22 Powerful Closure Activities
TODD FINLEY
DECEMBER 15, 2015

Too many university supervisors and administrators criticize the absence of lesson closure, a dubious assessment practice likely caused by the improper use of Madeline Hunter’s lesson plan model (PDF) as a de facto checklist of eight mandatory teaching practices -- anticipatory set, objective and purpose, input, modeling, checking for understanding, guided practice, independent practice, and closure -- a custom that Hunter decried in 1985.

Although it offers multiple benefits, please don’t view closure as a professional must-do.
Click here to read more: http://www.edutopia.org

Early Childhood News

Happy New Year! This month in Early Childhood we are introducing IStation Math! This component of Istation is now available for all students. Istation Math parallels Istation Reading in many aspects including reports, teacher station activities and small group instruction activities. Students in grade levels Kindergarten through 8th Grade will be able to gain access using their current username and password to take a diagnostic assessment that will place them into the skill level appropriate for their learning. After students take the assessment students will move directly into the lessons.

Teachers will have access to data reports that will help with student grouping and teacher directed interventions to use with those groups.

Follow the steps below to begin using Istation Math with your students:

IStation provides us with great Tier 1, 2 and 3 instructional resources. This means we can truly differentiate for students in all levels. Let’s make an effort to use this wonderful resource to its full capacity.

Please join us in understanding all of the components and resources made available by Istation in our next Istation Training.

Don’t forget to sign up on the Staff Development Website:
January 7, 2016
4:00-6:00 pm
The teacher evaluation instrument is changing statewide in 2016-2017 and we’re getting prepared for the new Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System or T-TESS. As part of this transition all ILD certified administrators will need to attend a three-day T-TESS training session to prepare for the 2016-2017 school year. The following sessions have been added to the staff development website under the course code T-TESS. Principals need to register for the appropriate session specifically for principals and directors for June 8-10. All other district administrators may register for the concurrent session offered June 8-10, 2016 or the session offered June 13-15, 2016. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Holly Fields, School Improvement Officer at hfields@sisd.net or at 915-937-0277.

### TX SSI Online resources

The TEA has released the following information:

An evaluation team comprised of TEA staff and district representatives reviewed the submissions and selected **Think Through Math (TTM)** as the provider for Texas SUCCESs math resources for grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and Algebra I.

The evaluation team selected reading resources, as well. The following programs will be available for district use in accelerated reading instruction:

- Grades 3-5 reading—**Istation**
- Grades 6-8 reading—**Compass Learning and Istation**
- English I and II—**Apex Learning**

The full correspondence can be viewed here: [http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage_wide.aspx?id=25769824546](http://tea.texas.gov/interiorpage_wide.aspx?id=25769824546)

We will send provide additional information as it becomes available regarding the implementation of these programs.

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### Advanced Academics

#### Upcoming Trainings for GT, AVID, DI, and UIL

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<tr>
<th>Professional Development Title</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>GT Coordinator Meeting</td>
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<td>GT Parent Meeting</td>
<td>January 20, 2016</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 pm</td>
<td>DSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature and Needs of Gifted and Talented Learners</td>
<td>January 23, 2016</td>
<td>7:00-2:00 pm</td>
<td>ONLINE</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVID College Readiness System</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVID Campus Coordinator Meeting</td>
<td>January 11, 2016</td>
<td>4:30-6:00 pm</td>
<td>Montwood HS</td>
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#### Academic Contest Corner:

| Destination Imagination Instant Challenge Workshop (for students) | January 16, 2016 | 8:00-12:30 pm | Eastlake HS |
| Team Manager Training with Sue Shanks, Texas Destination Imagination State Director | January 16, 2016 | 8:30-12:00 pm | Eastlake HS |
| SSD Super and Speech Slam                                     | January 23, 2016 | 9:00-1:00 pm  | Eastlake HS |
| Academic Decathlon Regional                                   | January 29, 2016 | 1:00-10:00 pm | Ysleta HS  |
| Academic Decathlon Regional                                   | January 30, 2016 | 8:00-8:00 pm  | Ysleta HS  |

#### Academic Contest Corner:

Get ready for the 2016 Young Achiever’s Forum.... Last year, more than 900 area sixth grade students participated thanks to your district’s efforts. This year’s Young Achievers Forum will take place on Saturday, February 20 from 8:00 am to 2:30 pm at the University of Texas at El Paso in the Magoffin Auditorium. **More information will be coming soon!**

### UIL announces statewide Robotics program

The University Interscholastic League will host the first ever UIL robotics pilot program to begin during the 2015-2016 academic school year. For more information regarding the UIL robotics pilot, visit [www.uiltexas.org/academics/stem/robotics](http://www.uiltexas.org/academics/stem/robotics) Go #TeamSISD!!
Career and Technology

What is NATEF and why is it important to the Automotive Programs in Socorro ISD?

