Implementing A Comprehensive Model to Improve Literacy

Rockdale County Public Schools

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Agenda

RCPS Strategic Plan & Literacy Goals
Implementation of ThinkCERCA
Usage & Results
Challenges & Successes

What do these numbers represent?
Student Population Percentages by Ethnic Subgroups

- Total Student Population: 16,529
- Total Economically Disadvantaged Rate: 72%

Who is Rockdale County?

ThinkCERCA: A Comprehensive Approach to Literacy Across the Curriculum

- ELA
- Social Studies
- Science
- Math
- Differentiated Curriculum
- Close Reading Instruction
- Academic Writing Instruction
- ELD Supports
- Speaking and Listening Practice
- Assessment Preparation
- Data-driven Instruction

RCPS Strategic Plan for improving teaching and learning across the district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard for Quality</th>
<th>World Class Teaching and Learning</th>
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<td>Action Plan</td>
<td>2.A.7 – Provide consistently engaging and relevant instruction for all students.</td>
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Why We Chose ThinkCERCA

- Provides writing units for all three writing types: Narrative (Grades 3-8), Opinion (3-5)/Argumentative (6-8), Informative/Explanatory (Grades 3-8)
- Provides direct instruction and basic application lessons (reading, writing, and language)
- All writing units require students to write in response to reading either one or two (paired) passages
- Provides customized, timed writing practice for state assessment
- On-Demand Support (Reports, Curriculum, Technology, PD)

ThinkCERCA Lesson Types

Direct Instruction
- Scaffolded lessons that walk students through the process of using textual evidence to support their understanding and composition of informational, argumentative, and narrative writing.

Embedded Skills Instruction
- Interactive lessons that provide grade-level instruction and practice in critical literacy skills. Include scaffolded checks and assessments for measuring understanding.

Writing Lessons
- Scaffolded lessons that walk students through the process of using textual evidence to support their understanding and composition of informational, argumentative, and narrative writing.

Writing Lesson

Uniform or Dress Code: There’s a Difference

I attended both grade school and high school at a school that had a very strict uniform policy. The boys had to wear button-down shirts, ties, and slacks that were tailored and pressed every day. Both boys and girls had to wear a very clean version of high school attire. But, this was the only wardrobe choice they got to make on their own.

I do realize that uniforms can be a great thing. A 2012 international study on student discipline had some interesting results.
ThinkCERCA: Lesson Flow

Activity

Lesson 1: Topic Overview; Direct Instruction or Skills Lessons
Lesson 2: Writing Lesson: Steps 1-3
Lesson 3: Writing Lesson: Steps 4-5
Lesson 4: Writing Lesson: Steps 6
Lesson 5: Speaking & Listening Activities

Resource

Tech Access

Activity

Lesson 1: Topic Overview; Direct Instruction or Skills Lessons
Lesson 2: Writing Lesson: Steps 1-3
Lesson 3: Writing Lesson: Steps 4-5
Lesson 4: Writing Lesson: Steps 6
Lesson 5: Speaking & Listening Activities

Implementation

A Plan for Growth

7+ Writing Lessons Per student with student collaboration & feedback

Significant Growth

(1.5 - 2.5 years according to recent studies)
Communicated Usage
Expectations

Coherent Curricular Experiences

ThinkCERCA Curriculum Connections, Grade 6

Students who write a formal argument at least once a month across subjects can achieve two years of growth per year. Reading, writing, and argumentation across subjects helps students become college and career ready.

The suggestions below are based on your curriculum’s themes, topics, skills, standards, and more. ThinkCERCA provides ideas and a pacing chart for you to find additional lessons to connect with your curriculum.

