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Georgia Standards of Excellence Aligned

Updated May 2017



To excel in a rapidly changing world, students must be able to communicate effectively. The ultimate goal for students is “they should know and be able” to use reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills. Upon graduation from high school, students should possess the skills to confidently participate in a variety of environments, whether college or career bound. Skills in literacy and language provide avenues for continued learning and greater understanding of life and its challenges.

The impact of low reading achievement on readiness for college, careers, and life is significant. Students who graduate high school as poor readers seem to struggle to succeed. Below level reading usually indicates students should enter remedial reading courses in college. The National Center for Education Statistics (Wirt et al, 2004) reports “the need for remedial reading appears to be the most serious barrier to degree completion.”

In the United States, reading levels among the adult population appear to be low. According to the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (Kutner, Greenberg, Jin, Boyle, Hsu, & Dunleavy, 2007), statistics showed 14 percent of adults read prose texts at such a low level, indicating the most basic and concrete literacy skills are understood. It appears only 13 percent read prose at the proficient level, demonstrating complex literacy activities. Proficient readers, as reported by the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, have declined 15 percent from 1992.

The percent of adults in the United States reading literature declined from 54.0 in 1992 to 46.7 in 2002 (National Endowment for the Arts, 2004). The percent of adults reading any book also dropped 7 percentage points. Thus, a focus was placed on text complexity grade bands in the Georgia Standards of Excellence (CCS) and their association with Lexile ranges. The text complex-

ity grade bands were aligned to Lexile ranges so that the development of reading comprehension throughout the grades would lead students to read at the college and career readiness level by the time they graduated high school. This low and declining achievement rate may be connected to a general lack of independent reading.

Research from the ACT research report (ACT, 2006; CCSS English Language Arts (ELA) Appendix A, 2010) confirms text complexity in reading achievement is important. Over the last fifty years, texts in K-12 grades seem to be less complex; yet higher education and the workforce have not lowered reading demands. In the last half of the century, the difficulty of college textbooks, as measured by Lexile scores, has not decreased but increased (Stenner, Koons, & Swartz, in press). College students are expected to read complex texts more independently and with little scaffolding than in their K-12 education years. Studies report that reading in the workplace varies, but some Lexile measures show the text complexity levels exceed grade 12. The vocabulary difficulty of newspapers remained stable over the 1963–1991 years (Hayes, Wolfer, & Wolfe, 1996). With a decline in complexity of texts and a lack of reading of complex texts independently, the emphasis on reading comprehension and text complexity is essential and continues to rise in importance. Thus, the need existed for ELA standards to reflect emphasis on increased complexity.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence (GDE, 2015a) in the domains of Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening, and Language expect students to demonstrate comprehension of literacy and informational texts and to communicate effectively through writing, speaking, and listening across a variety of genres and purposes (GaDOE, 2015a). The standards define what students should know and be able to do by the end of

each grade level. Through the teaching of the standards, students experience a comprehensive, integrated approach to language and literacy that ensures success in all content areas. Within Total Motivation ELA™, a resource written to support the implementation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence instructional materials, best practices, and the learning experiences are specifically designed and included to address the intellectual rigor and challenge of the GSE. The tools offered in Total Motivation ELA Student Edition and Teacher Edition, including Chart Your Success, GSE Frequency Chart, and the online progress monitoring reports allow teachers to continually measure student growth. Each text within Total Motivation ELA Student Edition offers content that is challenging, as appropriate, as the texts have been measured and certified by Meta-Metrics® according to the grade-level bands required by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE. 2015c).

Total Motivation ELA™, aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence provides strategies, activities, and recommendations for student interactions throughout the Teacher Edition Unit Instructional Plans. These include opportunities for students to both write and speak about relevant topics. Strategic models for teaching are essential for effective instruction. The Instructional Practices section of Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition offers evidence-based practices, including Close Reading and Critical Analysis of Text, that support high-quality instruction. Suggestions for teaching are embedded within the units of the Unit Instructional Plans in Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition. Total Motivation ELA also features articles that detail other important Instructional Practices, including Effective Questioning Strategies and Questions and Prompts that Support Higher-Order Thinking. Questions can deepen learning, promoting intellectually challenging collaboration, interaction, and communication. Also, included in the Teacher Edition are Instructional and Intervention Activities and Performance Task Assessments, which provide multiple and varied opportunities for students

to demonstrate understanding. For English Language Learners, language instruction must be specific enough so they acquire the necessary skills for success across all disciplines. Total Motivation ELA Student Edition addresses the use of language within the Revising/Editing assessment items as well as through a variety of writing tasks in the Constructed Response prompts, Extended Constructed Response prompts, Extended Writing Response prompts, Critical Thinking prompts, and the Performance Tasks Assessments. The Vocabulary Focus within the Unit Instructional Plans provides exposure to both passage-specific as well as standards-specific vocabulary words and offers targeted activities to teach essential words for each unit.

Total Motivation ELA is a comprehensive, rigorous, and relevant supplemental reading resource developed to provide aligned instruction and practice so that students meet the expectations as required by the English Language Arts Georgia Standards of Excellence. Addressing all Reading Georgia Standards of Excellence eligible for testing (GaDOE 2015b; GaDOE 2016), Total Motivation ELA offers multiple learning opportunities for students to achieve at high performance levels. With an emphasis on critical and creative thinking while building analytical skills and reading comprehension skills, students are empowered to extend and apply learning beyond the classroom.

All Georgia educators must be knowledgeable of how to effectively implement the Georgia Standards of Excellence in English Language Arts. Teachers at every grade level must teach the standards so students do not experience gaps in learning. Students must be given opportunities to encounter complex texts and must be taught academic vocabulary necessary to comprehend these texts. Researchers (Marzano, 2004; Marzano & Pickering, 2005) attest to the importance of vocabulary as it relates to learning and school success. All students should be exposed to texts with increasing complexity and criteria are noted that determine variety of text types. Hess and Hervey (2010a; 2010b) advocate how valuable



support can be that enables students to read texts at the appropriate level of complexity. Students should be taught to make inferences and to draw conclusions, citing evidence from texts. Students need to be provided opportunities to use and apply skills and strategies to make real-world applications. Knowing and understanding the standards is of utmost importance, but locating resources that help teachers transfer the English Language Arts GSE into classroom learning experiences is a must. Teachers must also establish an environment conducive to reading and include a variety of literature. Supplemental reading instruction that aligns to the English Language Arts Georgia Standards of Excellence is essential in order to raise the achievement rate and address literacy skills. Total Motivation ELA is a resource for teachers and students that is aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for Reading as it contains texts that fall within the complexity ranges as specified by the Georgia DOE (GaDOE2015c).

Total Motivation ELA provides instructional materials that address the rigor of the Georgia Standards of Excellence. This resource is produced in a bound paperback book format with accompanying online content. Each grade level 1-6 has a combination of literary and informational texts integrating science, social studies/history, and technical content. Text types include literature: drama, poetry, stories, and informational: literary nonfiction, social studies/historical, scientific, and technical texts. Formats include articles, reports, journals, diaries, letters, short stories, and investigations. The Student Edition provides texts at the appropriate level of complexity and rigor. Selected- and extended-response questions that require students to think critically and creatively are an integral part of the content. For grade 1, the Student Edition offers fifteen reading passages. For grades 2-5, the Student Edition offers twenty-five reading passages.

