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First Steps in Mathematics and Common Core State Standards for Mathematics

Does First Steps in Mathematics correlate to the Common Core?

Yes, for both the Standards for Mathematical Practice and the Grade Level Standards themselves. The similarities are striking. Both the Common Core document and *First Steps* in Mathematics resources talk about a need for:

- Greater focus, coherence and common understanding, by all members of the school community, of the math students need to know in order to ensure students learn what they need to learn.
- Robust learning that emphasizes depth of understanding over procedural knowledge.
- A focus on number sense in the early years of schooling to build a strong foundation for later years.
- Developmental progressions of student understanding that provide detailed information for teachers about how students learn and understand math.
- Supporting students who struggle to learn by providing access to varied but focused learning opportunities for these students, designed not to lower the bar, but to give students varied ways to get over the bar.

But perhaps the biggest correlation is the notion that, "Designers of curricula, assessments and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in mathematics instruction." (Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, p. 8).

This is exactly what STEPS Professional Development does.

Our resources connect all aspects of making sound professional judgments for teachers and give them the tools they need to determine the learning paths for their students.

In the *First Steps* in Mathematics Overview book (p. 2), it states, "*First Steps* in Mathematics is not meant to replace professional judgment. Rather, it should ensure that teachers' professional judgments about mathematics, assessment, teaching and learning are well informed. The series and associated professional development help teachers to:

- Build or extend their own knowledge of the mathematics underpinning the outcomes
- Understand how students learn mathematics so they can make sound professional judgments
- Plan learning experiences that are likely to develop the mathematics outcomes of all students."

As you read through the Key Points in Mathematics from the Common Core document, the connections to the *First Steps* in Mathematics Number resource in general, and the various components of it, are numerous.

- The Number Outcomes and their associated Key Understandings from the First Steps in Mathematics resources provide the 'solid foundation in whole numbers, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals' for elementary and middle school students.
- Sample Learning Activities related to each Key Understanding provide the practice with conceptual understanding as well as procedural understanding combined with hands-on learning experiences.
- Helping students become flexible, robust math thinkers who can applying content and procedural knowledge to new situations is a hallmark of the First Steps resources.

Okay, can you give me some specific examples of links between the Grade Level Standards and *First Steps* in Mathematics?

Yes, and we've included just a small sample below related to our Number resource. There are also connections for geometry (Space), Statistics and Probability (Chance and Data) and Measurement. For more connections, or any questions, please feel free to contact us at Info@stepspd.com or by phone at 866.505.3001. We look forward to hearing from you!

Samples from the Common Core Document	Samples from the *First Steps in Mathematics: Number* Resources	Sample *First Steps in Mathematics: Number* related Diagnostic Task
Grade K Overview (p. 10)		
Know number names and the count sequence	Recall the sequence of number names at least into double digits	Counting Principles
Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from	Solve small number story problems that require them to add some, take some away, or combine two amounts by imagining or role playing the situation and counting the resulting quantity	Comparing Bananas
Work with numbers 11 -19 to gain foundations for place value	Use materials or visualize to decompose small numbers into parts empirically	Emus and Rabbits
Grade 2 Overview (p. 18)		
Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction	Write number sentences that match how they think about the story line for small number addition and subtraction problems	Kangaroos
Understand place value	Partition at least two and three digit numbers into standard component parts without reference to actual quantities	Dinosaur Task
Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract	Use the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction to make a direct calculation possible (e.g., reinterpret 43 – 27 as 'what do I have to add to 27 to get 43 and so count on by tens and ones)	Find the Solutions
Grade 4 Overview (p. 28)		
Use the four operation with whole numbers to solve problems	Know that they can choose between multiplication or division to make calculating easier	Finding Factors
Gain familiarity with factors and multiples	Understand that a number can be decomposed and re-composed into its factors in a number of ways without changing the total quantity	Finding Equal Groups
Extend understanding of fraction equivalence and ordering	Partition a quantity into a number of equal portions to show unit fractions and, given a particular quantity, will say that one third is more than one quarter	Jumping Competition
Grade 6 Overview (p. 41)		
Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems	Recognize multiplication as appropriate in situations involving familiar rates, areas and combinations	Calculator Number Sentences
Apply and extend previous understandings of numbers to the system of rational numbers	Can write suitable number sentences for the full range of multiplication and division situations involving whole numbers, decimals and fractions	Cherry Problems