

*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, and 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!*

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Your local service center contacts are listed on the last page.

Edited by the ESC Region  
XIII Local CSCOPE  
Support Team

## Taking a Look Back: Reflecting on This Year of Instruction

It's hard to believe another school year is coming to a close. As summer swiftly approaches, it's time to take a moment to stop and think back on your year of instruction. Reflections can be used to make connections from the past experiences and, through this process, work towards new goals for next school year. The first step is to focus on questions that you can truly benefit and grow from - questions such as:

What short- and long-term goals did I want to accomplish this year? What was the result of these goals?

What resources did I use this year to support my goals?

What areas went well this year? What accomplishments am I proud of?

What were some obstacles that I encountered? What did I do to overcome these obstacles?

Start with one question and reflect on your experiences. You can continue to add questions of your own and generate ideas through this process. The key is to keep this process simple so that you can see the benefits; reflections can be as short as a five minute journal writing at the end of the day. A practice of reflection can

help in the planning of next year's instruction, and this directly impacts and benefits students.

### Collaborative Team Reflection

Plan a time to schedule short, informal meetings and visits with your team members. If you do not work on a team, you might want to meet with other teachers who are teaching the same content area to share ideas and support. When you meet, discuss the effectiveness of teamwork and reflect on what has worked this year. Also, reflect on aspects such as teaching difficult concepts in the curriculum, strategies, or programs implemented this year. What impact did these have on student learning? Consider the following questions:

How did we work together as a team (with collaboration, with shared planning responsibilities)?

What are some considerations for working together next year? How can we strengthen our team?

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## Tips & Tools for Managing Cooperative Learning: ABCD Whispers

ABCD whispers is a way to conduct structured student to student conversations in your classroom. Students are assigned a letter (A through D). Each letter is given a different concept or term which students then illustrate on a sheet of paper. The term they are given should be written on this sheet of paper, no other words should be used but symbols are allowed. For example, during specific units the following terms might be given to the students:

Letter assigned to student	Unit of study and words for each student			
	Ecology	Research	Applications with Rational Numbers	Civil War
Student A	Food web	Primary Source	percent	resources
Student B	Producer	Secondary Source	proportion	tariffs
Student C	Heterotrophic	Perspective	Part	secession
Student D	Decomposer	Artifact	Whole	emancipation

Three to five minutes is usually adequate time for students to complete their drawings, but allow more time if students need to reference their notes or text for review before drawing. Once students have completed their drawings, they will stand as a group of four (one member representing each of the four letters A-D). Students complete three rounds of discussion as shown below. Students explain the drawing they did to another student, hear their explanation, and then exchange papers. In the second round they will be explaining someone else's paper, they will then exchange papers again. In the last round a student is hearing the explanation of their own paper. As students are having their discussions, the teacher will circulate through the room, listening for strengths and

### Round 1

Student A explains Paper A  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student B explains Paper B

Student C explains Paper C  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student D explains Paper D

### Round 2

Student A explains Paper B  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student C explains Paper D

Student B explains Paper A  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student D explains Paper C

### Round 3

Student A explains Paper D  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student D explains Paper A

Student B explains Paper C  $\longleftrightarrow$  Student C explains Paper B

*Adapted from a process demonstrated by Linda Hoyt (<http://www.lindahoyt.com>) which is based on a process from Longman Vocabulary.*

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- What are things we did well together?
- How can we continue to help support one another?
- What goals would the team like to work on for next year?
- How can we continue to support student learning?

Groups can also choose a focus question to consider. Team members can use this question to reflect on individually over a period of time, and then revisit at the next meeting to share and brainstorm ideas with one another. You may also want to consider participating in vertical discussions with other grade level teams. This is an extremely valuable process in determining how to support student conceptual development as well as allowing time for sharing resources.

### Student Reflections

If applicable, ask for student feedback. Learn when your students were most engaged and how you can strengthen strategies and content to support them.

