

E-Newsletter

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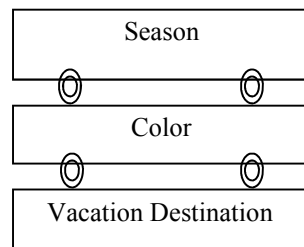
This newsletter is written specifically for teachers and will include news and information to help you implement the CSCOPE curriculum. In it you will find tools for managing cooperative groups, explanations of CSCOPE documents, easy-to-implement and highly effective instructional strategies, along with a preview of the upcoming six weeks. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and find it useful and informative!

Tips and Tools for Managing Cooperative Groups

In this issue, we'll describe the Four Corners technique for grouping students.

This technique is effective when you see the need for students to get up and get their blood moving; it also gives them an opportunity for social interaction as a readiness activity for response.

Preparation: Make 4 different signs to post in the 4 corners of the room. We like to make the following. (These can be made on cardstock or poster board. Punch two holes in the bottom of each card and connect with a ring or paper clip.) You can choose categories that will interest your students. You will use these to group students.



Instructions:

When I say go, you will go to the corner that corresponds to your favorite [season, color, category]. For example, if your favorite color is blue, you will go to the corner labeled blue. When you get to the corner look at me.

Go! I am going to ask you a question. Your group will have two minutes to discuss the question. At the end of two minutes, each group will share their answer and give support for it.

[Ask students a question that has more than one answer. Give them two minutes to discuss. The teacher may want to walk around the room to listen to conversations, noting where students understand and where they may have misconceptions.]

STOP and look at me. The tallest person in the group will share your group's answer. That person has one minute to consult with his/her team members before we share with the entire class. One minute starts now!

Each group shares their response and support. For your next brief discussion question, you may have students go to a different category corner. This allows students to interact with and learn from a variety of other students.

As with any grouping strategy, the key is short, clear directions and clear tasks with time limits.

ESL Strategy of the Month...

Posting or distributing sentence starters (also called sentence frames or sentence stems) is helpful for English Language Learners. Given the language to begin their responses, students are then able to retrieve content necessary for a meaningful response. Use sentence starters in the Explore and Elaborate portions of CSCOPE lessons when students are interacting and trying to make meaning from new content and make connections to old content and new contexts.

What it Might Look Like. The teacher identifies academic vocabulary that is important to the content and concepts to be taught. The teacher then formulates open-ended questions for students to respond to. (Sources for these questions might include TAKS stems and CSCOPE unit guiding questions as well as textbook resources.) Some examples of starters follow.

- My idea is like Jennifer's. I also think that ____.
- I disagree with Rodney because. . .
- Michael and Susan have ___ in common. They both ____.
- In both selections, ____ is important. In [selection 1], _____. In [selection 2], _____.

The teacher can either post or distribute the sentence starters where all students can easily refer to them.

When I say go, I want you to stand up and find 1 or 2 other students to work with. When your group is formed, look at me. Go! [Students form groups.] You will have 2 minutes to discuss [State the question.]. Remember to use the sentence starter(s) when you begin your response.

As students are dialoguing, the teacher will move through the room, monitoring how well students understand the

content and how well they are able to use the identified sentence structure. Signal students when 2 minutes has passed. You may ask volunteers to share from their discussions. You may form different groups to discuss the same or a different question. You may move on to a different part of the lesson.



Benefits of Using Sentence Starters

- Scaffold to push students to use more complex syntax than they would otherwise use.
- When used with pairs or small groups of students,
 - allow multiple opportunities to hear and speak English in a comfortable grouping.
 - allow for meaningful dialogue within a goal-directed context. Teacher-directed instruction allows only for one meaningful dialogue with one student. Most often this means that many of the remaining students have checked out.

For written responses, Kinsella (2005) suggests having students write an answer before giving them the sentence starter. This allows students to think and brainstorm before focusing on writing one perfect sentence.

Does this only help for ESL students? This works for ANY student, but it is especially important for ESL students to have the language to begin responses so that they can focus on content of their responses rather than trying to think of a way to begin to respond. When all students are encouraged to use the starters, the level of formal language used and modeled in the class increases. And there's an added bonus! Some teachers have reported an increase in manners as well when students are expected to speak in complete sentences!!

CSCOPE Doc Spot...The 5E Instructional Model Exposed



The 5E Instructional Model brings inquiry based learning to the forefront of classroom instruction. The 5E's are comprised of Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. The framework of the 5E stems from the constructivist theories of inquiry based learning. Student expectations are centered in problem solving, building on prior learning, and extending to real world connections. This is the model used in the CSCOPE lessons in all four content areas.

When you look at the 5E's in isolation, you can gain an understanding of the purpose behind these stages. The engage piece is more than just a typical warm-up in the sense that we are truly gaining valuable information such as tapping into prior knowledge to gain a sense of the level of student understanding. The engage also provides an opportunity to peak student interests and excitement about the upcoming activities.

The next step is the explore phase. In this part of our lesson cycle, students are still in the abstract form of the lesson. Many times we have not given a name or definition to what they are learning they are truly exploring through the learning concept(s). The midway point of a

lesson is explain – where we put a name to what we are learning. This is still primarily student centered, as the teacher facilitates learning though questioning and helping provide explanation. Elaborate is where the upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy flourish, with activities that encourage students to extend their knowledge to new ideas and bridging our classroom to experience real world applications. The final piece in the 5E learning cycle is evaluate. Students use connections to their learning through generating products such as graphic organizers, models, and journal entries. At this stage all the pieces of the 5E come together to complete the unit's cycle of learning.

