**Literacy Initiative Scope and Sequence FAQ**

**Mixed Classes**

* What lesson should I teach if I have a mixed class (for example, 9th – 11th graders)?

*In mixed classes, you will only teach one grade level lesson. In general, it will be important for teachers to consider the level of students in their class to make their decision. For example, if you have a bunch of 9th graders and 10th graders and one 11th grader, it probably makes sense to teach the 10th grade lesson. As you are trying to determine what lesson to teach, talk to your department lead, instructional coaches and administrator to help you make the best decision for your class. If you are feeling as though the range of your students is extremely large, instructional coaches can help you plan your lesson to incorporate differentiated tasks and readings for your students. This is not expected, but might be a nice option depending on your needs.*

**Rigor**

* Is the 12th grade goal advanced enough?

*The 12th grade goal is the lowest level of writing that students would do in all of their classes as seniors. There are many classes where students will be writing full research papers or projects. It is not expected that you would lessen this expectation.*

* My 9th grade students could go all the way to the 12th grade lesson, can I do that in my lesson?

*9th grade students will likely go through all of the standards in the literacy lesson scope and sequence in their English classes. However, when you are doing the 9th grade lesson try to differentiate by providing more difficult texts, and more effective annotation and writing rather than pushing your students more quickly. Consider ways to integrate other strategies and student feedback to help students improve on the 9th grade skills.*

* How are we preparing our students to proficiently read technical text?

*Technical texts are an important element in a lot of classes. They are also an important element on many state tests. As you are teaching your subject area throughout the year, consider ways to incorporate manuals, textbooks, etc. into your lessons when they are appropriate. This doesn’t explicitly live in the literacy lessons, although it is possible to use technical texts for a literacy lesson depending on the reading. The more frequently teachers incorporate technical texts into their classes, the more proficient our students will be at reading them.*

***Evidence***

* What is evidence?

*Evidence looks different in different subject areas. In math, calculations are evidence and in science, a lab can be considered evidence. However, if you consider writing a thesis in college, you would not use ONLY calculations or labs to justify a stance. As such, it will be important to discuss “what is evidence for this class” at the 11th grade and 12th grade levels. It also means that evidence needs to include peer reviewed journals and other valid sources.*

* Are we citing? If so, how are we citing?

*If evidence is utilized to support a piece of writing, it should be cited. As a school, most of our teachers use MLA. Thus, if you aren’t sure what to use, MLA is probably the format students are most comfortable with and as a result, it might be a good default to use. Training will be provided to help in regards to this skill. There are many resources available online for this purpose as well including easybib.com, and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/). That being said, APA is often used at the college level and some of our classes use APA. If you already use a specific citation style, don’t change it. It is good experience for our students to use multiple styles if that more appropriately fits your class.*

**Article/Prompt**

* How should we select a prompt and article?

*You can start with an article and then write a prompt to accompany it, or start with a prompt and find an article that aligns. Lessons that work most effectively fit within the scope and sequence of the year for the teacher and students, rather than feeling like a stand-alone activity or lesson. Consider that as you are making your selections. Teachingtolerance.org has some great articles and a prompt creator that accompanies the texts. Coaches are happy to help you use that resource, write prompts, or find other sources to use in your class.*

* Where does numbering begin when we annotate?

*There is some dispute about this. However, as a building we had to make a decision around this and we WILL be numbering the title, author and source as #1 with the first actual paragraph as #2.*

**Terminology**

* What are claims? How are author’s claims different than claims when writing a sentence or paragraph?

*The difference between claims needs to be clearly communicated to students and teachers alike. Claims are defined as an assertion of the truth of something. An author’s claim would be the assertion that the author is making in their article, book, etc. A student’s claim (the claim piece of claim-evidence-commentary/reasoning) would be the assertion that the student is making in their piece of writing. It should align to the prompt for the writing.*

* Can we use commentary/reasoning instead of just commentary?

