THE COLLEGE BOARD **ADVOCACY & POLICY CENTER**

AFFINITY NETWORK

CONNECTING K12 & POST
SECONDARY EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA

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Oklahoma Capstone Team

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Oklahoma Capstone Team

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Background

The College Board's Affinity Network was created "to build and strengthen connections between K–12 and postsecondary education systems and facilitate successful transition from high school to college" (College Board Press Release 4/16/12).

In particular, our work was focused on how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will prepare students for college-level, credit-bearing coursework in English Composition and other introductory courses that require writing.

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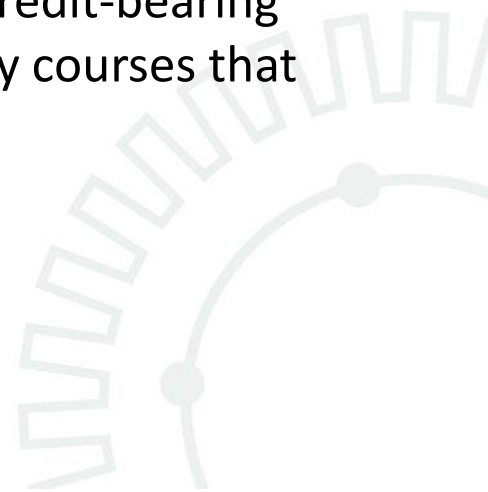
Step 1: Familiarize Ourselves with the CCSS

Example ELA Standard:

Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

9th Grade Reading Standard

Example ELA Standard:

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

11th Grade Writing Standard

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Step 2: Learn about Each Other's Classes

• Compared syllabi, textbooks, and writing assignments

• Worked through the peculiarities of differing terminology, e.g., thesis/claim, argument/persuasion, research essay/research report

• Determined which CCSS were most important for college readiness
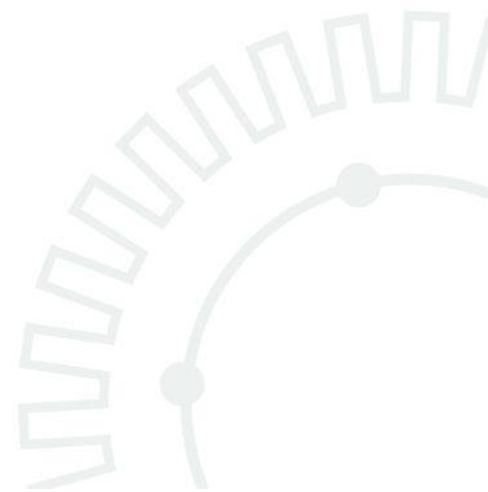
Initial Findings

- OCCC and UCO's composition courses were pretty well aligned.

- The CCSS increasingly ask students to write researched arguments as they move through the secondary grade levels.

- The first college and university credit-bearing course, ENG 1113, tends not to stress argument until the end of the semester, favoring instead expository writing.

- The CCSS would appear to prepare students better for ENG 1213, the second course in the sequence.