For grade 6, the Student Edition offers twenty reading passages. The texts fall within the complexity ranges as specified by the Georgia DOE (GaDOE, 2015c). The English Language Arts Georgia Standards of Excellence (GaDOE, 2015a) and Dr. Karin Hess (Hess & Hervey, 2010a; Hess & Hervey, 2010b) address paired selections in which students conduct analyses within single passages and across multiple passages. All levels of the Total Motivation ELA Student Editions have paired passages that provide opportunities for students to integrate information and complete comparative analyses across multiple texts. The passages within the Student Edition are followed by selected-response questions (including Part A and Part B items and Items with multiple correct options), constructed Response prompts, an Extended Constructed Response prompt, an Extended Writing Response prompt for paired passages, Revising/Editing assessment items, Critical thinking prompts, a Motivation Station activity, a Home Connection for caregivers to support the home-school connection, and a Performance Task Assessment. The Total Motivation ELA Student Edition contains a glossary of terms pertinent to the grade-specific GSE, allowing students to develop understandings of the terms that will be encountered on the Milestones Assessments. A Chart Your Success tool in the Student Edition is featured to enable each student to chart progress on the assessment items and the written responses within the units. The Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition provides instructional activities that clarify the GSE and enable teachers to instruct students in the skills and concepts needed to comprehend and analyze complex texts. The Teacher Edition contains Appendices that include Coding Charts that specify the GSE, DOK, and RBT for each of the components of both the Student and Teacher Editions. The coding is guided by the research and study provided by Hess Cognitive Rigor ELA

Matrix (CRM). The Teacher Edition also includes strategies for effective instruction, literature connections, intervention and instructional activities, and a GSE Frequency Chart. This frequency chart equips teachers with information to plan the use of units that match the GSE directed by the local or state curriculum scope and sequence as well as to adjust instruction in order to target individual skill deficits and strengths. The Teacher Edition provides educators a guide for teaching the ELA Georgia Standards of Excellence at the level required for student success on the Georgia Milestone Assessments and for complementing direct instruction with activities appropriate for multiple group formats. Developed by successful and experienced educators, Total Motivation ELA provides extensive, supplemental reading practice for the English Language Arts Georgia Standards of Excellence.

With Total Motivation ELA, administrators can direct teachers to be cognizant of the wide range of information that will assist them in understanding the way the Student and Teacher Editions are designed. Unpacking the Standards is one component that will specify the meaning behind the Focus GSE addressed in the unit and will aid teachers in Conceptual Understanding. Unpacking the Standards identifies “what” to teach and “where” to begin and end. The Focus Standard is identified for teachers. The arrangement of the Student Edition increases the probability of maintaining the focus so that the depth of the standards can be addressed. Reasoning is promoted through the assessment items, instructional activities, critical thinking opportunities, and writing response prompts. The Unit Instructional Plans, provided for the teachers, guide the flow of instruction. Mastery of the standards is easily addressed through formative assessment. Whereas, in the past, assessment was more summative in nature, Total Motivation ELA includes an array of instructional activities, vocabulary suggestions, interventions, and guiding questions that increase the student mastery of the English Language Arts Standards.

Earlier in 2012, the United States Department of Education and the Federal Communications Commission announced a blueprint to invite schools to transition to digital textbooks by the end of the next five years. While not mandated, the initiative encouraged schools to make the switch from print-to-digital materials based on the projected cost-savings and the academic improvement. These benefits are due to the expense of printed textbooks and the personalization of digital content. Total Motivation ELA also features a print-to-digital transition. Schools will have digital access to all the Student and Teacher Edition content if using Internet-connected computers. Using the same aligned content as Total Motivation ELA, educators have access to an interactive delivery method for their students and classrooms. The online dimension of flexibility of Total Motivation ELA, offers an engaging learning environment, not only for educators, but also for students. Tools such as online progress monitoring, automatic tracking, and reporting are built into this innovative program. With the appropriate use of technology, students can develop deeper understanding of English Language Arts concepts and skills identified in the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Reports from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2003) indicate 38 percent of fourth graders cannot read well enough to grasp meaning from a basic children’s book. With scientifically based approaches to reading, students with reading or language problems, attention or learning deficits, or those with a reading disability or with limited English speaking abilities risk their performances lagging behind those of their peers. Chall (2000) notes that research findings are not always widely accepted. Practitioners do not always readily transfer findings into classroom practices. It is imperative that educators and others appreciate, recognize, agree upon, and implement pertinent research findings that are scientifically based. Educators must seek to optimize learning opportunities for students validated by research. Students are expected to



independently read some unfamiliar texts, relying on the print and drawing meaning from it. Total Motivation ELA seeks to provide a resource that supports the concept of “reading to learn.”

Total Motivation ELA incorporates research-based strategies and pedagogically sound principles for teaching and learning. This product is designed to support and enhance best practices for incorporating the standards into student instruction. Total Motivation ELA is founded on the modeling of active teaching, which is teacher-directed instruction that proceeds in small steps. Active instruction includes a wide range of instructional approaches: small groups, class discussion, concrete objects, hands-on experiences, reading, and writing. In Total Motivation ELA, teachers can ask students to think aloud, consider different options for responses, show evidence for the response reached, and put their thoughts in writing. All of these ways help students to organize their thinking and assist teachers in determining the level of understanding of reading concepts. Studies indicate that instruction which emphasizes active student engagement in hands-on opportunities improves attitudes toward learning and indicates a positive effect on achievement.

The National Reading Panel (2000) identified comprehension of text as critical to reading successfully. This panel pointed out a series of strategies that influence the meaning of text. The Teacher Edition of Total Motivation ELA will delineate strategies that students can use independently as they read. Pressley & Afflerbach (1995) state that when students learn and apply such strategies, their comprehension improves. Without comprehension, teachers and students become frustrated when students can read words but only have a surface understanding of the printed word. With the absence of comprehension, reading for pleasure and knowledge appears to be nearly impossible (Vaughn & Linan-Thompson,

2004). The questions and instructional activities within each unit accent specific skills and provide practice designed to challenge students and address elements of reading comprehension and analysis. Reading comprehension and analysis skills include applying one’s prior knowledge and experiences to the text, understanding vocabulary and other concepts, linking ideas within and among texts, recognizing the author’s purpose and craft, distinguishing between facts and opinions, and making inferences or drawing reasonable conclusions. Poor readers typically have difficulty with these skills, causing them to struggle with actively processing text.

Teaching students to use strategies that target the aforementioned skills or the individual difficulties they encounter can increase comprehension (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1997; Swanson, 1999; Gersten, Fuch, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Swanson, 1999). Strategy instruction seems to consistently improve the abilities of students to see relationships in reading selections and to grasp meaning while actively engaging students. Explicit and systematic instruction is linked closely with improved outcomes in reading comprehension. Thus, learning experiences must entail participation from both students and teacher, determine what students need, and should adapt to meet the needs of each learner in order to progress in reading.

