

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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Questions?

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 process, a journey through which individuals and/or groups can seek paths to accomplish great things for student learning.

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

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, 2nd 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.

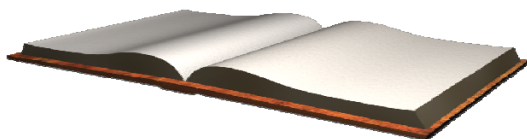
When considering students in your class that are ELL, what is already in the lesson to meet their needs? The activity is concrete and visual, and students are asked to record their findings. To add to this, if needed for better understanding, the teacher could pre-teach vocabulary like “permanent” and “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 6th,
7th, and 8th Grade**



Middle School Teachers! Learn successful academic literacy routines as part of an effective RtI model!

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Summer 2009
Contact your regional education service center to register today!



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

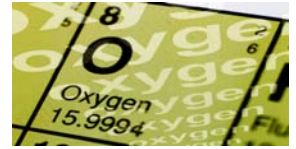


For more details, go to
<http://www5.esc13.net/cscope/cscopeconference/index.html>.

Hope to see you there!



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview



Science

Kindergarten

Unit 11: Exploring Organisms and Their Environment (Life in a Tree) Kindergarten students 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.

Unit 12: A Final Look at Patterns, Cycles and Changes

In Unit 12, students will participate in hands on activities with patterns, cycles, and changes.

First Grade

Unit 10: Investigating Organisms: Interactions, Interdependence, and Change

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. 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?"

Unit 11: A Final Look At Weather and Seasons

Students will be able to explore the changes that occur in weather over time. This unit is the culmination of the other weather units throughout the year. They will explore the difference in the amount of heat absorbed by different colors. Finally, they will look for patterns in the weather data collected all year. Students will discuss and review what they have learned about the four seasons. In small groups, they will discuss one season with respect to sights, sounds, smells and touch.

Second Grade

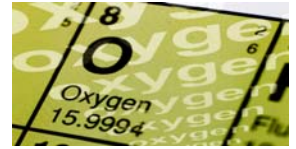
Unit 10: Animals

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.



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview

Science



Third Grade

Unit 08: Investigating Ecosystems

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

Unit 08: Comparative Adaptations

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.

Unit 09: Metamorphosis

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

Unit 09: Experimental Design

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

Unit 11: Properties of the Solar System

Students will explore our solar system by learning about the characteristics of the sun, moon, meteorites, asteroids and the moon. In the second lesson, students will use their background knowledge to study how to identify characteristics of the planets.

Unit 12: Space Travel

Students' mission, should they choose to accept it: Space Project Mission to Mars. Students will become space vehicle experts by working together as a final design team. They will compile research, build, describe and present information about the types of equipment and transportation needed for space travel.



6th Six Weeks Lesson Preview

Science



Seventh Grade

Unit 10: Chemical Reactions and Compounds

The focus of this six weeks is on 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.

Unit 11: Physical Properties and the Periodic Table

Students will examine properties of metals and nonmetals. The properties of metalloids will also be discussed. Students will look at patterns to determine where an element should be placed on the periodic table. They will also focus on the correlation of the physical properties of elements and how the properties are used to position the elements on the table. Students will then look at patterns of properties to determine where an element should be placed on the periodic table.

Eighth Grade

Unit 13: Universe: Explorations

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.

Unit 14: Experimental Design

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

Unit 12: Animal Kingdom and Dissections

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



Chemistry

Unit 13: Acids and Bases

Students will focus on the properties and behaviors of acids and bases. Students will participate in hands-on investigations with a simple titration involving counting drops, the standardization of NaOH, and they will use the titration technique to compare different brands of vinegar.

Unit 14: Oxidation/Reduction

This lesson includes hands-on activities that demonstrate chemical reactions that can be classified as redox reactions. The activities include the oxidizing of metals and the properties of bleach.

Unit 15: Nuclear Chemistry

This unit uses models to demonstrate concepts of nuclear chemistry. A research project is assigned to cover some of the technical and social aspects of the applications of nuclear chemistry.

IPC

Unit 11: Electricity

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.

Unit 12: Waves

Students begin Unit 12 by reviewing waves and will then transition to learning about wave application. Students will explore how waves are used and how they affect our daily lives.

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

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