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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Teacher Clarity Playbook, Grades K-12* by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Olivia Amador, and Joseph Assof.

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MODULE 1:

CONCEPTS & SKILLS

I KNOW THE FACTS...
HOW TO **APPLY** THEM
& **WHEN** TO USE!

**PRIOR
KNOWLEDGE**

NOUNS
CONCEPTS
VERBS
SKILLS

WHAT A STUDENT
NEEDS TO **KNOW**

...AND
BE ABLE TO
DO!

CONTENT
STANDARDS

☐ DECLARATIVE
☐ PROCEDURAL
☐ CONDITIONAL

THE PLAY:
ANALYZE
THE
STANDARDS

OUTCOMES



MODULE 1: IDENTIFYING CONCEPTS AND SKILLS



◀ VIDEO 1.1 Module 1 Overview
resources.corwin.com/teacherclarityplaybook

A simple glance through a standards document is not sufficient to teach those standards. Knowing the standards well allows teachers to identify the necessary prior knowledge and to determine the expectations for students' success. In nearly all cases, the standards themselves articulate outcomes of learning and often call upon students to apply what they have learned to an ever-widening set of situations and texts. These outcome standards can't be mastered in a day or a week. They require intentional instruction that is sustained over many lessons and learning experiences.

WHAT CONTENT KNOWLEDGE DO STUDENTS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

A useful method for determining the concepts students must master and the skills they need to attain is to analyze the standard's nouns and verbs. The nouns in a standard generally represent what it is the student needs to know—the concepts. This is the core knowledge of the discipline, and it encompasses the following:

- *Declarative knowledge*, which is the factual information associated with the subject.
- *Procedural knowledge*, which is the application of information.

- *Conditional knowledge*, which is knowing when the information should be used.

Many of the nouns in a standard reveal the declarative, procedural, and/or conditional knowledge the student needs to learn. Another way of saying this is that these are the content demands. Take this example from the Michigan Social Studies Standards for Grade 8, with key nouns and noun phrases identified:

STANDARD(S)

Develop an argument based on evidence about the positive and negative consequences of territorial and economic expansion on Native Americans.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Evidence
Consequences of
territorial
expansion
Consequences
of economic
expansion
Native Americans

SKILLS (VERBS)

We didn't underline *positive* and *negative* in this case because we wanted to focus for now on the essential nouns. That is not to say that these adjectives are not important. Quite to the contrary, they are because they provide further detail and nuance about the concepts that need to be taught. But for now, we just want to tease out the key nouns present.

Also note that we just presented one standard. In many subject areas, teachers are actually teaching multiple standards at the same time. In that case, you'd list all of the standards in the top box, identify the range of concepts (nouns) and later skills (verbs), and then continue the process outlined in this playbook.

WHAT SKILLS MUST STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

Of course, teaching is far more than just pouring facts into the heads of students. Knowledge is more useful when it can be applied. The syntax of the standards helps us again, this time in the form of verbs. Many of the verbs in a standard speak to the skills students must acquire in order to make the concepts, and content, useful. Let's look again at the same standard, this time with the verbs underlined:

STANDARD(S)

Develop an argument based on evidence about the positive and negative consequences of territorial and economic expansion on American Indians.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Evidence
Consequences
of territorial
expansion
Consequences
of economic
expansion
Native Americans

SKILLS (VERBS)

Develop an
argument

Chances are good that the moment you considered this verb phrase, you immediately began thinking in two divergent directions:

1. What other knowledge and skills would students need in order to develop such an argument?

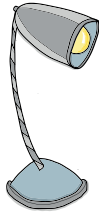
2. How might a student demonstrate this skill?

The first question speaks to the prior knowledge and skills needed, while the second question addresses wonderings about teaching and assessment. That's understandable, but we'd like for you to hold those wonderings for the time being. Rather, let's consider what the term *develop* signals. It suggests that students are constructing knowledge, not simply reproducing facts, which requires them to use declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. These are the skills that students must apply to the concepts. It is equally important to recognize what the word *develop* doesn't say. Nowhere is there a directive about how it will be accomplished or what it will look like. The outcome might occur in an argumentative essay, a presentation, or a debate. Those decisions are yet to come as you analyze for learning progressions, learning intentions, and success criteria in the coming modules.

PLC CONVERSATIONS

1. What challenged you in this module?
2. How will you package and pace the standards? Would a pacing guide for all of the standards be useful?
3. How will you know if you analyzed the standard(s) correctly?





MODELING

Here are modeled examples of standards with the nouns and verbs identified.

GRADE 1: MATH

STANDARD(S)

Solve word problems that call for addition of three whole numbers whose sum is less than or equal to 20 (e.g., by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem).

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Word problem
Addition
Whole numbers
Sum
Objects
Drawings
Equations
Symbol
Unknown number
Problem

SKILLS (VERBS)

Solve
Use
Represent

GRADE 4: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

STANDARD(S)

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Main idea
Key details
Text

SKILLS (VERBS)

Determine
Explain
Summarize

GRADE 8: ALGEBRA

STANDARD(S)

Know and apply the properties of integer exponents to generate equivalent numerical expressions.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Properties of integer exponents
Equivalent numerical expressions

SKILLS (VERBS)

Know
Apply
Generate

GRADE 10: ENGLISH

STANDARD(S)

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

Textual evidence
Analysis of explicit text
Analysis of inferences

SKILLS (VERBS)

Cite
Support
Draw from

GUIDED PRACTICE



For the following examples, identify the nouns and verbs. First, underline them; then, place them in the corresponding boxes.

GRADE 7: ELA

STANDARD(S)

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
(c) Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

SKILLS (VERBS)

GRADE 3: MATH (FLORIDA)

STANDARD(S)

Tell and write time to the nearest minute and measure time intervals in minutes. Solve word problems involving addition and subtraction of time intervals in minutes—for example, by representing the problem on a number line diagram.

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

SKILLS (VERBS)

Note: For suggested answers, please turn to page 123 or visit the companion website at resources.corwin.com/teacherclarityplaybook.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE



Fill in your own standards in the following boxes; then, identify the nouns and verbs as you did in the Guided Practice section.

STANDARD(S)

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

SKILLS (VERBS)

STANDARD(S)

CONCEPTS (NOUNS)

SKILLS (VERBS)



For a blank version of the independent practice pages in this book, visit resources.corwin.com/teacherclarityplaybook

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WATCH! 



Videos and viewing guide may also be accessed at resources.corwin.com/teacherclarityplaybook



VIDEO 1.2

Module 1 in Action—Elementary

resources.corwin.com/teacherclarityplaybook



VIDEO 1.3

Module 1 in Action—Secondary

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NOTES 

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.