*Yes! If you find a location where it hasn’t been changed, let a coach know and we will change it.*

***Rubrics and Student Work***

* How is reasoning measured? How can we intentionally connect it to the literacy lessons?

*These are great questions. We will continue to look for meaningful ways to integrate reasoning into literacy lessons and we are on the lookout for good rubrics for reasoning. If you have one, send it to an Instructional Coach so it can be utilized as a resource.*

* Do we have rubrics? How would they be used?

*We are working to collect rubrics and create rubrics that align to the non-negotiable elements like annotation, thesis creation, analyzing the prompt, claim-evidence-commentary/reasoning and paragraph creation. If you have rubrics that fit, send them to an instructional coach. It will be important that every lesson has an opportunity to look at student work and ensure that your class is meeting the standard. The rubrics will be a tool to help you do that, if you so wish to integrate them. They will also provide an opportunity to look at the literacy initiative school wide and complete student work protocols to see how we are doing as a school.*

* How are we using student work?

*Student work should inform your instruction. If students are completing the skills set forth for their grade level accurately and at standard, great! If not, we need to look for opportunities to re-engage students in those skills during subsequent classes like during entry tasks or exit tasks. Instructional coaches will provide supports and ideas for ways to re-engage students in these skills. As a system, we will be looking at student work to see how the overall initiative is working and what systematic modifications need to be made.*

***Rationale***

* Is the rationale aligned to the literacy lessons?

*As the literacy lessons are written and revised, the rationale will to be a lens through which the lessons are vetted. By reading and annotating texts in all content areas, students will be engaging in text similar to those they will see on assessments such as the SAT, AP, and SBAC.  In addition, they will be engaging in texts they might also find in the workplace.  By moving from summary of the text to a written analysis, students will show growth in critical reading and critical thinking skills, both of which are necessary to be college and career ready.*

***Support***

* Can we get examples of what each lesson could look like?

*Yes! These will be provided during summer institute and on the collaboration day in August. Each lesson will have certain elements that are non-negotiable and many elements that you can modify for your needs.*

* Can we have a poster for analyzing the prompt?

*As certain processes are being used in all classes, it would make sense to provide posters for those procedures that you could optionally put up in your room if you feel like it would benefit you.*

* How do I teach writing? I don’t feel comfortable with this!

*Unless you teach English or Social Studies, you may feel like this. There will be on-going support throughout the year helping teachers in regard to these elements that feel foreign to them. Please seek out these opportunities. Additionally, coaches are always happy to work with teachers one on one to help them feel more comfortable with content or strategies that are overwhelming or new.*

***Differentiation***

* How can we differentiate the lesson for low level readers like ELL level 1 students and SpEd students who read at the lower elementary levels?

*Teachingtolerance has some interesting texts that have lower level reading sources with high school level content. Work with a coach to access this resource. We are always on the lookout for other sources that fit within the needs of our students. If you know of other resources, let us know and we will spread the word. Additionally, lessons can and should be differentiated based upon the needs of your students. If you need support in this process, let an instructional coach know. We will also work to integrate ELL and SpEd strategies into the lessons that are planned and resources that are provided.*

* What would this lesson look like in MY subject?

*It is understood that this is a stretch for many teachers. Continue to have open dialogue with your department lead and administrator and instructional coaches around what this lesson might look like in your class. Remember that there are certain elements that will be in every lesson, but much of the lesson is flexible based upon your class and your needs. Having continual conversations throughout the year will help everyone better understand what the lesson can look like for different subject areas. It would also make sense to integrate subject specific literacy into small learning institutes next year.*

* Do kids really need to write that much in every subject?

*Remember that students will be expected to write about other subject areas in the SBAC and SAT, as well as in college or in future careers. If they are not writing about complex texts in all of their classes, they will not be well prepared for these expectations. Discuss this concern with your administrator and department lead or an instructional coach to try to identify what that might mean for your subject.*