In the CSCOPE units, the 5E model is the framework for the lessons. Each lesson has an extended duration that generally lasts several days. The 5E's do not always cycle in order perfectly, you will see lessons that provide opportunities to reexamine a part of the instructional model for student's to gain a better understanding of the concept being taught.

"Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I'll understand" -Chinese proverb

Have a general CSCOPE question that you think would be a good article for the newsletter?

Send it to Jennifer.shinners@esc13.txed.net.



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview

Science



Kindergarten— Kindergarteners investigate life in a tree this six weeks and will continue to learn about spiders. Students will make connections about how trees act as shelters for animals such as woodpeckers, owls, and squirrels and look at their relationships within their habitat. Students will enjoy activities such as spider headbands and singing songs about these animals. In Unit 12, students will participate in hands on activities with patterns, cycles, and changes.

First Grade— Students will begin the six weeks exploring the diversity of animals by constructing a pond ecosystem. Students take an in depth look at how animals and plants interact, and the role nonliving parts play to help meet their needs. This unit contains extensive literacy connections with the use of student notebooks and Readers' Theater. They will then extend this knowledge through learning about the life cycle of a frog in Unit 12. Students will make observations of tadpoles, recording and illustrating their findings in a tadpole journal. Students will use Venn diagrams to compare tadpoles to adult frogs, and participate in a motivating activity called "Could I Live in a Pond?"

Second Grade— This six weeks is all about animals. Students will participate in the exploration of animals through classification, studying special characteristics, life cycles, and the dependence among species in their environment. Students will research animals through reading fold books and doing hands on activities such as representing the life cycle stages of the butterfly using pasta.

Third Grade— In Unit 8, students will learn about ecosystems. Students will experience observing local habitats and making connections to the organisms that live near their school. Students will enjoy participating in habitat bingo in the first lesson. They will then experience the African savannah, and how animals compete with one another for survival. Students will create a brochure on how organisms can modify the environment around them, and will also study how changes in the environment can have major impacts on ecosystems.

Fourth Grade— In Unit 8, students will investigate and compare adaptations in living organisms. Students will play Adaptation Jeopardy, utilize a variety of thinking maps to gain knowledge and create an analogy project. In Unit 9, students will explore metamorphosis and compare different life cycles. Students will compare and contrast various life cycles such as those of plants, frogs, butterflies and humans. In the explore/explain stage students will observe and investigate worms. The focus on this unit is for students to understand life cycles, and see that each stage is crucial in the development of the organism.

Fifth Grade— Students truly become scientists this six weeks! In Unit 9, students will use scientific investigations and critical thinking skills to design an experiment. They will gather equipment, test and record observations, and write an explanatory lab report summarizing their experiment.

Sixth Grade— Students will explore our solar system by learning about the characteristics of the sun, moon, meteorites, asteroids and the moon. The performance indicator allows for student creativity as they produce a comic strip detailing a trip through our solar system. Look for multiple online resources in the elaborate portion of the lesson. In the second lesson, students will use their background knowledge to study how to identify characteristics of the planets.

Seventh Grade— The focus of this six weeks will be chemical reactions and compounds. Students will participate in hands on labs to observe reactions, as well as be able to conduct experiments and write about the results of chemical changes. In lesson two, students will be able to distinguish elements, compounds, and mixtures.

Eighth Grade— Students will explore the universe and design experiments this six weeks. In Unit 13, students will learn about light years, what they are and how they are measured. Students will research seven stars in the Big Dipper and write a persuasive article as a performance indicator. They will then conduct research on scientific theories about the origins of the universe. In Unit 14, students will choose a science topic of interest to research and test. Using scientific inquiry procedures, students will design an experiment to address a testable question and produce a lab report to reinforce the importance of experimental design and inquiry.

Biology — This six weeks students will have an overview of the Animal Kingdom. Students will construct a booklet about the major phyla in the animal kingdom. The big ideas of this unit are that animals have adapted to fill a variety of niches resulting in organisms with unique structures, and that structures in organisms have evolved for particular functions.



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview

Science



IPC— This six weeks is all about electricity. Students will review background knowledge from previous grade levels. Student learning will be centered around these key understandings:

- Different materials have the ability to act as conductors, or insulators, to allow or block the flow of electricity.
- Regardless of the type of circuit, parallel or series, electricity in a circuit must follow a closed circular path.
- Electric and magnetic fields are interconnected forces.

Chemistry— Information will be provided at a later date.



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview

Science



Source

Kinsella, Kate. (2005) Teaching Academic Vocabulary. Kate Kinsella, Ed.D. Aiming High Resource. Sonoma County Office of Education.

Upcoming Professional Development

Look for these and other workshops to be published in the eCampus catalog soon.

Maximizing Student Performance: Effective Classroom Strategies

Participants will experience and learn about a variety of instructional grouping strategies. The focus will be on easy to manage and time saving strategies that will successfully engage all types of students in learning.

Maximizing Instructional Time: What do your students really know?

Why wait until the end of the unit to know what your students know? This course will focus on assessing student knowledge during the unit without the use of time-consuming quizzes. You will examine CSCOPE lessons and identify opportunities for providing feedback on students' work. You will then learn practical, easily implemented processes to plan subsequent instruction using the data you collect.

Maximizing Instructional Time: Strategies for New Teachers

Why learn classroom management in a trial by fire? In college they don't teach you how to run your classroom efficiently and with a smile. Come join us and learn simple management and instructional techniques that maximize instructional time while maintaining a positive learning environment.