Total Motivation ELA is not a reading approach but a supplement to English Language Arts instruction. Research indicates that the active teaching approach is associated with higher levels of student achievement. Students are guided through the learning process within the Student Edition of Total Motivation ELA and are afforded numerous classroom opportunities for success: Reading Passage, Assessment, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Written Responses to Texts, and Home Connection Activities (for home com-

pletion). This product contains reading passages that reflect a variety of genres incorporating literary and informational selections. Each selection includes assessment items that measure or assess the comprehension and analysis of students toward the passage. Critical thinking questions, based on Bloom's Taxonomies, Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK), and Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrices, are offered to allow students to derive meaning from the text using the upper three levels of questioning. A creative thinking activity is provided to stimulate the mind by connecting an element of the passage or a specified standard in a productive manner. Students are provided numerous opportunities to respond to prompts and produce constructed responses based on the Unit Focus GSE, extended constructed responses in the form of narratives, and extended writing responses in the form opinion and informative/explanatory texts. All of these activities provide practice to extend the learning of each unit's reading passage.

Adams (1990) advocated the need for practice in reading. Furthermore, the exposure to many reading materials could reinforce vocabulary learning and provide motivating reading materials that would interest students. Chall (2000) also noted the need to provide children with the practice in reading that would provide challenging reading material in addition to texts. These supplemental materials would enable students to practice skills they had acquired. A review of literature reveals a strong correlation between children's academic engaged time and growth in achievement. To become skilled readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and thinkers, students must be provided authentic opportunities to practice and communicate, receiving support while doing so. For students to achieve literacy competence, they first must be motivated to engage with literacy tasks. As students succeed, motivation increases and leads to improved engagement. Total Motivation ELA provides texts that are authentic, challenging, and reflect varied genre across a wide range of topics that are written to

capture student interest and to promote student engagement while improving literacy skills.

Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2004) indicate sometimes teachers pose questions to students, and those students who respond in a reasonable manner achieve. Such students are regarded as those making adequate progress. Those who do not respond correctly or completely are then given answers or just provided cues leading these students to the specific answers sought. Students may or may not understand the text but both of these scenarios appear to satisfy some teachers. However, the best approach to ensuring comprehension of text is to directly and explicitly teach comprehension strategies. Studies conducted during the late 70s by Durkin reveal a minimum amount of minutes dedicated toward the direct instruction of comprehension. Later studies continued to show that comprehension is not taught as often as it should (Pressley and El-Dinary, 1997; Schumm, Moody, and Vaughn, 2000). Total Motivation ELA provides a supplement for the teacher to apply the taught comprehension strategies and an opportunity to check progress of students toward identified standards or skills.

With the emphasis on state reading assessments or Georgia Milestone Assessments (GaDOE2015a; GaDOE 2016), the purpose for teaching comprehension strategies to students is of dire necessity. Every state is required by law to show evidence of student progress in reading. Vaughn & Linan-Thompson (2004) note that gains will surface in the assessments of students' progress if teachers will provide systematic and explicit comprehension instruction. Cunningham (1998) agrees with the importance of teaching comprehension strategies. Although she notes that teachers may ask questions after the reading of texts, modeling how to answer the questions does not occur often enough. Teachers appear to confuse question asking with teaching. Teachers also assign tasks with questions to be answered independently by the students, yet these same teachers neglect to demonstrate how to answer



written questions which is also the teaching of comprehension strategies that skilled readers use.

The review of the literature, experiences, and collaborative discussions convinced the Mentoring Minds Product Development Team that quality supplemental resources for English Language Arts practice were needed. Thus, the format for a Student Edition was designed to help move reading, writing, language, and speaking and listening practice and assessment forward in order to assist teachers in incorporating standards-based teaching on a higher level and to develop within students the confidence they need to succeed. The Total Motivation ELA Student Edition with its fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five standards-based units containing reading passages that reflect a variety of literary and informational genres offer teachers the resource to integrate the GSE into instruction.

Teachers must ensure that ample opportunities are provided for students to learn important skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. A specific focus must accentuate all targeted skills on a regular basis. Therefore, time must be built into the schedule for instructional opportunities. Evidence from research demonstrates that a successful instructional program must include time for students to practice what they are learning and experiences to perform the tasks for which they are to demonstrate competence. A positive relationship between total time allocated to instruction and general student performance exists. Total Motivation ELA is an educational tool that enables students to practice what they are learning.

Assessment plays a critical role in all aspects of teaching and learning. The need for higher-quality assessments is well established. Studies show teachers spend as much as one-third to one-half of their time involved in assessment-related ac-

tivities (Stiggins and Conklin, 1992). assessment is embedded into each unit from whence the teacher can gather timely student information to readily and continuously maintain accountability for academic achievement standards.

The Every Student Succeeds Act(ESSA) requires that academic assessments for “math and reading or language arts must be administered annually in grades 3-8 and at least once in grades 9-12...” (Mandlawitz, 2016, p.1). The critical issue of accountability will continue with ESSA, but assessments will be used to help improve schools and inform instruction. The law allows the state and local levels the opportunity to create systems for accountability, resources, interventions and teacher evaluation systems. The federal requirements of Every Student Succeeds Act require a plan that all students participate in the state assessment program. All students must be tested in reading content at their respective grade levels. Total Motivation ELA provides supplemental reading passages that contain a variety of multiple-choice, open-ended, constructed response, extended constructed response, and extended writing response pieces to provide practice and to measure comprehension and analysis of literary and informational texts.

Total Motivation ELA also offers Performance Task Assessments which are used to evaluate student learning. The task itself relates to the unit topic and allows students to demonstrate the ability to think and reason while using higher-order thinking skills. The task requires students to create a product that integrates multiple Georgia Standards of Excellence using research, writing, and speaking within real-world contexts. Scoring guides, or rubrics, are used to measure student responses. Research shows that when teachers use performance-based tasks, their instructional practices began to align more with best practices (Vogler, 2002). Evidence-based practices must

be embedded in our instruction to guide students to improved performance. According to the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (Fadel, Honey, & Pasnik, 2007, p. 34), the workplace will require “new ways to get work done, solve problems, or create new knowledge”—the assessment of students will need to be largely performance based so that students can show how well they are able to apply content knowledge to critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical tasks throughout their education. Hess advocates that students must be able think deeply— process information analytically, to independently draw inferences and reach conclusions, and to solve problems.

Test scores will still appear to be the barometer that measures the success of the educational environment of a campus or that of a district, but ESSA now allows schools to focus on reasonable goals and objectives collaboratively established and align with the needs of students. Juel (1988) states that the ability to read fluently and with comprehension is necessary for academic success and that continues to hold true to this day. The goal is for educators to use evidence-based practices to improve their knowledge and improve their effectiveness toward reading instruction. Novice and veteran teachers can enhance their instructional delivery and lead students to become proficient lifelong readers, preparing them for success in college, in the work force, and throughout their lives. Total Motivation ELA can provide additional practice opportunities with comprehension and analysis skills and promote critical and creative thinking with depth and complexity.