Founded in 1983 as an independent, non-profit 501(c) (3) organization the mission of the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF) is to improve the quality of automotive technician training programs nationwide at secondary and post-secondary, public and proprietary schools. To accomplish this mission, NATEF examines the structure, resources and quality of training programs and evaluates them against standards established by the industry. These standards reflect the skills that students must master to be successful in the industry. NATEF also works with students to increase career awareness opportunities in the automotive repair industry.

Socorro first certified its programs through NATEF in 2011 and then each program must recertify every five years to maintain its credentials. The program that Socorro is being accredited for the next five years has changed from the four core areas of “Brakes”, “Steering and Suspension”, “Engine Performance” and “Automotive Electric” to a more integrated program called “Automotive Maintenance and Light Duty Repair”. Areas addressed are the instructor’s current industry credentials, curriculum, facility, tools and equipment, and documentation/artifacts that indicate the students are receiving the instruction required through the certification.

Although automotive technicians cannot test for their Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications prior to the completion of two years of work experience, our students enrolled in education programs through a NATEF certified program can test for the NATEF Junior ASE certification.

The SISD Automotive programs are located at Socorro, Americas, and El Dorado high schools. Students from Montwood, Eastlake and Pebble Hills who are interested in Automotive Service Repair can apply to attend the Advanced Automotive Program that is currently being housed at Socorro high school.

To learn more about NATEF, go to [www.natef.org](http://www.natef.org).

Socorro ISD Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Officer Installation Ceremony

This year marks the 32nd annual CTSO Officer Induction for Socorro ISD. Students, parents and teachers from around the district met at the Socorro HS Auditorium on Wednesday, December 2nd to be officially inducted as an officer of their campus CTSO program. The event was held at Socorro high school. The pre-induction entertainment was provided by the El Dorado Mariachi and the opening ceremony was conducted by the El Dorado ROTC and Choir. Refreshments were provided by the Culinary Arts programs of each of the five high schools. Students from Socorro, Montwood, Americas, Mission ECHS, El Dorado, Eastlake, and Pebble Hills high schools were inducted. There are approximately 2000 SISD students who participate in Career and Technical Student Associations Organizations each year. The following organizations that SISD CTE endorses and supports are:

- Business Professionals of Americas (BPA)
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Skills USA
- Family, Career, Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
- Skills USA
- Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA)
- Technology Student Association (TSA)
- Texas Association for Future Educators (TAFE)
- National Technical Honor Society (NTHS)

I would like to thank the CTE teachers from El Dorado who helped in organizing and Ms. Louisa Valenzuela who coordinated this annual event.
Elementary Initiatives:

Differentiation in Math instruction

Carol Ann Tomlinson in The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners encourages educators to look at teaching and learning in a new way. Using the phrase “One size doesn’t fit all,” she presents, not a recipe for teaching, but a philosophy of educational beliefs:

• Students must be seen as individuals. While students are assigned grade levels by age, they differ in their readiness to learn, their interests, and their style of learning.
• These differences are significant enough to require teachers to make accommodations and differentiate by content, process, and student products. Curriculum tells us what to teach; differentiation gives us strategies to make teaching more successful.
• Students learn best when connections are made between the curriculum, student interests, and students’ previous learning experiences.
• Students should be given the opportunity to work in flexible groups. Different lessons point toward grouping students in different ways: individually, heterogeneously, homogeneously, in a whole group, by student interests, and so forth.
• There should be on-going assessment—assessment can be used to help plan effective instruction.

Focus of the Month:
Implementing technology in math

Social Studies News

Elementary

Integrating Social Studies and ELAR is a great way to “kill two birds with one stone,” especially since many of the Social Studies Process Standards align with Figure 19. Careful planning can lead to successful activities where students learn writing skills and social studies facts at the same time.

Station Idea of the Month: Mapping Skill
Have students write a Procedural Text on how to get from one place to another, be it buildings inside the community, cities within the state, or cities throughout the country! Students can then research that new location and write an expository text on it.

