

CSCOPE Teacher and Parent Q & A

1. What is CSCOPE?

CSCOPE is a comprehensive, customizable, user friendly curriculum management system built on the most current research-based practices in the field. Its primary focus is to impact instructional practices in the classroom to improve student performance. This multi-faceted system includes three key components that operate seamlessly:

- Professional Development
- Curriculum & Assessment
- Innovative Technology

2. What is curriculum?

Curriculum is what we teach, when we should teach it and why. The "**what**" is the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). In CSCOPE it is the Vertical Alignment Documents and Instructional Focus Documents. The "**when**" is the effective sequencing of instruction. In CSCOPE it is the Year at a Glance Document and Instructional Focus Document. The "**why**" is the performance standard.

3. What is instruction?

Instruction is the "**how**" portion of teaching. Teachers have the flexibility, freedom and control of how they present knowledge and information to their students. The "**what**", "**when**" and "**why**" is non-negotiable, but the "**how**" is negotiable as long as the students are successful with the performance indicator.

4. How much flexibility do teachers have with CSCOPE?

CSCOPE is not a textbook, but should be supplemented just like we would do with a textbook. The CSCOPE documents (YAG, VAD, TEKS verification Matrix and IFDs) identify what must be taught and when. This is the "what" and "why" portion of CSCOPE that is non-negotiable and must be followed. The CSCOPE lessons are examples of the depth and rigor necessary to improve students' math and science skills from one grade level to the next. Teachers have the opportunity to bring in other materials, resources and activities that have proven to be successful in the past as long as they fit into the alignment of the CSCOPE documents. These activities must meet or exceed the performance indicator identified in the Instructional Focus Documents.

5. Why does CSCOPE take so much time?

Any new curriculum will require more time to implement the first year. Because the lessons and activities are student centered, it does require a lot of extra time to plan and prepare for instruction. After this first year, CSCOPE will get easier.

6. What is the 5E model of instruction?

The CSCOPE lessons are based on the 5E model of instruction. 5E stands for: Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend/Elaborate, Evaluate. This is not a new concept, it is just a good teaching practice. Because 5E is a student centered approach to instruction, it is critical that classroom procedures and routines along with expectations for behavior are clearly identified and established by the teacher. Once these expectations are established, students will be ready for any type of instructional

approach. 5E utilizes a lot of hands on activities designed to promote students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. When students are engaged and challenged in the classroom, their opportunity for misbehavior is greatly diminished. This results in fewer student referrals to the office.

7. Why have there been some test questions on the assessments that don't match up with what was taught in the CSCOPE lesson?

The curriculum writers throughout the state are writing the lessons, but not the assessments. Region 13 oversees the math and science lessons, while Region 10 is responsible for writing the assessments. Region 10 pulled test items from the WebCCAT databank instead of developing test questions based on what was taught on the lessons. WebCCAT is available on our campuses for teachers who want a test bank to create or customize their own assessments based on TAKS formatted questions. **Questions on the assessments that are not relevant to the lesson should be marked out and not counted against the students.** Also, do not hesitate to add questions to the assessments that you feel are important to measure student progress. CSCOPE assessments should not be the only form of evaluation for measuring student progress. Other forms of assessment include group work, teacher observation, self evaluation, performance based assessments, project based assessments, or even portfolios.

8. Why are there misspellings and wrong numbers in the lessons and activity sheets?

We will never find a curriculum or textbook that is error free. The curriculum writers want to be sure that we have access to the lessons 6 weeks in advance. As a result, there have been errors with numbers and misspellings. Region 13 will move quickly to address content issues and make those corrections. These errors should be emailed to the service center and sent to the attention of Jennifer Drumm: Jennifer.Drumm@esc13.txed.net. When you see misspellings or wrong numbers, correct these and move on.

9. What about homework with CSCOPE?

CSCOPE identifies the K-12 alignment and provides sample lessons for teachers to use. Since it does not provide the volume of resources familiar with textbook publishers, teachers will have to ensure that students and parents are provided with resources and instructions for any type of work to be completed at home. Homework or independent practice is assigned based on individual students' performance in guided practice and should reinforce the learning at the instructional level. As you know, assigning independent practice at a frustrational level is counterproductive and actually can inhibit student learning. Likewise assigning homework that the student can already do (even prior to instruction) is seen as busy work and contributes nothing to the learning. CSCOPE affords teachers the opportunity to design independent practice based on individual students' needs. Teachers are in the best position to make appropriate assignments based on student strengths and weaknesses and are encouraged to do so.

10. Why have student grades on common assessments been lower?

Because the CSCOPE assessments have not matched 100% with the lessons, there have been questions that students have missed. Teachers are to identify questions that are not relevant to the lesson and remove them from the test. Students should never be responsible for information that has not been presented to them. If students do not understand the material that was taught, re-teaching should occur.

11. Why doesn't CSCOPE provide more practice problems?

Since CSCOPE is not a textbook, additional practice problems will have to be created or pulled from other available resources.