Teachers must view assessment as an integral and natural component of the instructional process. Formative and summative assessment results should inform instruction. Formative assessments are information-gathering activities that take place during the actual teaching of concepts or skills. Summative assessments are administered to students periodically to determine what students have learned. Formative and

summative assessments work together to form a complete picture of student performance and are essential in providing a balanced approach for assessing student achievement. Teachers cannot wait to assess students using summative test results. Assessments must be ongoing and skillfully used.

Each unit of Total Motivation ELA Student Edition includes selected-response assessment items that align to the content and format of the Georgia Milestone Assessments (GaDOE, 2015b). These assessment items require students to read the passage of the unit and select options based on the evidence provided by the passage. Some of the items are Technology-Enhanced Items that include Part A and Part B items and items that require students to select two correct responses. Within the Teacher Edition, the Student Edition assessment items are provided along with the bolded correct option(s).

Teachers must assess the subject matter accurately so relevant information can be collected about student achievement. Assessment results help make sound decisions for the purpose of improving student achievement. Most teachers are unprepared to meet the assessment challenges they face today. Licensure does not say that teachers have to show assessment competence yet much of their time is spent in assessment-related activities (Stiggins & Conklin, 1992; Trevisan, 1999). Teachers must have help in accurate assessment. Mentoring Minds sought to develop a product to assist in the practice of English Language Arts skills and the assessment of teaching and learning. Selected-response sections include items that assess students’ application of the writing and language standards used when revising and editing. Assessment of incorrect and correct answers to questions for each reading passage will be charted by each student to maintain accurate and useful data. By using the chart, teachers and students can determine individual strengths and weaknesses. In the Teacher Edition, the GSE Frequency Chart, listing



the reading standards, correlates to the Total Motivation ELA Student Edition unit passages and assessment items. The Frequency Chart could be used to identify the specific standards for which students need additional practice in mastering skills before taking the Georgia Milestone Assessments. Assessment data yields information to educators about their students as readers and writers. Once data is retrieved, deciding how to organize the data is vital so that better instructional decisions can be made. A study of student data allows for individualization of instruction to meet the needs of students.

Critical thinking is an important issue in education today. Attention is focused on quality thinking as an important element of life success (Hess, 2016; Huitt, 1998; Thomas and Smoot, 1994). In the 1950s, Bloom found that 95% of the test questions developed to assess learning required students to only think at the lowest level of learning, the recall of information. Similar findings indicated an overemphasis on lower-level questions and activities with little emphasis on the development of students' thinking skills (Risner, Skeel, and Nicholson, 1992). "Perhaps most importantly in today's information age, thinking skills are viewed as crucial for educated persons to cope with a rapidly changing world. Many educators believe that specific knowledge will not be as important to tomorrow's workers and citizens as the ability to learn and make sense of new information" (Gough, 1991). "Now, a considerable amount of attention is given to students' abilities to think critically about what they do" (Hobgood, Thibault, and Walberg, 2005). It is imperative for students to communicate their thinking coherently and clearly to peers, teachers, and others

It is crucial to invite students to explain their thought processes. If the results are inaccurate, teachers can identify the precise point at which students deviated from using critical thinking.

Thus, teachers must purposely promote critical thinking as part of the learning experiences that align with the Total Motivation ELA. The literature notes that when students use their critical thinking abilities integrated with content instruction, depth of knowledge can result. Teachers are encouraged to refrain from limiting instruction to lectures, rote memorization, and other strategies that exercise only lower levels of thought as opposed to incorporating those that build conceptual understanding (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking, 2000).

The ability to engage in careful, reflective thought is viewed in education as paramount. Teaching students to become skilled thinkers is a goal of education (Stobaugh, 2013; Hess, 2016). Students must be able to acquire and process information since the world is changing so quickly. Some studies purport that students exhibit insufficient levels of skill in critical or creative thinking. In his review of research on critical thinking, Norris (1985) surmised that students' critical thinking abilities are not widespread. From this study, Norris reported that most students do not score well on tests that measure ability to recognize assumptions, evaluate controversy, and scrutinize inferences.

Thus, students' performances on measures of higher-order thinking ability continue to reveal a critical need for students to develop the skills and attitudes of effective thinking. Furthermore, another reason that supports the need for thinking skills instruction is the fact that educators appear to be in general agreement that it is possible to increase students' creative and critical thinking capacities through instruction and practice. Presseisen (1986) asserts that the basic premise is students can learn to think better if schools teach them how to think. Adu-Febiri (2002) agrees that thinking can be learned. According to Sousa (2006), students are not actual-

ly taught to think because children are born with the brain organizational structure that originates thinking. As educators, students can be assisted in organizing the content of their thinking to facilitate complex reasoning. Sousa supports Bloom's Taxonomy as an organizational structure that is compatible with the manner in which the brain processes information to promote comprehension.

The models used to develop critical thinking throughout the Student and Teacher Editions of Total Motivation ELA are: Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson et al, 2001), Webb's Depth of Knowledge (2002a; 2002b), Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix in English Language Arts (2010; 2009; Hess & Petit, 2006), and Hess' and Hervey's text complexity rubrics for informational and literary texts (2010). The English Language Arts' Product Development Team employed these models to stimulate and develop students' higher-order thinking skills and to make extensions to the real world. Critical thinking is integrated into each component of the unit through higher-order questions and complex problematic situations. Students are invited to shift to new levels of increased awareness when calculating, analyzing, problem solving, and evaluating. In the Student Edition, two pages are dedicated to the component Critical Thinking. This opportunity is presented to entice students to think critically and move them beyond basic comprehension and rote memorization. This component typically offers open-ended questions that are coded to all six levels of Bloom's and Revised Bloom's Taxonomies. While students are applying and using higher order thinking skills in real-life situations, they are also learning to question the accuracy of their responses or solutions.

Students must learn to read, write, speak, listen, and use language effectively in a variety of content areas. Narrative, opinion, and informative/explanatory writing are important elements of student expression and are offered as writing opportunities in each unit for the purpose of incorporating writing into all the English Language

Arts concepts and skills. These writing prompts are used within each unit in the Student Edition Levels 1-6 to provide authentic writing opportunities and, as promoted by research, serve as a valuable instructional learning experience for concept application to real-world settings. Prompts or questions are used to compose original responses that integrate student writing skills with reading based on upper levels of critical thinking. These writing prompts invite students to apply a concept from the passage to the students' own lives, thus making real-world connections. Literary concept prompts allow students to reflect and communicate their knowledge as they integrate reading and writing as required by the English Language Arts GSE. The writing prompts in Total Motivation ELA serve as another formative assessment opportunity for students to express their thoughts and reasoning abilities as they transfer concepts across the disciplines and into written expression.

Motivation Station is another component of the Student Edition unit which extends practice of the Language and Writing GSE. These activities provide opportunities for students to apply the skills and concepts learned within that unit or in prior units within the Student Edition.

