Our chief takeaways from three years of research: Implementation isn’t simple or linear. Implementation is iterative, recursive, and never-ending.

The reality that implementation is iterative calls for a more nuanced and appreciative view of the complexity of implementation; an acknowledgment that the adult learning process will continue to unfold in the years ahead; and a willingness to let go of short-term expectations, instead allowing schools and districts the time to build and iterate upon the real progress they have already made.

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Three years of listening to educators has taught us that implementing the California State Standards is a highly varied and localized experience—a constant exercise on the part of school leaders, district leaders, and teacher leaders to integrate what they’re learning into existing organizational structures and calibrate instruction and training in response. In our final domain we explore the common theme across educators’ experiences in our large and diverse state: that implementation is iterative.

LESSON 3
Not every district is where it would like to be in the implementation process, considering the piecemeal nature of implementation rollout so far. Still, many have faith that progress will continue if they stay the course.

“We are learning to provide a rigorous instructional program that really ‘stretches’ students in order to increase their ability to think critically, create, collaborate, and communicate their ideas, both orally and in writing. This requires a true focus on application of learning rather than simply practicing learned skills.”
— District Leader

“We think when we first moved to California State Standards, we shifted ELA and math very quickly and then had to backtrack and re-evaluate and re-plan our implementation. We’ve now learned that it’s better to take it slow and make sure that it’s done right the first time so that we don’t get that pushback as much from our teachers.”
— District Leader

“They say we need to be done by tomorrow, we say we need to be done by the end of the week, we don’t get to build a full picture of that until six, seven years down the line. We ask people to go through this change and just trust us through it.”
— District Leader

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