This month in history:
Did you know...? On January 15, Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was a civil rights leader who stressed nonviolent demonstrations. In 1964, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. Four years later, he was assassinated. We honor his legacy every year on the third Monday in January. On January 28, the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded only 74 seconds into its flight. All seven crew members died.
5 Easy Steps to Teaching Vocabulary Development in Social Studies

As we move into the next phase of curriculum development in Social Studies across Socorro ISD, it would help us to remember some of the basic steps that will become the focus for part 2 of our series on “Second Language Acquisition for Secondary Social Studies Students (SLA for S4).” The second, 3-part series, will focus around strategies toward teaching vocabulary development through a 5-step process.

Step 1: Identify the academic language you want students to learn.

This step is important because we oftentimes take it for granted that students know certain terms without actually analyzing whether or not we think it would be beneficial to teach such terms. With an infinite number of resources, there are plenty of things that we can be doing to focus our teaching in Social Studies around specific vocabulary – the first step in doing so is to focus on the right words.

Step 2: Tier the academic language.

Our tendency as Social Studies teachers is to focus on unit specific academic language focused on Social Studies – oftentimes termed Tier 3 language. However, sometimes our students do not understand the use of certain terms and how they apply to Social Studies specifically. These terms are oftentimes used across multiple content areas and have not always been taught explicitly in the classroom – these are oftentimes termed Tier 2 words. It is important for us to categorize words as Tier 2 or Tier 3 words in order to make a conscious effort to actively, purposefully, and explicitly ensure that ALL of our students are effectively learning and applying Tier 2 language.

Step 3: Define the academic language that you would like students to be able to apply.

There is something to be said for “looking up” words’ definitions. However, by the time that students are at the secondary level (grades 6 through 12), it is more important that students be able to apply the words’ definitions effectively. Therefore, it is in our best interest as teachers to provide a student-friendly definition of the words that we would like students to be able to apply any given day. As a teacher focuses on 5-7 words per day, it is important that some of those words be Tier 2, but it is also important that the students have an accurate definition that they can refer back to in order to apply the term appropriately. This means that the teacher may be responsible for providing them with materials, tools or verbalization of teacher-paraphrased definitions for key words.

Step 4: Have students apply the academic language purposefully.

Similar to the 3rd principle for creating effective second language learning environments in Cruz and Thornton’s (2013) Teaching Social Studies to English Language Learners, this step focuses now on ensuring that students are actively reading, writing, listening and speaking with the use of the specific academic language that you want them to learn. Whether it is something as simple as applying their knowledge of a word to fill-in-the-blank work (which should be timed and limited in terms of application), utilizing a specific group of words to a short-response prompt, or speaking specifically about how several academic language terms are connected to one another, students should be required to apply their terms purposefully in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Step 5: Determine whether or not the students applied the correct words through assessment.

Teachers should always go back and assess whether or not students are able to apply the different academic language terms appropriately and/or assess the degree to which they learned the word. The application of terms might have different purposes from exposure to its use through listening to the word in context, to its application in analysis to a subject that encompasses lots of facets. In any case, the teacher should always assess whether or not the students are using the words appropriately.
Elementary

In looking at our benchmark Reading scores, one TEKS that was repeatedly low across 3-5 was Figure 19E, which is summarizing information in text, maintaining meaning and logical order. There is one main way summarizing is tested, which requires students to think critically in choosing the best summary for the passage. Two answer choices can be easily dismissed, however, the other two will similar. Here are some ideas to incorporate in workstations or daily activities in the classroom.

My Book and Me
A mini book can be made out of several pieces of paper stapled together. On one side the title will be “My Book” and the other will have “Me”. As the students read a book or passage they will write facts about the book (who, what, when, where, why) on the “my book” side. On the “me side” they will write what the book makes them think of [making connections]. When they are finished with the book (or after each chapter) the student writes a summary using the fact they have already written, but sticking to the main parts of the story. The student can work collaboratively in teams or independently. Summaries can then shared with the class, helping students who are having trouble deciphering main points with details out by listening to other students work.

Comic Strip Summary
This activity works well in a workstation, but remember to model first. A book or passage can be assigned to the station or the story of the week can be used. A template can be created like the one shown to help students organize the main points of the story. A second template can be given to the students so they can start drawing and captioning their comic strip. The squares are then glued to a long piece of construction paper. Students work collaboratively and share their comic strips.