A Chart Your Success tool is included at all levels and is located in the back of each Student Edition for students to visually record, observe, and monitor individual progress on an ongoing basis. The involvement of students in assessment promotes student engagement in individual learning targets and develops student accountability as they monitor and measure learning. Students need to know what learning targets they are responsible for mastering, and at what level. Marzano (2005) states, "students who can identify what they are learning significantly outscore those who cannot." This self-assessment opportunity promotes practices that are crucial to independent learning. Research on formative assessment suggests that students should be aware of their learning target, their present status, and the next steps in reaching that goal or closing any gaps (Atkin,



Black, & Coffey, 2001). Such knowledge helps students keep track of their achievements, know how close they are to their learning targets, and determine future steps to advance their learning. When students are aware of their achievement gaps and teachers motivate students with continuous feedback linked to the expected outcomes and criteria for success, students are able to surge ahead and close performance gaps in the Reading CCS. Black and Wiliam (1998) note there is evidence to support a strong relationship between interactive feedback and student achievement.

Studies support the use of a variety of measures to gauge student achievement. Due to accountability issues, Mentoring Minds encourages teachers to maintain accurate and useful data records as well as employ a variety of assessment measures to form a more valid insight on where a classroom or a student stands in mastery of reading performance standards. Following each main reading passage in the Student Edition are sections entitled Critical Thinking. Three critical thinking questions, one for each of the levels of Analyze, Evaluate, and Create of Bloom's Taxonomy are provided to stimulate students to think about the passage(s) read. The Motivation Station activity contains a statement of the unit focus GSE in student friendly terms. The Motivation Station activities provide practice at the application level for the Language, Reading, and Writing GSE. Therefore, Total Motivation ELA reflects formative assessments integrated with interactive student/teacher conversation. Data from the Assessment page in the Student Edition used in conjunction with other measures from the Teacher and Student Editions provide crucial information for the teacher in improving performance relating to the Reading Georgia Standards of Excellence.

Research indicates that thinking skills instruction makes a positive difference in the achievement levels of students. Thinking skills involve two modes of thinking: critical and creative thinking. An essential goal in education is to assist students in learning how to think in a productive manner. Authorities in the field of thinking indicate both creative and critical thinking lead to a "well-rounded" thinker (Paul 1995; Hillis & Puccio, 1999; Cotton, 1991). Studies that reflect achievement over time show that learning gains can be accelerated. These results indicate that the teaching of thinking skills can enhance the academic achievement of participating students (Bass and Perkins, 1984; Bransford, 1986; Freseman, 1990; Kagan, 1988; Matthews, 1989; Nickerson, 1984). Critical thinking is a complex activity and we should not expect that one method of instruction would prove sufficient for developing each of its component parts. Carr (1990) acknowledges that we have learned that while it is possible to teach critical and creative thinking and its components as separate skills, they are developed and used best when learned in connection with content knowledge. To develop competency in critical thinking, students must use these skills across the disciplines or the skills could simply decline and disappear. Torrance (1972) examined the extent to which creative thinking could be taught. The culmination of his research showed that creative thinking could be enhanced. Torrance indicated that Creative Problem Solving (CPS) was a widely accepted model of teaching creative thinking. Total Motivation ELA allows students opportunities to apply their thinking using creative and critical thinking avenues. Teachers should expect students to use thinking skills in every class and evaluate their skills accordingly. Hummel and Huitt (1994) stated, "What you measure is what you get."

Students are not likely to develop these complex skills or to improve their critical thinking abilities if educators fail to establish definite expectations and measure those expectations with some type of assessment. Assessments (e.g., tests, demonstrations, exercises, panel discussions) that target higher-level thinking skills could more than likely lead teachers to teach content at those levels, and students, according to Redfield and Rousseau (1981), to perform at those levels. Students not only need to know an enormous amount of facts, concepts, and principles, they also must be able to effectively think about this knowledge in a variety of increasingly complex ways. If test items only require lower-level thinking skills such as knowledge and comprehension, students will not develop and display their higher-order skills even if instructional methods that employ these skills are implemented. Individuals do not always do what is expected, only what is inspected.

Solving problems in the real world and making worthwhile decisions is valued in our rapidly changing environment today. Paul (1985) points out “thinking is not driven by answers but by questions.” The driving forces in the thinking process are the questions. When a student needs to think through an idea or issue or to rethink anything, questions must be asked to stimulate thought. When answers are given, sometimes thinking stops completely. When an answer generates another question then thought continues. Paul ascertains that students who ask quality questions are really thinking and learning. Multiple forms of student engagement exist when high-level thinking is fostered. Examples of engagement include collaborative group activities, problem-solving experiences, open-ended questions that encourage divergent thinking, activities that promote the multiple intelligences and recognize learning styles, and activities in which both genders participate freely. “Brain researchers suggest that teachers employ a variety of higher-order questions in a supportive environment to strengthen the brain” (Cardellicchio and Field, 1997). “Meaningful learning requires teach-

ers change their role from sage to guide, from giver to collaborator, from instructor to instigator” (Ó Murchú, 2003). “Since students learn from thinking about what they are doing, the teacher’s role becomes one of stimulating and supporting activities that engage learners in critical thinking” (Bhattacharya, 2002).

Word Study is featured in Level 1. To engage students in activities that focus on the foundational skills of print awareness, phonological awareness, and phonics, all of which assist students in reading and comprehending texts.

The Home Connection section for Levels 1-6 is located in both the Student and Teacher Editions. These activities are included to promote parent/caregiver involvement with student learning which extends student achievement and increases the academic success of students. Total Motivation ELA includes activities to invite and encourage parent/caregiver engagement in reading and writing. Product developers recognize that teachers must support and encourage parent/caregiver collaboration with students regarding academics. Teachers are provided activities per unit with which to cultivate parent/caregiver involvement with children by reinforcing previously introduced skills. Research concludes that productive collaboration and interaction with parents/caregivers have a favorable impact on attitudes and student achievement. Parents/caregivers can be significant contributors to the learning process. Opportunities for parents/caregivers to be involved in their students’ learning allow parents to show an interest in the students’ work. Parent/caregiver involvement helps parents become familiar with the content and the way students are learning. When parents/caregivers take time to provide encouragement, students have another opportunity to apply and practice concepts previously learned. Teachers and other educational leaders should consistently help students and parents/caregivers to understand that an increased emphasis on the importance of effort is related to improved reading and writing performance.



Research indicates that the more parents/caregivers are involved and excited in the learning of their children, the more successful a child can be academically. When schools cultivate partnerships and engage families in their children's education, author Constantino (2008) stated that student achievement can increase. In addition, Constantino noted that schools must continuously nurture relationships with parents by providing them with resources to help their children succeed in school. Constant attention in strengthening relationships lays the foundation for high-quality engagement. Weller (1999) indicate there are parent behaviors that can lead to effective schools. When parents show support, interest, and become involved the success rate of students can rise. Students in at-risk situations show an increase in grades, test scores, academics, and more when their parents become involved in instructional programs (Henderson & Map, 2002; Dolan, 1996). The activities for parents/caregivers in Total Motivation ELA offer opportunities within each unit to reach and engage parents.

