

Recorded Interview with Sue Pimentel on March 30, 2018

Facilitators:

Destiny Eldridge, Literacy Consultant, Iowa Department of Education

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ABOUT SUE:

Susan Pimentel was a lead writer of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and is a Founding Partner of Student Achievement Partners. Susan's efforts have been focused on helping communities, districts and states across the nation work together to advance education reform and champion proven tools for increasing academic rigor. Her work has resulted in the phase-out of student tracking, enriched core curricula, and advances in results-based school accountability programs. Susan also has led several national improvement efforts, including two multi-state adult education reform initiatives under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Adult and Vocational Education (OVAE), and the development of content for the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence—a rigorous discipline-specific national teacher test. Susan holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and a law degree from Cornell University. Since 2007, she has served on the National Assessment Governing Board that advises on the nation's report card, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In addition to several articles, Susan is co-author with Denis P. Doyle of the best-selling book and CD-ROM, *Raising the Standard: An Eight-Step Action Guide For Schools and Communities*.

Questions:

0:00-0:20:47

1. When the Standards first came out, there was a lot of controversy around the focus on nonfiction texts. During our early Iowa Core Advocate webinars, we explained that the standards are English Language Arts and Literacy Standards, so they also speak to reading in social studies, science, and technical subjects. The Standards go from 50 percent literature and 50 percent nonfiction in elementary grades to 70 percent and 30 percent in high school. The percentages refer to all the student's readings in school. That said, how would you respond to a non-ELA teacher who reads these Literacy Standards and says, "I am not an English teacher, so I'm not responsible for these Standards!"?

4:20:50

2. On the flipside, how would you respond to an ELA teacher who is concerned that the Standards push fiction out, especially when traditionally they have focused their instruction on the reading of whole class, fictional texts?

10:15:17

3. In a 2016 Newsweek article titled “The Common-Core Standard That Should Have Been,” you said that you have at least one regret about how the Standards turned out: They don't require students to read a large number of texts independently. You explained that the Standards do include "nods" to that goal; for instance, the Reading Standards say students should read complex literary and informational texts "independently and proficiently." But that it would be "better to have a [independent reading] standard that signals that students should regularly read a volume of texts at a range of complexities."
  - a. Why is it important for students to read independently and at volume?

13:37:70

- b. What recommendations would you make or insights would you offer to teachers to encourage this practice?

17:50:00

4. In the field, we hear from instructional leaders who are concerned that the Speaking and Listening Standards do not receive enough attention in ELA, as well as in the other content areas. How would you suggest putting more emphasis on these Standards into instruction and learning?

25:26.97

5. Do you have insights that you can offer for our advocates regarding a recommended process with “tight/loose” guidelines or recommendations for unpacking standards towards instructional design?
  - a. We are noticing districts that are picking a few standards from each strand and calling them 'priority standards.' These are the standards that are on the report card. Teachers have been picking them based on relevance and the high leverage for the child's future. The teachers also have 'supporting standards' which include the remainder of the standards, but the explicit instruction and assessment for reporting to stakeholders is focused on these priority standards. It seems like there are about 2-3 chosen per literacy strand. How would you respond to this practice of prioritizing?

40:16.37

6. What's the role of formative [interim] assessments in students meeting the Standards?

45:54.03

7. What's the connection between high quality instructional materials and writing?

50:48.10

8. What can a teacher do if their school is unable to adopt/purchase high quality, aligned curriculum?

57:02.00 ( Include when we are discussing the enrichment task )

9. The 2017 paper, “Practice What You Teach,” addresses system leaders and asks them to integrate curriculum into professional learning. Members of the Iowa Core Advocates serve in roles primarily ranging between teachers, curriculum directors, and instructional coaches. How do you suggest Iowa Core Advocates use the key takeaways in this paper to advocate for change in curriculum *and* professional learning within their educational settings?

1:07:44.53

10. How should teachers in our state prepare students for a new Standards-aligned summative assessment?

1:11:41.63

11. A goal of the Common Core State Standards is to close the gap between high school and the expectations of college and the workplace. How would you assess movement toward this goal since the introduction of the Standards in 2010?

a. What does the attainment of this goal look like?