

We asked district leaders, principals, and teacher leaders about the experience of shifting instructional practice in their schools. The key takeaway: standards implementation is a deeply iterative process that takes time for true changes in practice to flourish.

For more of *The Center's CA Insights* on INSTRUCTIONAL SHIFTS, visit us at [TheCenter.WestEd.org/shifts](http://TheCenter.WestEd.org/shifts)

Shifting instructional practice is central to improving teaching and learning. When given structured opportunities to reflect upon what the standards mean for their own practice, teachers are better equipped to shift instruction and affect standards implementation. In the **Instructional Shifts** domain, district leaders, principals, and teacher leaders observe how their teachers navigate this process at the classroom level. As one principal put it, "It's making teachers go from being presenters to teachers again."

**TEACHERS NEED A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS COMPONENTS OF THE STANDARDS BEFORE THEY CAN ACCURATELY SHIFT INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE.**



"Right now **our priority is really the rigor of the standards.** We have found that our teachers are not completely aligned across all of our sites on **what the standards mean.**"

- District Leader



"[My] goal is to assess what the teachers' understanding of the standards are, so they can **unpack them, unravel them, unwrap them,** whatever the term is, and really focus

on the tier two vocabulary so they can use that as a gauge to check for understanding in the classrooms."

- Teacher Leader



"[Our district focus is] providing professional development that really **digs into what is the rigor of each of the standards** in their

grade level and how does that, in turn, affect the instruction they're providing for their learners."

- District Leader

**INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE AND MATERIALS ARE UNLIKELY TO ALIGN UNLESS TEACHERS HAVE STRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES TO GRAPPLE WITH WHAT THE STANDARDS MEAN FOR THEIR OWN APPROACH TO TEACHING.**



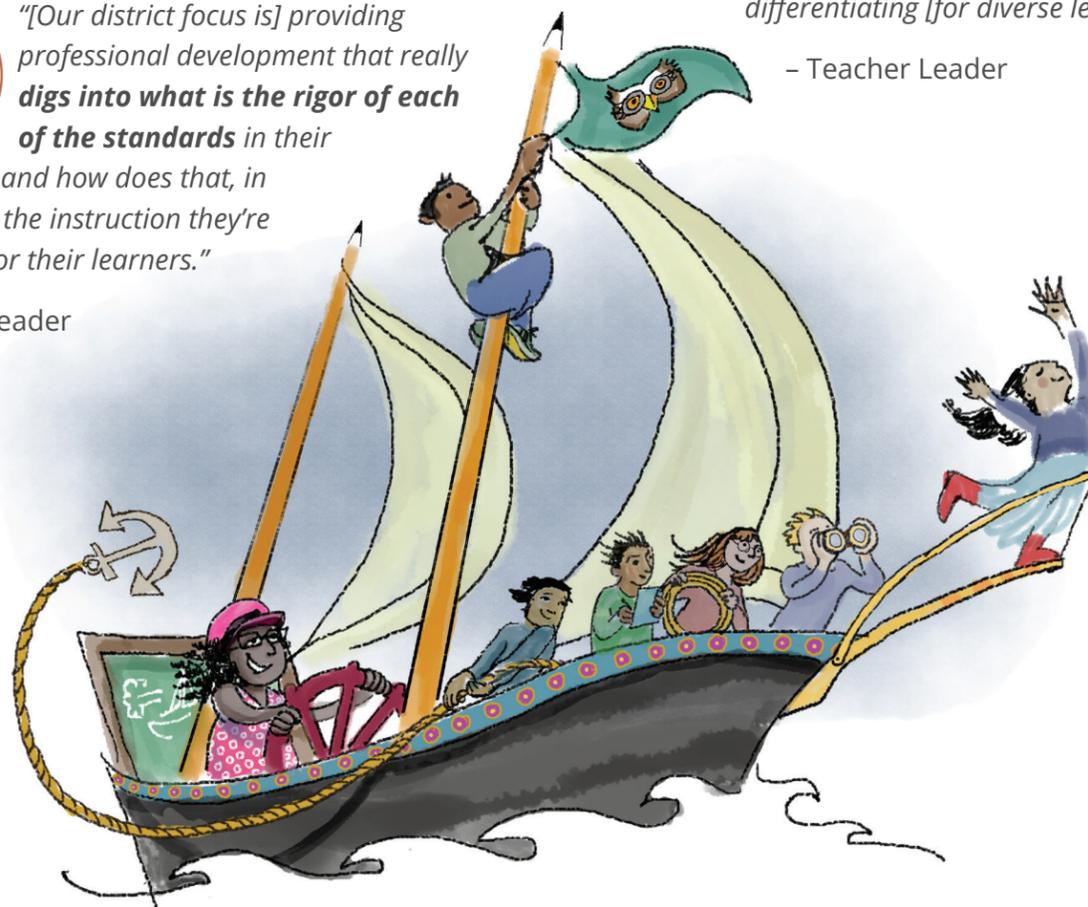
"[It's important] to involve teachers in the initial going and looking at the curriculum at the county office. **Have a longer lead time** with both piloting the [instructional] materials and with developing the understanding in the rubrics for how we're going to assess them."

- District Leader



"I see teachers who have only taught using a teacher's manual, following word-by-word. Almost zero differentiation in their classrooms... [My job is] trying to **teach them how to teach** so that they're differentiating [for diverse learners]."

- Teacher Leader



**CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE ARE ONLY THE BEGINNING; THE STANDARDS REQUIRE SHIFTS IN MINDSET THAT MANY TEACHERS ARE LEARNING TO EMBRACE AS THEY GO.**



"Their [teachers'] human nature [is to] gravitate towards certain components they may feel the most comfortable with, [which] is something that we want to guard against."

- District Leader



"[It's about helping] teachers to go deeper with the standards and have a comfort level with one another to **really discuss, plan, collaborate, and learn** so that as they're doing this work, [they feel that] it's not just work [for them]."

-District Leader



"It is hard for a lot of these teachers. I know there [were] a lot of mixed feelings on the [change to the new standards] when it came out. A lot of people hated it, [a lot of people] loved it. I do like...the fact that **it's making teachers go from being presenters to teachers again. It's changed the way they educate kids** probably with these questions you're looking at. [Still, the standards change] came out so broad and gray. **I don't think anybody knows, 'This is the correct way to implement things.'**"

- Principal