**Reflections** help educators strengthen their teaching, deepen their knowledge, and adapt new ideas to help implement the district curriculum. Individual reflection centers your instructional practices and allows you to continue to strengthen knowledge and identify strategies that help support student learning. As you look back on this year of instruction, how did you make your district's curriculum your own? How will you continue to grow with your curriculum? Have those conversations with others, and look to those around you - your grade level team, department, or campus leaders - for support. Reflection is a continual

**"Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action." - Thomas F. Drucker**

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## Differentiating Instruction

In order for educators to consider the most effective differentiation strategies that will really make a difference in student learning, we first must determine the definition and the purpose of the word. Differentiated instruction is not a "thing" that should be accomplished in the classroom, instead it is a way of thinking about the teaching and learning of students. A few questions must be asked first. What exactly is differentiation and how does it apply to me? Based on the truth that all students learn differently, what practice or strategy is necessary for these students to make sense of the information being given to them? More specifically, how differentiated is a CSCOPE lesson as it is written?

In differentiated instruction students are placed at the center of teaching and learning (Tomlinson, 2001). Because each learner comes to school with a different set of learning needs, examples of which include differing educational, personal, and communal contexts (Taylor, 2003) and varying degrees of academic skill development (Levine, 2001), differentiated instruction advocates that the educator proactively plans a variety

of instruction methods so as to best facilitate effective learning experiences which are suited to the various learning needs within the classroom (Tomlinson, 2001). Expecting the students to modify themselves to "fit" into the curriculum does not work. Research reminds us that students come to the classroom with different ability sets and also, a variety of gaps in their learning. CSCOPE along with some simply applied strategies can engage all of the students in your classroom.

CSCOPE lessons are written in accordance with the Five E model. Even the seemingly simple "engage" and "explore" activities should never be eliminated when teaching the lesson. These instructional procedures set up the lesson to tap into the student's readiness and interest level, thus preparing them to make sense of the information that is forthcoming. Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, proved that individuals learn best in accordance with their readiness to do so (Tomlinson, 2001). This theoretical influence provides a concrete foundation for differentiated instruction. The readiness of the individual should

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match what a student learns, how they learn it and how the student demonstrates what they learned when using differentiated instruction. One goal in teaching should be to assist in creating an autonomous or independent learner. A stepping stone in achieving this is to build on the intrinsic motivation of the student. What better way to accomplish this than developing the interest level?

Look carefully at the Performance Indicator of a CSCOPE lesson. Notice the verbs. What exactly is it asking you to have the students accomplish? Each Performance Indicator has two parts, the content and the performance. Here is an example. A third grade Performance Indicator (Unit 6) states:

*Create a visual display that illustrates the literary elements of narrative structure with a book that you have recently read. Explain how the application of these literary elements has helped you to understand and interpret literary texts.*

What is the content of this Performance Indicator? What is the performance required? Another way to look at it is that the content is the “what” and the performance is the “how”. The content of this specific Performance Indicator is “literary elements of narrative structure” and how they help the student to “understand and interpret literary texts”. The performance is to “create a visual display”. After breaking the Performance Indicator apart into these two sections, remember that when differentiating for your class, the content must stay the same for all students. The variation would be included in the performance aspect of the Performance Indicator. The question to ask is how can the integrity of the original Performance Indicator remain intact while making alterations to meet the needs of my students? Each Performance Indicator should be evaluated in this manner prior to implementation to insure quality and effective learning to take place.

Another method of differentiating a CSCOPE lesson is to take a careful look at what is already imbedded. Again, think of the students that you will be working with. What is already there and what would be necessary to add according to the specific learning needs of your class.

Here is an example. In the second grade science lesson (Unit 02, Lesson 01) the title is *Change*

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### ***Tips for Designing and Managing Differentiated Instruction***

- Begin differentiating at your own pace. If you are new to differentiation, choose a couple of low-prep strategies to try out each semester.
- The time allotted for a task should be a little shorter than your students’ attention spans.
- Giving clear directions is essential when several activities are going on in the classroom.
- Be sure students have a plan for getting help when you are busy with another group. “Three before me” is a good motto.
- Group work can be noisy, but use strategies for minimizing the sound like teaching students to use their “6-inch” voices.
- Teach students what on-task behavior looks and sounds like.
- Have a plan for students or groups who finish quickly. Guide them to do higher quality work or have a game ready for when they finish. If they consistently have spare time, the work may be too easy for them.
- Observe student behaviors as a clue to the difficulty of the tasks. Students who give up quickly may not understand the directions or may think the work is too difficult. Plan to spend a little time at the beginning of the work session with those students to give them a head start.

