**Educators Prepare for Shift to Common Core (Part 2 of 2)**

Leslye Abrutyn, on the other hand, has experience implementing curriculums and evaluations of student work that provide a deeper picture of student achievement and a true portrait of accomplishments and abilities. Abrutyn authored An Introduction to Using Portfolios in the Classroom Plan, the seminal textbook on evaluating students with projects and portfolios. Since the new standards include an emphasis on project-based learning, more teachers will need to learn Leslye Abrutyn’s strategies for building good portfolio-based assessments.

While some fear that the new Common Core Stanards will result in lower achievement, other experts believe that the increased emphasis on broad subject knowledge and non-fiction reading will actually improve reading comprehension and critical thinking skills. For instance, cognitive scientist Dan Willingham, a specialist in issues related to education, explains that reading comprehension improves when a student has background knowledge of a given subject.

The reading strategies favored by NCLB become useless if students don’t have a framework into which they can plug reading. In addition, students can’t build connections and think critically until they’ve acquired information to think about and facts with which to build connections. The Common Core Standards go into full effect in 2014, and the Department of Education will probably tweak them during the implementation process. However, many school systems may want to look into hiring consultants to conduct professional development for teachers or to construct implementation plans ahead of the shift.