Bagin and Gallagher (2001) note regular communication with parents/caregivers can promote student learning and reduce attendance problems. Weller (1999) advocates that when schools and teachers treat parents/caregivers with genuine concern and make them feel important, welcome, and needed, parents/caregivers are more apt to take active roles in supporting their children in academic achievement. Findings from an extensive research review on parent/family involvement programs are shared by Henderson and Mapp (2002) in the report *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*. Henderson and Mapp concur with other researchers that a favorable and substantiated

relationship exists between family involvement and student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education. A key finding is that children of parents/caregivers who are involved in home and in school settings show improved performance in school. Thus, the inclusion of Home Connection is provided to help parents/caregivers support their children with meaningful and relevant applications to the unit passages or to previously taught concepts. The information given helps the parent/caregiver and child build oral language through informal conversation. Simply written, the text invites parents to support Reading and Writing GSE by asking questions, making relevant comments, or providing other home learning activities to reinforce previously introduced topics or concepts. Activities, intended to be completed at home, enhance students' understanding, skills, and reading/writing proficiency. Total Motivation ELA reflects the careful planning taken by the Mentoring Minds Product Development Team so that the primary focus of Home Connection activities is the meaningful extension of the skills/concepts taught in the unit.

Research confirms that the involvement of parents and families in their children's education is critical to students' success in school. Based on the 2002 synthesis research report, *A New Wave of Evidence*, several findings were concluded. The overall conclusion was, "When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more." (Henderson and Mapp, 2002, p.7). Parents/caregivers can be significant contributors to the learning process. Opportunities for parents/caregivers to be involved in their students' learning allow parents to show an interest in the students' work. Parent/caregiver involvement helps

parents/caregivers become familiar with the content and the way students are learning. When parents/caregivers take time to provide home encouragement, students have another opportunity to apply and practice the concepts previously learned. Research indicates that the more parents/caregivers are involved and excited in the learning of their children, the more successful a child can be academically.

Teachers cannot teach what they do not know. When reviewing the literature regarding the relationship between teachers' knowledge and students' achievement, the research indicated that teachers' content knowledge is an important element. The Teacher Edition in Total Motivation ELA is arranged in recognition and support of this finding. Teachers are provided the guidance they need as they prepare and deliver high-quality instruction to improve performance in English Language Arts for all students. Each Teacher Edition identifies the Georgia Standards of Excellence by the as the Unit Focus Standard. Other standards addressed within each unit are noted on the Appendix C Coding Charts and on the GSE Frequency Chart in Appendix D.

The Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition provides instructional plans for each of the fifteen units (Level 1), twenty-five units (Levels 2-5), and twenty units (Level 6). Instructional strategies and activities followed by formative assessments and performance tasks support teachers as they plan effective instruction and monitor student progress. This resource also includes information on current evidence-based instructional practices, literature suggestions, a GSE Frequency Chart, and an ELA Glossary. Each Teacher Edition contains a wide array of helpful resources to guide a teacher in the use of Motivation ELA. Correct answers for assessment items, vocabulary pertinent to each unit passage and to each unit's focus GSE, and a grade appropriate glossary are included in the Teacher Edition. The Coding Charts in Appendix C provide the GSE for all Assessments, Vocabulary Activities/Formative

Assessments, Instructional Activities/Formative Assessments, Intervention Activities, Constructed Response, Extended Constructed Response, Extended Writing Response, Revising/Editing Assessments, Critical Thinking prompts, Motivation Station activities, and Performance Task Assessments.

Beyer (1991) advocates teachers activate students' relevant prior knowledge. When teachers link new learning to everyday and academic experiences, students seem to better comprehend new information. Studies acknowledge the necessity of connecting classroom activities with topics familiar to students. Kujawa and Huske (1995) confirm the importance of prior knowledge. Therefore, students appear to learn best and to remember newly presented information when the content is linked to their cultures and experiences. Total Motivation ELA provides an array of Building Background Knowledge activities that support teachers as they introduce each unit passage, access prior knowledge, and engage students with the topic of the passage. These teaching and learning opportunities within the Teacher Edition from which teachers can implement learning experiences that build on students' prior knowledge, forming meaningful connections. For example, when activating prior learning, teachers might employ graphic organizers and small group or class discussions. Using dialogue or visualizations, teachers can determine the extent of future instruction. Necessary adjustments can be made so that incomplete or inaccurate prior knowledge or connections are corrected. High-quality research does not appear to support that instruction be either student-centered or teacher-directed. The findings seem to confirm that neither approach should be used exclusively. Thus, Total Motivation ELA is designed to incorporate both.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence stress the importance of the aural dimension of early learning by identifying read-aloud text exemplars appropriate for grades 1-6 found in Appendix D.



Two lists of literature are provided: Suggested Unit Content Literature and Skill-Based Literature. Motivation ELA supports the reading-speaking-listening link. Literature is suggested for read alouds and independent reading. Students are encouraged to read texts and reflect on them in writing as well as participate in conversation by comparing, contrasting, analyzing, and synthesizing. Performance tasks also connect the reading, speaking, and listening standards.

Suggested Unit Content Literature is a section in each unit Teacher Edition that offers a means through which student knowledge can continue to grow. Literature extends topical learning and supports selected reading/writing skills and concepts. Students are led to make connections and integrate information from other sources. The use of literature extends student learning across multiple contexts, connecting texts by topic, genre, and author. Appendix D in the Teacher Edition suggests Suggested Unit Content Literature and Skill-based Literature. GSE indicates there is also evidence that current standards, curriculum, and instructional practice have not adequately fostered the independent reading of complex texts, a crucial need for college and career readiness, particularly in the case of informational texts. The suggested literature in each unit focuses on the unit passage's content and the Performance Task Assessment. The suggested books may be used for read alouds, independent reading, and research. Enrichment literature that can be used for integrating lessons across the curriculum is noted for each individual unit. Recommended books may relate to the content of the story, selected skills, or both. Literature offers excellent resources for connecting literature to skills instruction for students. Literature makes skills in reading relevant, strengthens student motivation, and presents meaningful contexts for stimulating a variety of responses to critical and creative thinking. Higher levels of engagement increase when

discussions are held to build conceptual understanding. *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (Anderson, 1985) stresses the importance of the integration of reading. Reading is a communication tool that helps students become successful learners. Literature can stimulate a variety of creative and critical thinking responses from the students, such as performing skits based on texts. Problem-solving strategies, including acting it out, drawing a picture, and constructing a model or props materialize quite readily as a result of literature. Problems that emerge from books make learning relevant, are highly motivational, and present meaningful contexts for establishing thinking. Evidence also shows literature promotes thinking and reasoning when questions are presented on higher thinking levels. Discussions are encouraged to communicate and build conceptual understanding, emphasizing speaking, writing, listening, and language. Thaiss (1986) advocates literature connections to strengthen student motivation and increase higher levels of engagement.

Students must understand vocabulary to understand the academic content they encounter in school. In the Teacher Edition of Motivation ELA is the section Vocabulary Focus. This section displays two categories of vocabulary: Passage-Specific Vocabulary and GSE Vocabulary. Two activities are featured in Vocabulary Activities that contain graphic organizers, hands-on activities, or similar engagement opportunities. Students participate in vocabulary experiences essential for the unit and conclude with a formative vocabulary assessment. Stahl and Fairbanks (1986) revealed when specific vocabulary from academic subject areas is selected as the focus of instruction, the result was a 33 percent increase. Therefore, it appears when students are taught specific content vocabulary in each subject area at each grade level, students have an excellent opportunity to acquire the academic background

knowledge they need to understand the subject area content. Teaching content vocabulary using a systematic approach appears to be a powerful tool for student success (Marzano and Pickering, 2005). Furthermore, research firmly documents that academic background knowledge has an effect on academic achievement. Any intervention for the achievement of students should identify increasing students' content vocabulary knowledge through direct instruction as a leading priority (Marzano, 2004). In earlier research, Becker (1977) concluded that the implementation of systematic vocabulary programs appeared essential in order to close gaps between students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and those who were not.