Students should complete 15 Writing Lessons throughout the year across content areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Usage Expectations</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Quarter</td>
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<td>Second Quarter</td>
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<td>Third Quarter</td>
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<td>Fourth Quarter</td>
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Key Implementation Essentials

For Leadership (district and/or building):
- Provide PL for building admin
- Create a pacing guide
- Model lessons (coaches)
- Conduct learning walks
- Provide release time and a protocol for scoring
- Provide instructional resources to address data
- Assign customized mock writing assessments
- Frequent communication to teachers
- Budget for resources in needs assessment

For Teachers:
- Be engaging
- Select writing lessons as PLC
- Stress the writing type
- Guide students through each step
- Teach students how to dissect a prompt
- Provide off-line pre-writing activities
- Create a conducive classroom environment
- Participate in collaborative scoring sessions
- Give timely feedback and opportunities for revision
Does teenage brain development influence risk-taking behavior?

A teenager develops a part of the brain which leads them to taking more risks that could lead them to getting more awards because of the evolution of their brain. The way their brain works it could be what causes them to take their risks. When a teenager becomes a teenager they want to take more risks because they want to learn how to survive on their own. These actions are also triggered by hormones from the brain telling them that if they do this they will get a reward which makes you want to try something new for a reward.

Usage & Results

January
December
March

What does student writing progress look like?
(2018-2019)

December
January
March

Write an informative essay that explains how trees may discourage criminals from invading into some neighborhoods. Be sure to use information from BOTH passages in your informative essay.
There is something about trees that deters that some people believe that trees play a role in crime. Studies have shown that people tend to stay away from areas with large amounts of trees and shrubs. A study found that in neighborhoods with large amounts of trees, there were fewer crimes than in neighborhoods with less trees. This is because the trees create a feeling of security and prevent people from feeling vulnerable.

Trees can also affect crime rates by creating a sense of normalcy and routine. When people see trees in their neighborhood, they tend to feel safer and more secure. This can help to reduce the fear of crime, which can in turn reduce the actual crime rate. In neighborhoods with large amounts of trees, there were fewer crimes than in neighborhoods with less trees. This is because the trees create a feeling of security and prevent people from feeling vulnerable.

In addition to creating a sense of normalcy and routine, trees can also help to reduce crime by providing cover for law enforcement. When the police feel safe and secure in their environment, they are more likely to be effective in their duties. This can help to reduce the amount of crime that occurs in the area. In neighborhoods with large amounts of trees, there were fewer crimes than in neighborhoods with less trees. This is because the trees create a feeling of security and prevent people from feeling vulnerable.
7th Grade Student Writing Progress (Fall 2019)

Monday Writing: Little Things Are Big

Write a personal narrative that describes an important decision you made.

My biggest decision was when I was going to Europe for the summer and my grandparents were planning a trip to Europe for the summer. I didn't know what to do because I didn't have a chance to go. I had been planning this trip for a long time, but I didn't know how to make it happen. My parents said that they would pay for the trip, but I didn't have the money to go. I decided to make a decision and I decided to go to Europe. My parents helped me with the money and I was able to go on the trip. It was a great experience and I learned a lot about the world. I made an important decision and it changed my life.

November

7th Grade Student Writing Progress (Fall 2019)

November Writing: The Other Side of the Story

Write a personal narrative to describe a disagreement or fight you witnessed.

The other side of the story happened when I was walking home from school. I was walking with my friends when we saw some other kids fighting. We didn't want to get involved, but we couldn't just watch. We ended up getting into a fight with them. It was a big fight and we ended up getting in a lot of trouble. We learned a lesson and we didn't want to get involved again.

December

7th Grade Student Writing Progress (Fall 2019)

December Writing: A Company's Mission

Write a personal narrative to describe a disagreement or fight you witnessed.

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I was surprised of what he told me and I said, "I know you are, me and Rebekah were walking around then we stopped because we heard something and it turned out to be you and Alejandro and Raul and we heard both of ya’ll talking about how ya’ll were going to fight. But, it’s alright after all, we do need to put a stop to this. May the best group win." and he walked off and me, Rebekah and Jaymee were sitting down waiting for our food and then Raul came up to me and he told me, "Your group is going to lose." I said, "we’ll see. Do I have to reminder you my group has beat ya’ll before and we not afraid to beat ya’ll again." And Raul gulp and he walked off. Me and Rebekah we were sitting next to each other and Jaymee was sitting right in front of us and our food had already come so we were eating. Rebekah said, "I’m worried our group is going to lose. Our group is not as strong as before, we might lose." I told her, "Don’t worry we got this, we must believe in them. It doesn’t matter if we’re not as strong as before, we must defeat them." Then we ate, and then I went outside for a walk and we saw all the boys standing there waiting for the other group to show up, and I went up to them and I said, "Good luck boys." And they all said thank you. Me and Rebekah went very far away where we can see the fight but we not close to the fight where we get hurt and right after we left, Veronica’s group showed up. Veronica came up to me and Rebekah, but she didn’t say anything she just gave us a death stare and sat down.