Tomlinson, C.A. (2001). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Association for supervision and curriculum development: Alexandria, Virginia.

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*Occurs: What is Change?* Look specifically at the “engage” activity. First write the question “What is change?” on the board and discuss with students. Next, show a piece of paper, cut the paper in half. Ask “What has changed?” Hold up a different piece of paper, ball it up, and ask the same question. This should prompt a discussion about permanent change.

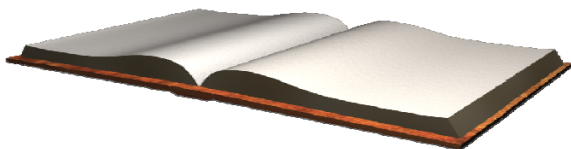
When considering students in your class that are ELL, what is already in the lesson to meet their needs? The activity is concrete and visual, and students are asked to record their findings. To add to this, if needed for better understanding, the teacher could pre-teach vocabulary like “permanent” and “change”. Another method of differentiating might be to give the student paper so they could follow along with the demonstration. By making these minor adjustments, the teacher is insuring the information and concept acquisition. By allowing the gifted student to speculate about the questions and providing them an opportunity to share their ideas either orally or in writing can assist in engaging this student too.

Effective differentiation does not require the teacher to change all that they have always done in the classroom. We must remember that differentiation is a way of thinking about teaching and learning. Responding proactively to the needs of the students requires careful evaluation of the prepared CSCOPE lesson.

Sources:

1. *Levine, Mel (2002). A Mind at a Time. New York: Simon & Schuster.*
2. *Taylor, Lorraine; Catharine Whittaker (2003). Bridging Multiple Worlds: Case Studies of Diverse Educational Communities. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.*
3. *Tomlinson, Carol (2001). How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms (2nd edition). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.*

**TALA Stipends for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>,  
and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers!**



**Middle School Teachers!** TEXAS  
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Learn successful academic literacy routines  
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Summer 2009  
Contact your regional education service center to register today!

## Growing Writers in Writing Workshop

Writing workshop is a regularly scheduled time for students to have the opportunity to practice and polish their writing while making meaningful choices and receiving positive feedback in a low-risk, supportive environment. This instructional feedback, or response, can be from classmates as well as from the teacher. The writing in which the students are engaged has authentic purposes and authentic audiences. Students know that they will have an audience and, thus, try to anticipate what those readers will want and need in order to enjoy and follow the writing.

Students arrive in language arts classrooms with writing skills that span the academic continuum. The framework of a daily writing workshop allows teachers to differentiate their instruction to meet the wide range of students' writing abilities. Unfortunately, there is no short-cut! Students must grow and stretch as writers by emulating modeled writing and by taking risks with their own writing.

We [sometimes](#) panic because most of our students' writing at the beginning of the year doesn't remotely resemble the writing that is described in our state standards. You see, standards are written with year-long goals in mind. When many of our students' drafts and district benchmark tests are filled with incomplete sentences, misspellings galore, run-on sentences, and questionable punctuation, it is easy to get overwhelmed and not to know where to start. Considering both short- and long-term goals for our students will help to chart the course to proficiency in written expression. The supportive, enriching, and differentiated instruction that takes place in a writing workshop environment can move the student along their individual development as a writer.

**Components of Writing Workshop.** The components of the writing workshop often include the following:

- Predictable time devoted to writing (daily routine)

- Writing process

  - pre-writing, drafting, sharing, revising, editing, and publishing

- Teacher as writer (modeling using think-alouds)

- Mini-Lessons\* – 10 minute whole-class lessons

  - Procedures

  - Expectations

  - Resources

  - Author's craft lessons

  - Grammar lessons

- Writing systems such as folders or notebooks and portfolios

- Small group lessons

- Writing conferences (teacher and student)

- Peer writing conferences (student and student)

- Editing teams

- Mentor texts (books used to inspire and model writing)

- Author's chair

- Whole group sharing

\***What is a mini-lesson and why are they "mini?"** Mini-lessons are short, focused, and direct, teacher-led lessons which are kept short because the bulk of a student's learning takes

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place when he or she is given time to practice and/or apply the recently-introduced skill or strategy. Mini-lesson throughout the school year can address topics of procedures and routines, revision strategies, author's craft, grammar and conventions. Teacher tip: Set a timer to remind you when 10 minutes is up.