Student acquisition of vocabulary is imperative to success in reading comprehension. The significance of its relationship to comprehension was supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). Researchers agree that vocabulary level differences among students are reasons for the varied ranges in academic achievement (Baumann and Kameenui, 1991; Stanovich, 1986). Although studies reveal the importance of vocabulary instruction, schools exist that neither have frequent or systematic vocabulary instruction (Lesaux, Kieffer, Faller, and Kelley, 2010; Scott and Nagy, 1997). Students must be given varied and repeated opportunities to comprehend meaning of words and to use them in different contexts. (Landauer, McNamara, Dennis, and Kintsch, 2007). Thus, Total Motivation ELA acknowledged these findings and reflected the importance of vocabulary.

Exposure to vocabulary and interaction with language throughout education years enable students to comprehend word meanings, build awareness of language, and apply their knowledge to understand as well as to produce language. Within each Student Edition of Total Motivation ELA, a glossary of key terms related to the English Language Arts GSE is provided. These words increase student comprehension of terms pertinent to the standards and successful perfor-

mance. A common academic language is essential to support application of the academic vocabulary with texts and assessments. In the Teacher Edition, the same glossary is contained. Within each unit in the Teacher Edition, the vocabulary is categorized into vocabulary relating to the GSE being addressed in the unit and to the displayed reading passages.

In the Teacher Edition, the Unpacking the Standards component notes the GSE Unit Focus and identifies the grade expectation supported by the Unit Focus Standard. The description equips teachers with a brief explanation of the GSE and defines pertinent vocabulary linked to the Focus Standard. This information deepens the knowledge and conceptual understanding of the Focus GSE addressed in the unit.

Interventions is another section located in the Teacher Edition. The Every Student Succeeds Act (Mandlawitz, 2016) advocates the use of evidence-based interventions and instruction. When formative assessment data from Total Motivation ELA reveal students in need of intervention, intervention activities must be provided to students in need. To support the Unit Focus GSE, these interventions can be used by teachers to foster active learning, to provide additional practice, to provide the means for assessing students beyond traditional classroom methods, to re-teach or reinforce concepts, or provide targeted skill intervention. Thus, if students are approaching the Focus GSE, these activities will help close the existing gap in learning.

Studies support the use of several measures from which to gauge student achievement. Constructed Responses, Extended Constructed Responses, and Extended Writing Responses (paired passages) appear in the Student Edition units. The Constructed Response prompts require students to respond to the unit passage based on the Unit Focus GSE, using evidence from the passage to support their thinking and responses. The Extended Constructed Response prompts require students to write narratives based on the unit passage. In some instances, students are asked



to write original personal narrative or original imagined pieces that are related to the topic of the unit passage. In other instances, students are asked to write a portion of the unit passage using more descriptive language and dialogue, to write the unit passage from a different point of view, or to write the passage starting from a prescribed point and creating an alternate conclusion or resolution for the narrative. The Extended Writing Response prompts are included in the units that contain paired passages. These prompts require students to write either opinion/argument texts or informative/explanatory texts based on the topic, theme, or perspective of the unit passages. Student synthesize information from the unit passages and use their original thinking and evidence from the passages to compose appropriate and meaningful responses. The Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition provides instructions that teachers can use to guide student thinking and writing and provides rubrics to score all types of student responses: Constructed Response, Extended Constructed Response, and Extended Writing Response. When students are provided these rubrics prior to their writing and they are included as a part of the writing instruction, students have clear understandings of what is required and expected of their content and expression. The Constructed Response rubrics provide two-point scales; the Extended Construction Response rubrics provide four-point scales; the Extended Writing Response rubrics provide seven-point scales. The purpose of these writing prompts is to encourage students to observe the natural relationship between reading and writing so that they become skilled in reading and then expressing thoughts, reflections, and responses to the texts using written language.

Research indicates that when children read extensively they become better writers. Reading from a variety of genres, as found in Total Moti-

vation ELA, can help students learn many things, such as text structures and language that can be transferred to their own writing. Reading also provides background knowledge students can use in written (or oral) compositions. Writing can convey knowledge in print, but students must have information with which to write. The conclusion is reading plays a large role in writing. Furthermore, evidence in the literature shows reading and writing are connected based on a shared common knowledge and cognitive processes (Shanahan, 2006). In the report *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*, Graham and Hebert (2010) identify how writing about what is read can enhance reading comprehension. Within the report, evidence of writing practices found to be effective in helping students increase their reading skills and comprehension are noted. Therefore, it appears that by improving students' writing skills, improved reading skills should result. Total Motivation ELA capitalizes on the reading and writing connection, integrating the two into each unit.

Additional assessments appear in the form of the Revising/Editing items in the Total Motivation ELA Student Edition. Some items address the writing GSE and require students to make decisions about the revision of opinion, informative/explanatory, or narrative prepared texts. For example, students are asked to determine the option would make the best topic sentence, the option should not be included in the text, or the option would include needed details for the text. Some items address the Language GSE and require students to make decisions about editing provided sentences or texts. For example, students are asked to choose the option that is written using correct grammar usage, the option that is written using correct spelling, or the option that is written with no errors. The Teacher Edition content for the Revising/Editing assessment items includes

an explanation of the GSE standard(s) addressed in the items, the student items, and the bolded correct options. The Revising/Revision assessment items align with the content and format of the Georgia Milestone Assessments.

Suggestions are also provided to classroom teachers on how to address critical thinking using Bloom's Taxonomy to stimulate and develop students' higher order thinking skills. Questioning prompts are included on the three upper levels of thinking – Analyze, Evaluate, and Create - that stimulate and encourage creative thinking. Bloom (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl, 1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior in learning. This taxonomy contained three domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. Within the cognitive domain, Bloom identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The taxonomy was revised by Anderson and others (2001) to focus on thinking as an active process. The original and revised taxonomies continue to be useful today in developing and categorizing the critical thinking skills of students. Hess' Cognitive Rigor English Language Arts Matrix (Hess, 2009; Hess, 2010) integrates Revised Bloom's Taxonomy with Webb's Depth of Knowledge. This matrix is provided in the Teacher Edition to help educators develop questions and plan learning experiences that reflect rigor, depth, and complexity of thought.

The Motivation Station activity that is a part of each Motivation Station ELA Student Edition provides additional practice and application of the Reading, Writing, or Language GSE. For example, students are asked to apply the use of appropriate grammar, interpret figurative language, or complete charts that require an understanding of word parts and their meanings. The Teacher Edition section for Motivation Station provides an explanation of the GSE standard(s) addressed in

the activity as well as the student activity and correct or suggested responses.

