Individual Considerations: Keeping Students at the Center

to one another through teachers’ knowledge of and interaction with students. As a teacher, all of your work with students happens in close relation to the context where you teach, including your school and local community. So your students’ needs, abilities, and interests—both individually and collectively—inform your decisions about planning for, enacting, and assessing instruction.

Keeping students at the center will enable you to prioritize what to attend to first and why. Furthermore, keeping students at the center may also empower you to utilize the CCSS mandate to advocate for your students’ unique learning needs, as we discuss later in Chapter 7. Our collective teaching experiences across the country suggest challenges are inherent to good teaching, whether a result of the CCSS or not, but foregrounding student learning needs, abilities, and interests provides a useful and necessary lens through which to interpret and implement the CCSS. No matter the pathway you choose to begin, as Figure 5.2 illustrates, your students provide the map for planning and journeying with the CCSS.

FIGURE 5.2: Planning with students at the center.

From Supporting Students in a Time of Core Standards: English Language Arts, Grades 6-8 by Tonya Perry, with Rebecca Manery. ©2011 National Council of Teachers of English.