12. How has CScope affected grades during the first six weeks of implementation?

When grades for the first six weeks, fall 2008, are compared to the grades for first six weeks, fall 2007, each core subject area at each grade level shows fewer failures than last year with a few exceptions. Here are significant findings:

- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade failures are down in every core area
- 4th grade has slightly more failures in math and social studies
- 5th and 6th grades have slightly more failures in language
- 6th grade has slightly more failures in math
- 7th and 8th grade failures are down in every core area
- 9th grade has slightly more failures in social studies
- 10th grade failures are down in every core area
- 11th and 12th grades have slightly more failures in language
- 12th grade has slightly more failures in social studies

In summary, then, of 48 core subjects we did better in 39 of them than in the first six weeks of 2007.

13. Is CSCOPE proven?

Ervin Knezek, statewide CSCOPE coordinator, shares that schools who have **successfully** implemented CSCOPE have seen an increase in their campus ratings. Schools that have partially implemented CSCOPE have been able to maintain their campus ratings.

14. Is this the first year for CSCOPE?

No. CSCOPE has been around for a few years. This is the first full year of implementation for MWISD.

15. Which Regional Service Centers are supporting CSCOPE?

Region 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16, 19, 20 or half of the ESC sub the state.

16. How many schools are using CSCOPE?

There are many school districts in Regions 13 and 8 ESC areas that use CScope. We are affiliated with the curriculum through Region 10 who supports a number of districts in north central Texas, including Springtown and Decatur. Across the state last year, there were 262 districts and 1218 campuses using CSCOPE. This is

approximately 25% of the state. (Figures for this year, statewide, are unavailable at this time.)

17. What is the research base behind CSCOPE?

Curriculum Design, Standards, Instructional Design

- Robert Marzano
- Fenwick English
- Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe
- Heidi Hayes Jacobs
- John Crain
- James Barufaldi
- H. Lynn Erickson

Learning Theory

- Reuven Feurstein
- Lev Vygotsky

Professional Development

- Thomas Guskey
- Linda Hammon

18. Do the CSCOPE units build in review of the previous year?

It is by design that CSCOPE builds rather than separates review of prior year's content at the beginning of the school year. The approach is one of a spiraled curriculum. As such, we purposefully use on-grade level content to address the issue of building competency in the TEKS. Naturally, you may find students who would benefit from additional review and may have to supplement the lessons with additional time for specific interventions that will support their learning.

19. What does it mean when CSCOPE calls the lessons "exemplars"?

CSCOPE provides exemplar lessons to demonstrate the depth, breadth, and rigor of the clusters of specified student expectations taught in a particular unit. They are intended to be used as any other high quality teaching resource. Teachers can add to these lessons with other materials to allow students to achieve the standards clustered together in the instructional focus document. These exemplars contain the elements of learning to ensure that students have access to the rigor and content of the Instructional Focus Documents; however, they can and should be supplemented with other available resources.

20. How much flexibility do teachers have with the lessons?

The lessons are intended to be exemplars; professional judgment should determine the flexibility of implementation. If changes to the lessons are made, it is critical that the modifications are created to ensure student success on the performance indicators listed in the IFD.

21. How can we best use CSCOPE lessons for students who are not on grade level?

As much as possible, students will need to be taught on grade level because of the changing nature of the assessments. However, you can look at the vertical alignment documents ... determine the specificity for the grade level, then go back to the grade

level of the student performance and look at the specificity there to determine how best to scaffold that student's learning. A teacher can also access all grade levels within CSCOPE to investigate activities that might best fit the student's needs.

22. Why might it appear that the order of CSCOPE Algebra I is different from what teachers are used to seeing in textbooks?

While most traditional algebra courses take an algorithmic approach to algebra and solve equations earlier in the school year, CSCOPE takes a functional approach. Therefore the writers chose to develop the idea of relationships between variables in a real world situation before teaching how to solve equations. This approach is reflected in TEXTEAMS Algebra 2000 and Beyond, Mathematics TEKS Connection Grades 9-12, as well as many current textbook series. Students will officially solve equations in Algebra I in Unit 5 which is at the beginning of the 3rd six weeks. In 7th grade students are introduced to solving equations and 8th grade builds on that knowledge. So students have been exposed to solving equations in middle school and will get to it in Algebra I very soon.

23. How will the implementation of the new curriculum be monitored?

The administrative staff consisting of principals, assistant principals, program coordinators, and central office personnel will work with vertical alignment teams, grade levels/departments, as well as individual teachers to assist with the successful implementation of CSCOPE. Formal and informal walkthroughs and observations will be conducted by the entire administrative team.

24. How much is MWISD spending on the curriculum alignment effort?

In order to stay current with the demands of state accountability, MWISD must consider curriculum alignment activities as an ongoing expense. Teachers will be supported by budgets that allow them to purchase the necessary materials and supplies needed for successful implementation of the curriculum. The ESC contract for CSCOPE during the 2008-2009 school year is \$34,000. This is approximately \$9.00 per student. Keep in mind that there is also a price for MWISD if we don't align curriculum, for our scores will reflect weak alignment in the AEIS and AYP reports.

25. The CSCOPE lessons utilize a lot of manipulatives for hands-on activities. Will students be able to use these manipulatives on the state assessment test?

No. The Texas Education Agency does not allow the use of manipulatives on the state assessment tests, but the TEKS suggest the need for manipulatives.