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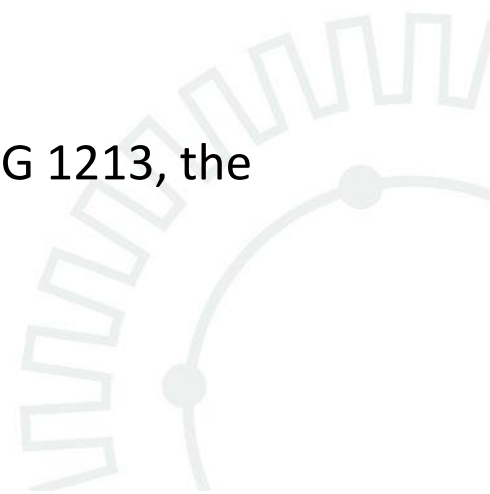
Grade 11 ELA Writing Standard #7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
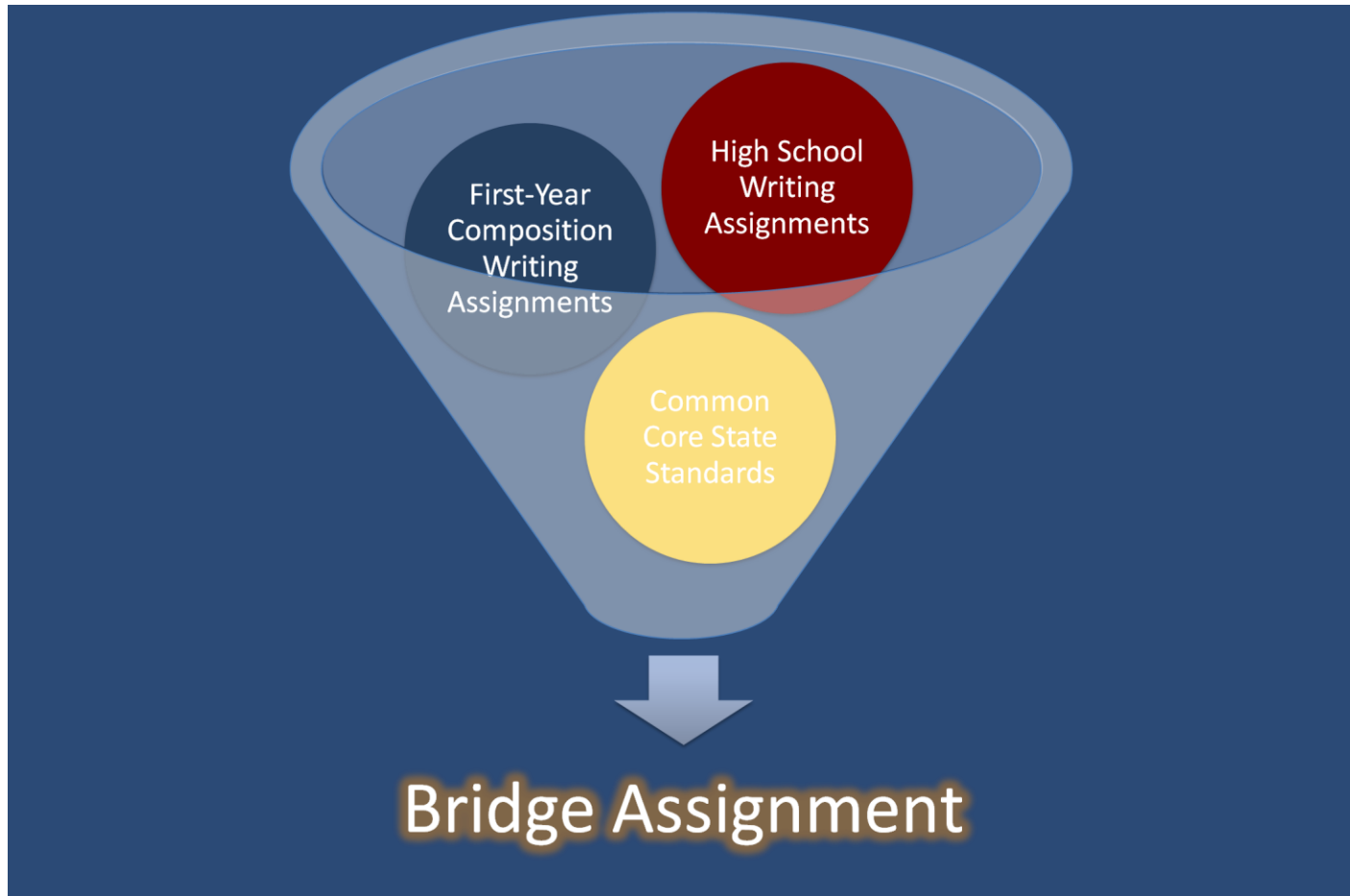
A Gap

First-Year Composition Writing Assignments

High School Writing Assignments

Common Core State Standards

Bridge Assignment

TEMPLATE PROMPT FOR AN ARGUMENT REQUIRING THE SYNTHESIS OF SOURCES

After reading the attached source excerpts about [subject goes here], write an essay that completes the tasks listed below. You do not have to complete the tasks in the order in which they are listed.

- Argue your own position about the [type of argument goes here, e.g., fact, value, cause, definition, policy, etc.] of [subject listed above].
- Summarize the position, stance, or main idea of the primary and secondary sources.
- Analyze the position, stance, or main idea of the primary and secondary sources.
- Use quotations and paraphrases from each source.
- Provide in-text citation for each source.
- Imagine an audience with a vested interest in [subject listed above].

Characteristics of the Template Assignment

- It is adaptable to a variety of levels and courses.

- It helps students build new knowledge on top of old knowledge.

- It accurately represents a major genre of writing expected at the college level.

- It produces a measurable student artifact.

Next Steps: Sustain Collaboration

- Gather and analyze sample assignments from instructors across disciplines & institutions

- Examine assignment samples to determine the extent to which assignments realize the CCSS

- Determine the extent to which existing assignments can be retrofitted to the template

- Discuss how the College and University will transition from assignments directly tied to CCSS and move to assignments tied to specific academic and professional pursuits

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Next Steps (continued)

- Analyze pool of assignment prompts based on template to determine knowledge being transferred and retained

- Pilot versions of the template in HS/College/University, analyzing student writing for interpretation of prompts between levels and retention of knowledge

- Imagine other uses for the template assignment, e.g., as a diagnostic essay or as the first graded assignment in Composition I

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The Goal: Degree Completion

Students who pass a gateway course are more likely to be retained.

Students are more likely to pass a gateway course if they can recognize a pathway to success within that course.

We are hopeful that successive encounters with variations on the template assignment will help students reach this goal.