Secondary

January 2016

Empowering Writers for Special Populations
An Empowering Writers will be offered to 4th grade and 7th grade bilingual/ESL and special education teachers on January 14, 2016. Campus administrators will soon be provided with additional details regarding the logistics and participation for this session.

Exploring Expository Texts
Middle school and high school teachers will be provided with strategies to address expository texts on January 16, 2016 from 8:30-12:00 at the DSC.

Genre Spotlight

During the third nine weeks teachers will focus on having students make connections within and across texts. More importantly, however, teachers will have the opportunity to recap all genres.
Research and Evaluation Department

An A-F rating accountability system will take effect beginning with the 2017-18 school year. Indexes will be replaced with Domains. Each district and campus will be assigned an overall rating of A, B, C, D, or F and a rating for each domain. Here is a comparison of the current Index system vs. the domain system.

Please click on the links to view the 2015 Fall Readiness Model Reports and the presentation shared during Leadership.

Run a Quintile Report Today

Quintile Analysis Reports are used for analyzing the performance gap of students and the distribution scores by district or campus. The PDF report will display the performance of students on an individual assessment into five equal groups. Each quintile is then used to discuss the various student learning needs and plan for targeted instruction.

Users with District Data Viewer, Principal, and Teachers (linked to a SIS account) can create quintile reports by choosing Reports in the Analyze tab in Aware.

Click here for more information on how to pull Quintile Reports in Eduphoria Aware

Bilingual Buzz

We want to thank all of the campuses who participated in our Latino Family Literacy Project training. Please contact Liliana Carrillo at 937-1630 or lcam01@sisd.net if you have any questions regarding this wonderful opportunity to reach our parents. Our end of year acknowledgement ceremony for parents who complete the program will be May 18th! We look forward to this event.

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<th>Training</th>
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<td>Middle of year LPAC for Administrators</td>
<td>January 27, 2016</td>
<td>8:30-11:30 am 12:30-3:30 pm</td>
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Professional Development

We will be offering CPI Training **EVERY MONTH** for the 2015-16 school year. This will facilitate the opportunity for every campus to train their student crisis management teams.

Just as a reminder, every campus must have a student crisis management team that is currently certified in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (CPI) which should consist of (at minimum) one special education teacher, one general education teacher, and one administrator. Every campus will have specific needs and may have to train additional faculty or staff in order to best meet those campus issues or needs.

All training dates are currently posted on the Staff Development website. Each training date is restricted to **ONLY 40 PARTICIPANTS**, therefore it is best to register early. It is also recommended that if a campus plans to train a large number of people, they stagger their staff to attend different training dates throughout the year.

**CPI: Nonviolent Crisis Intervention**
- January 27, 2016
- March 23, 2016
- May 18, 2016

**Autism Spectrum Disorders: Applications of Nonviolent Crisis Intervention**
- February 24, 2016
- April 27, 2016

Attendance to and successful completion of any of the trainings listed above will certify that individual in CPI for one calendar year.

**What Teachers Should Know and Do:**
Meet with your General Education Teachers in order to:
- Interpret the IEP.
- Review accommodations/modifications/PLAAFPS/goals and/or objectives/BIPs and any assistive technology.
- Create student/learner profile.
- Make sure that ARD dates, for the year, are scheduled and communicated to the appropriate personnel.
- Draft goals/objectives, which should be provided to parents 10 days before the scheduled ARD.

**Experience & Learning Pyramid**
The District/Campus Improvement Plan (DIP/CIP) is the blueprint by which district/campus staff members work to improve the academic performance of all students, serving also as a primary audit document for the expenditure of state and federal funds. Quite simply, it’s a document that demonstrates what you do for your students to help them succeed and how you use your funding to do so!

Campus teams should deliberate on the mid-year state of each of their CIP strategies and provide feedback in the Formative Evaluation document, which you have already received. Your completed Formative Evaluation should be submitted to Oscar Leza at oleza@sisd.net no later than January 29, 2016. The document will be attached to your online CIP, publicly viewable by auditor and community member alike.

A great big “Thank You” to the following campuses for submitting their signed Statement of Assurance (SOA)! If your campus has not yet done so, please submit as soon as possible.

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<th>Campus That have Submitted SOAs</th>
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If you have any questions, please feel free to call Oscar Leza at the Department of State and Federal Programs at 915.937.1603.