<b>Structure of the Writing Workshop</b>	
[Time Frame: 4 - 5 times/week; 60 minute sessions]	
Mini-Lessons (Whole class - 10 minutes)	
Writing Time (35 minutes)	
Drafting	Peer conferencing
Revision	Editing
Publishing	Conferences with teacher
Sharing (Whole class – 15 minutes)	

**Benefits of Writing Workshop.** Student engagement is high in a writing workshop classroom due to student choice and the active learning that is required. The teacher can orchestrate opportunities for students to engage in authentic writing with specific purposes and an intended audience. Teachers can also create safe learning environments where students of varying abilities can work side by side and learn from each other. Once students get positive feedback to their drafts from peers as well as the teacher, motivation increases and there is a satisfaction of belonging to a writing community. Teachers who write for their students and with their students model the writing process – out loud – and explicitly display the problem-solving approach that writing an organized, focused, and well-crafted piece demands. Finally, one of the benefits of using a workshop approach to writing that often comes as a surprise to teachers is that you get to know your students on a much deeper level than before. And getting to know your students better has a positive effect across the board!

Want to learn more about writing workshop? The following books are excellent resources:

1. Writing Workshop - The Essential Guide by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi
2. When Writing Workshop Isn't Working by Mark Overmeyer
3. The Art of Teaching Writing by Lucy Caulkins
4. In the Middle by Nanci Atwell



**CSCOPE State Conference for Teachers**  
San Antonio, Texas  
June 23 and 24, 2009



For more details, go to  
<http://www5.esc13.net/cscope/cscopeconference/index.html>.

**Hope to see you there!**



## Sixth Six Weeks Preview

# English Language Arts



**Kindergarten. Beginning to Find My Way.** As kindergarten students head toward a new beginning in first grade, they take stock of what they have learned about reading and writing; using sounds; and learning spelling patterns and word families. They use their new reading and writing skills to conduct basic research. They observe, gather information, and record and dictate questions as part of their investigation. Students then draw conclusions from the information gathered and report the findings from their investigation. They publish their research findings incorporating written text, illustration, and technology.

**First Grade. Relationships in My World.** By the end of first grade, students are becoming strategic readers who know how to apply specific strategies before, during, and after reading. While reading narratives, they deepen understanding by making text to self connections. They use context to identify and build new vocabulary. Students conduct basic research by generating simple questions to interview others on a topic. They use a variety of resources such as the internet, texts, people and experiences to gather information. They compile the information and communicate their discoveries through oral, written and visual presentation.

State Resources: 1st Grade Teacher Reading Academy

- Section 6: Alphabetic Principle, Word Study, and Spelling; Word Study Strategies
- Section 8: Comprehension; Comprehension Strategies

**Second Grade. My World of Patterns.** Readers are aware of the features of text which make writing effective. They are able to identify and analyze the specific purpose and audience the author is targeting. Students explore effective features in writing to entertain, specifically in poetry and in writing to persuade. They continue to use the research skills learned in the last unit to gather information to make a persuasive argument. Writing to persuade may take a variety of forms and may be presented through different media. As students write to persuade, they follow the five phases of the writing process to develop their final products.

**Third Grade. The Complete Puzzle.** Readers are able to interpret and understand stories if they comprehend how the author organizes or structures the text. Readers use the structure of narrative texts to identify the information necessary for creating meaning. Authors use descriptive and figurative language in developing a story. Figurative language helps the reader to construct deeper meaning through the use of imagery. This leads to an understanding and appreciation of narrative texts or stories and makes the literature come alive. As readers the students develop an awareness of their own thinking and how to use strategies to help them with comprehension. As writers the students begin to apply the author's craft in creating personal stories and descriptions of personal experiences.

**Fourth Grade. The Panoramic View.** Interpretation of past events can be like a good story. Good historians try to make sense of the past in order to help us see aspects which we would not be able to find on our own. Historians have different perspectives about the past and may interpret events and human behavior based on their own values and beliefs. For this reason, students need to be able to analyze the different types of sources and/or texts, both primary and secondary, to critically evaluate a historian's interpretation of the past. Students use the research process to become independent and responsible learners by accessing and gathering

*Reminder.* The ongoing, or process, ELA TEKS do not appear on the IFD or in the Exemplar Lessons. Be sure to check your TEKS Verification to determine in which six weeks these are taught.



