



Cologne  
Academy  
Local  
Literacy Plan

2012

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Cologne Academy

The Future  
Starts Here

## Program Overview

Integrating a capacity for learning, retaining, and applying knowledge acquired through reading lies deep in the heart of Cologne Academy's vision for the future of each student. The vision, mission, and cornerstones of Cologne Academy continuously repeat the desire for every student to make significant academic achievement through enriched curriculum, interaction between teachers and parents, small student to teacher ratios, and character education that teaches students to be independent learners. The Core Knowledge Sequence, developed by E.D. Hirsh<sup>1</sup>, was selected by Cologne Academy's founding board for its proven success to teach students background knowledge. This background knowledge gives students access to a broad landscape of information that helps facilitate reading comprehension as students grow and are required to read increasingly difficult text. Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary-based programs, such as SRA's *ImagineIt!*<sup>2</sup>, were selected to support a comprehensive and complete reading program.

Throughout the four years of Cologne Academy's educational existence, data has guided curriculum and instructional support. The school uses standardized tests such as the MCA and norm referenced assessments such as the NWEA<sup>3</sup> to determine year-long results. To determine weekly and monthly growth, the school uses interim assessments created or selected by the Curriculum specialist in conjunction with partnership with the academic committee. These assessment results indicate which students need further curriculum and instructional support and in what specific skill. This is then answered through additional instruction by trained reading interventionists. Goals established on the basis of the school's mission and vision and made practical through researched-based curriculum, instructional strategies, and measured by multiple methods of assessment mark Cologne Academy as a place where students develop reading strategies and thrive in understanding the written world in which we live.

Cologne Academy's reading goal is that all students will make at least one year's academic growth based on norm referenced assessments and will demonstrate at least grade level mastery in the five pillars of reading as reflected on STEP reading assessment<sup>4</sup>. To assess the first portion of the goal -which all students make at least one year's academic growth - all students take the Northwest Evaluation Association's (NWEA) Measures of Annual Progress

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<sup>1</sup>*Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlotteville: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999. Print. <coreknowledge.org>.

<sup>2</sup>*SRA Imagine It!*. K-3. McGraw Hill, 2007. Print. <<http://www.imagineitreading.com>>.

<sup>3</sup> [www.nwea.org](http://www.nwea.org)

<sup>4</sup>*Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress*. Chicago: The University of Chicago & Urban Education Institute, 2006.

(MAP) Reading assessment in the spring, or in the fall if the student was not enrolled the prior school year. The MAP assesses phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension. The MAP score is then used to determine where each student is academically and then a unique goal score is created for each student. This goal score is determined by norm referenced research from NWEA's MAP that identifies what numeric score would reflect one year's growth.

The second portion of the goal - that students demonstrate at least grade level mastery in the five pillars of reading - is currently determined by the STEP Assessment. This has recently replaced DIBELS<sup>5</sup> progress monitoring at Cologne Academy. The STEP assessment determines thirteen levels of literacy and is given no less than three times a year to each student. The assessment defines grade level proficiency in the fall, winter, and spring of each grade level beginning in kindergarten and ending in third grade.

These goals are communicated to parents in the fall during parent teacher conferences. Students' Learning Plans (SLP) are presented to parents with each student's current NWEA MAP score and his or her goal score for the spring. The instructional strategies, curriculum, and behavioral goals the school has determined that will best aid the student in meeting this goal are also displayed on the SLP. Throughout the year, parents are continually made aware of student progress through graded formative assessments sent home, progress reports, and an additional parent teacher conference in February, and other conferences, as needed.

Students are regularly assessed using formative assessments and when the students are reflecting lower results than peers exposed to the same instruction then interventions are implemented. When students are not demonstrating anticipated growth, parents are notified with either an email or phone call home by the student's teacher. These students will receive reading intervention approximately twice a week which consists of twenty minutes of further instruction on specific skills their formative assessments show the students have not yet mastered.

To ensure students receive instruction that will meet these goals, all elementary teachers attend professional development three times a week. Twice a week, teachers meet as a whole group to learn and discuss school-wide initiatives such as *Data Driven Instruction*<sup>6</sup> and *Teach*

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<sup>5</sup>*Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*. 6. Longmont: Sorpris West, 2005.

<sup>6</sup>Bambrick-Santoyo, P. *Driven by data: A practical guide to improve instruction*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons, 2009.

*Like a Champion Techniques*<sup>7</sup>. Once a week teachers meet in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups to discuss research-based instructional strategies specific to their grade level or content area. At least 50% of the PLC meetings that Kindergarten through Third Grade teachers attend are devoted to discussion and support on research-based instructional strategies that are implemented into their classrooms. These instructional strategies include guided reading, critical thinking skills, decoding strategies, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and basic comprehension. These strategies are used with all students, no matter what diverse needs or ethnicity the students' possess.

English Language (EL) students are assessed at the beginning of the year for language proficiency and are given additional reading instruction in skills as indicated through assessment. This instruction includes phonemic segmentation, discrimination of letter sounds, content appropriate vocabulary, and other academic support as indicated by grade level teachers.

Ongoing assessments throughout the year are used to indicate strategies that are most successful. End of the year assessments will be submitted annually to the Commissioner with objectives of our assessment program, name and description of tests, and grade level definitions of proficiency. These results will also be incorporated into the local literacy plan and posted on the school website with a reflection on improvement in future years.

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<sup>7</sup>Lemov, D. *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc Pub, 2010. Print.