Students who are college and career ready are students with the ability to integrate knowledge and skills across multiple content standards. Performance tasks appear to be the appropriate assessments to determine this readiness since it would be difficult to assess this ability through selected-response or constructed-response items. One Performance Task Assessment for each unit is presented in both the Student Edition and the Teacher Edition. All tasks are relative to real-world application and use the unit passage as the stimulus for students thinking. The tasks are performed independently and result in a product or a performance which can be scored using the provided scoring criteria appropriate for rubric assessment. Students are asked to share their products with appropriate audiences, thus, addressing the Speaking and Listening GSE. It is recommended that students are provided an introduction to performance tasks (Stiggins and Chappuis, 2005; Khattri, Reeve, and Kane, 1998). The design for the student task includes the following descriptors: Standards Focus, Performance Task (overview), Performance Task Steps (description of steps), and Scoring Criteria (advanced knowledge of scoring). The scoring criteria are identified for inclusion into rubrics to be used for student self-assessment and for teacher scoring. Depth of understanding, research skills, provision of relevant evidence (Darling-Hammond and Pecheone, 2010) and the ability to integrate knowledge and skills across content standards or within a content area (Khattri and Sweet, 1996) are some of the expectations that will be measured or demonstrated with performance tasks. Rubrics inform students of the established criteria for success by clarifying desired learning outcomes. Crooks (1988) shared criterion-referenced feedback provides the guidance for improving student understanding. Self-assessment



and reflection are an important part of the learning process. When students monitor their work against preset criteria, they can receive immediate feedback regarding the task (Wiggins, 1993; Trammel, Schloss, and Alper, 1994). Performance tasks provide educators with an understanding of what students have internalized and what still needs support in regards to the CCS, since the performance tasks clearly connect to the specified CCS. Due to the accountability issue for schools, Mentoring Minds encourages teachers to maintain accurate and useful data as well as to employ a variety of assessment opportunities in order to form a more valid insight on where students stand in reading performance. Performance tasks, formative assessments, selected-response items, and constructed-response items are some of the included assessments within Total Motivation ELA.

Studies show that the art of asking questions with an emphasis on higher-level thinking can advance student achievement. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) reported how teachers can increase their effectiveness in teaching and learning by using research findings on questioning strategies. An important conclusion showed learning to increase in classrooms where teachers asked questions related to essential content rather than questions teachers gleaned would interest students (Alexander, Kulikowich, and Schulze, 1994; Risner, Nicholson, and Webb, 1994). Redfield and Rousseau (1981) reported that knowledge level questions resulted in less learning than higher-level questions that encouraged students to use their analytical thought processes. Fillippone (1998) found that teachers ask lower-level questions more times than not.

Wait-time should be acknowledged before asking a question. Usually teachers give less than one second for students to respond to a question and the results are short responses or no re-

sponse at all. Student-to-student interaction and quality of responses increase when wait-time is addressed noted Fowler (1975). Rowe (1974) studied the effect of questions on elementary students that were used by their teachers. Results showed three to five seconds of wait-time led to increases in student responses, student confidence, evidence supporting the response, and student conversation. This finding is consistent at the middle and high school levels when wait-time is allowed after asking a question. A recommendation is to allow five seconds of wait-time. Students must be informed that this time is their think-time and time should also be adjusted to the cognitive level of the questions.

Based on a literature review, graphic organizers have been successfully utilized with students with or without learning disabilities before, during and after reading texts. Organizers serve as visual scaffolds, helping to assist students in activating prior knowledge (e.g., serving as an entry into text structure, identifying and connecting the main ideas of a text). To receive the fullest benefit, teachers should implement this strategy and train students to use each introduced organizer to help guide students in becoming independent learners. Organizers can prepare all students for learning, even English Language Learners. Other benefits include developing and reinforcing the concept, and helping clarify misunderstandings. Many researchers support the use of organizers for reading skills and vocabulary development (Chularut et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2002; Brookbank et al., 1999; Moore and Readence, 1984). Graphic organizers allow students to use graphics, symbols, and words to present a visual display to structure learning before and during a lesson. Paivio (1986) stated students can understand information and learn more when a variety of modes are used to present content. The graphic organizers that are referenced within the Unit In-

structional Plans in Total Motivation ELA Teacher Edition are provided in Appendix D: Teacher Resources and are legal to copy for classroom use.

Mentoring Minds sought to understand the issues involved in teaching English Language Arts. The National Research Council (2001) asserted that the performance of students in both reading and mathematics at the conclusion of elementary school is an important predictor of their educational success. Students who have not acquired a quality foundation in reading and language arts skills can expect to encounter problems across the disciplines throughout their schooling and in later years. Summary statements such as these, other research findings or recommendations, a review of literature, and observations from classroom experiences yield much knowledge about what works. With this wealth of information, Total Motivation ELA was developed to complement reading and language arts instruction for any campus. The Mentoring Minds Product Development Team embraces the goal that all students receive quality-based opportunities from which they develop essential reading skills in order to learn for the remainder of their lives.

Kilpatrick, Swafford, and Findell (2001) share that in mathematics that all standards within the content area build understanding, rather than placing emphasis on a few standards. To ensure student success in the Reading standards, that statement can be applicable to Reading; thus, all reading standards must be addressed. Research strongly supports the importance of student acquisition of conceptual understanding in Reading. Total Motivation ELA addresses the standards eligible for testing. As students progress from grade to grade, students should become increasingly proficient in the standards relating to Reading. Proficiency in this area of English Language Arts will prepare students to meet challenges they may face in college, in the work force, and in life.

The English Language Arts Product Development Team is comprised of educators who have served as administrators and teachers. In the

course of developing Total Motivation ELA and aligning this resource to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, the writers consulted many sources. They reviewed research-based evidence on how students learn, gathered input from a wide array of educators, attended conferences, collaborated with practitioners in the field, studied released documents from the Georgia Milestone Assessments Resources for both parents and educators (GaDOE, 2015b; GaDOE, 2016) unpacked the GSE, employed individual expertise, and applied collective judgment as they designed an English Language Arts resource to lead students into the 21st century. The contents of Total Motivation ELA focus on the Georgia Standards of Excellence in Reading, Writing, Foundational Skills, Language, and Speaking/Listening (GaDOE 2015a; GaDOE, 2015c), ensuring that the product is appropriate, high-quality, and current. Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, et al., 1956; Anderson, et al., 2001) Webb's Depth of Knowledge (Webb, 2002) and Karin Hess' English Language Arts Cognitive Rigor Matrix (Hess, 2009) and Hess' Text Complexity Matrices for Literary Text and Informational Text (Hess & Hervey, 2010a; Hess & Hervey, 2010b) are incorporated to stimulate and develop students' critical thinking skills, encouraging rigor and depth in thinking. Examples of evidence-based techniques found in Total Motivation ELA are many, including standards-based instruction, cooperative learning, minds-on learning activities, formative assessments, and real-world applications. The contents of Total Motivation ELA complement these principles for improving student performance. The literature on improving student performance concludes that effective instruction must provide specific information on individual student performance for teachers, parents, and students; peer feedback and support; direct or explicit instruction; and real-world application. Total Motivation ELA addresses these criteria for improving student performance.



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