## Sixth Six Weeks Preview

# English Language Arts



information. They develop questions about their topic to direct their research. They set goals consistent with the theme, the topic, and attainable resources. They present their findings through oral and written formats supported by technology and media.

**Fifth Grade. Making a Difference.** Modern communication demands interpretation of much more than simply print media. Visual image makers not only present information, they also influence others' thinking. Exploring and analyzing media for persuasive techniques allows students to examine their own beliefs, behaviors and judgment. As fifth grade students reflect on the influences and changes they have experienced this academic year, they express and interpret their memories in ways that include print and visual media.

**Sixth Grade. Into a Brave New World.** This unit provides students with opportunities to reflect upon and practice previously learned knowledge and skills through the viewing and representing student expectations. Students will read a piece of literature and adapt it into a script that will be read in a Reader's Theater. They will then develop media to present the story from the script.

**Seventh Grade. How to Win Friends and Influence People.** The ability to conduct basic research is a lifelong skill. Learning to set up an investigation, gathering information and data from varied sources, and then synthesizing the findings results in a clear understanding of a topic or issue. Communicating that understanding is the end result of the research process. Students must be able to use technology and media tools to produce research projects. As students come to the end of seventh grade, it is time to reflect on how people, pieces of literature, and events in their world have influenced them, and how they have influenced others. Students use writing to express these connections and compare them to others' connections.

**Eighth Grade. Insights.** This unit combines and applies skills learned throughout the year: understanding fact and opinion, taking relevant notes, determining the reliability of sources, drawing conclusions about what is read, comparing and contrasting information from different sources. Researching an interesting topic can be a highly motivating and creative endeavor. Although students learn and apply traditional research procedures, they can take the process and results in different directions through creative interpretations. New insights may occur as students step beyond the traditional and seek new ways of perceiving a topic, a theory, or an unanswered question.

**English I. Appeals in the Media.** Vast numbers of people depend upon mainstream media as an important source for their information, and the media help to shape their perceptions and beliefs about reality. It is worth looking at what the media presents, how it does so, and what factors affect the way it is created. In this unit, students will analyze the credibility of sources and the use of artistic techniques in order to create products that exemplify understanding of how these elements work together to create meaning.

State Resources: Media Literacy Training

[http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary\\_TEKS\\_se.asp](http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary_TEKS_se.asp)

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# English Language Arts



**English II. Conversations with the Media.** With a focus on credibility, the integration of reading, writing, and presentation skills allows students the opportunity to further explore effective communication strategies. This unit will serve as a culminating experience for students to fine-tune their understanding of organizational skills and the application of varied media to communicate with purpose and perspective. As students reflect upon their own personal experiences, affords they make relevant connections to real world events and situations.

State Resources: Media Literacy Training

[http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary\\_TEKS\\_se.asp](http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary_TEKS_se.asp)

**English III. Evaluating Appeals in the Media.** The TEKS bundle in this unit focuses on increasing students' media literacy skills in evaluating the media's credibility and use of design to convey ideas, beliefs, values, and points of view. Students apply these skills in creating, revising, and presenting individually created media products reflecting on personal and academic learning.

State Resources: Media Literacy Training

[http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary\\_TEKS\\_se.asp](http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary_TEKS_se.asp)

**English IV. Convincing Others.** Critical thinkers analyze media for perspective and credibility and then use their conclusions to make their own multimedia projects. In this final unit of study students create and present a poignant, memorable multimedia production representing their high school experiences. The product, a credible representation of their academic experience and other relevant experiences, synthesizes the importance of looking back, looking ahead, and taking stock of where they are and where they are going. The final project is designed, created and presented in the multimedia format that best expresses the message students want to communicate to future college admissions counselors, employers, or to others in their future plans.

State Resources: Media Literacy Training

[http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary\\_TEKS\\_se.asp](http://www.texasreading.org/utclra/materials/secondary_TEKS_se.asp)

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**Have questions about the newsletter? Contact your Education Service Center.**

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