Then the fight began, the boys started to fight, all the punches in faces, all the blood everywhere, I just couldn’t watch how both group hurting each other but, I didn’t bother to stop them, I just let them keep fighting.

Then, from a distance I saw Henry raging and then we fully went on attacking all 4 guys by himself, I was speechless. He was kicking, punching, and just in general he went all crazy on them, then the rest of the boys went to join him and the three crew happened and the boys from the other group were knocked down, and they gave up. Veronica just rolled her eyes and said, "I guess your luck made us win." Then he chuckled softly. I smiled.

Then all of us went to celebrate and we went to my house and we played games, we ate, we told jokes, we watched a movie, and finally we just chilled till they had to leave. Next Saturday, Me and Rebekah started walking around and we found ourselves with Veronica and she said, "I’m sorry about everything, I just wanted to hang out with ya’ll because I’m very lonely." Rebekah and I exchanged looks and then she said, "It’s ok but I don’t know if we want to hang out with you." And she said, "I understand." Then we went on walking and then we found the boys and we went to hang out with them. We were walking around with them and then we started playing a game and we were just having fun. We then got tired and just decided to hang out. Then the boys said, "Thanks for hanging out with us, Veronica. We appreciate it." Veronica just smiled and said, "Anytime, it was my pleasure." Then we all had a good time and decided to hang out again. Then next weekend, Veronica and me planned to go to the park and hang out. Veronica and I both agreed to meet at the park at 5pm and hang out for a while. Veronica and me both felt happy that we finally got to hang out and talk and get to know each other better.

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Challenges & Successes

- Emphasis on standards (not just test prep)
- Equitable instruction on all writing types
- Consistency in implementation
- Meeting scoring deadlines
- Technology integration
Successes

- Increase in scores
- Improved writing instruction
- Greater understanding of standards
- Teacher leader development
- Greater monitoring of instruction
- Collaboration across schools
- Increased student engagement
- Students revealed they were writing more than ever before!!

Next Steps & Lessons Learned

- Increase use of additional reading passages (in addition to 8 writing units).
- Implement ThinkCERCA in all (11) elementary schools during the FY20 school year.
- Finalize which high school model will be implemented during the FY21 school year.

Next Steps

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- Implement ThinkCERCA in all (11) elementary schools during the FY20 school year.
- Finalize which high school model will be implemented during the FY21 school year.
ThinkCERCA works with administrators to plan the initial rollout and reinforces throughout the school year to ensure goals are achieved.

ThinkCERCA helps align ThinkCERCA lessons by skills, theme or topic for coherent curricular plans.

ThinkCERCA provides resources for administrators and lead teachers to support implementation, reflect on best practices and share instructional strategies.

ThinkCERCA provides tools to help schools create schedules for implementation regardless of access.

Do you have built-in, professional collaboration time? How often?
Recommended at least once/month

Who will support you in the roll out of ThinkCERCA? How do you envision support for your teachers?
Grade level leaders, department chairs, lead teachers

How do you envision teacher collaboration with ThinkCERCA?

What is the process for onboarding the team with accounts & on-demand training videos?

How will we know ThinkCERCA is successful?

Which district departments should be included in conversations about progress throughout the year?

When is a technology lead at the district available to discuss automated rostering for accounts and classes? If there isn’t a lead, who is responsible for roster uploads?

What devices do your students use?

How often do students have access to these devices?

Who is responsible for creating the technology schedule?
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Q&A