

Middle School Georgia Social Studies Curriculum Guide



Table of Contents

- I. Overview
- II. Lesson Types
- III. Content Standards and Aligned CERCA Sets
- IV. Supporting Bilingual Learners
- V. Implementation Results

I. Overview

Objective

To support schools and districts in increasing student achievement in reading and writing across disciplines through rigorous, differentiated content and instruction for English language arts, social studies, science, and math.

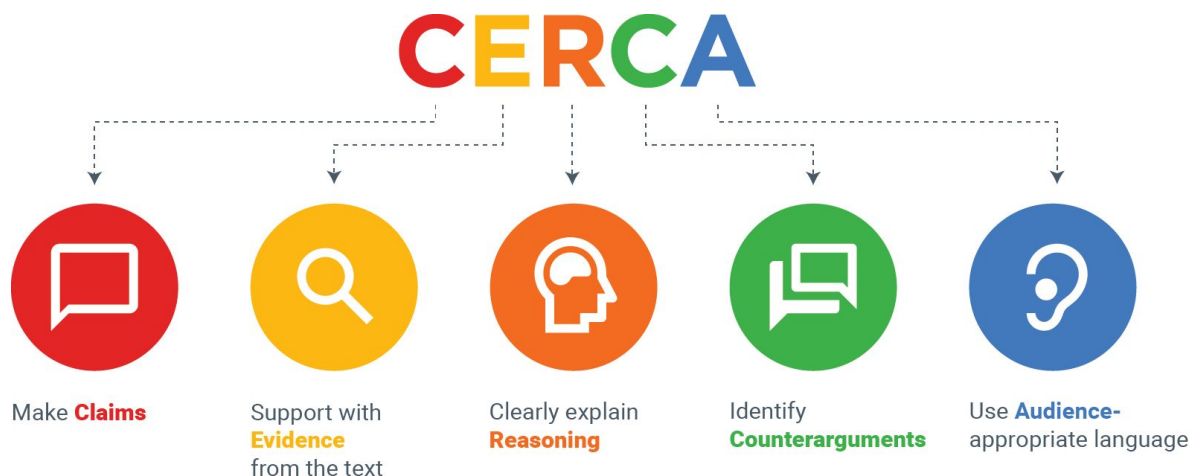
Goals

- Provide measurable student outcomes by improving teacher capacity for the delivery of standards-based literacy instruction, featuring grade-level complex texts and tasks with a focus on close reading and argumentative writing across English, Science, Social Studies, and Math.
- Increase professional collaboration through a shared language, practice, and data.
- Improve instructional leadership with a flexible, cross-curricular framework that focuses on research-based practices in early to intermediate literacy instruction.

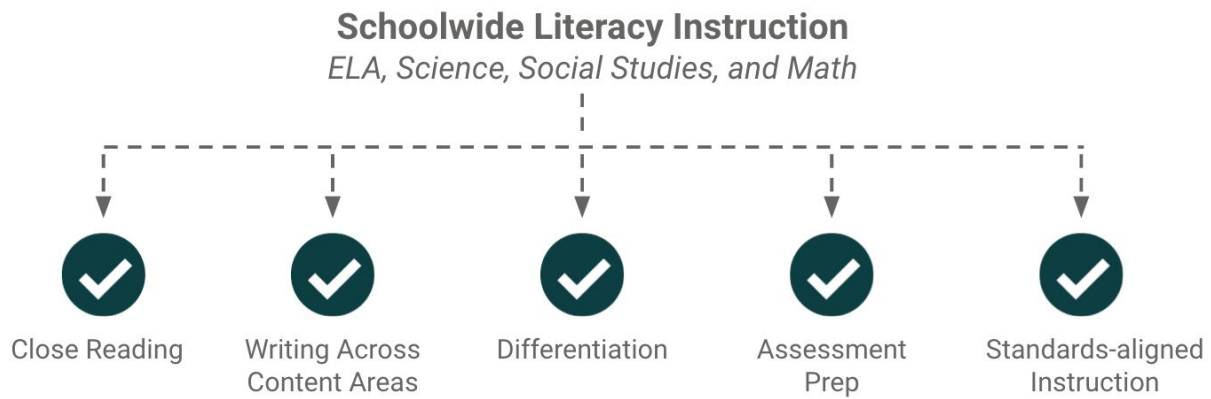
Solution: ThinkCERCA

ThinkCERCA's personalized literacy curriculum and platform empowers teachers to grow students' critical thinking skills. Through standards-aligned close reading and academic writing lessons for English language arts, science, social studies, and math, our schoolwide approach to literacy instruction prepares students in grades 3-12 for post-secondary life by building their analytical skills in every subject.

The CERCA Framework gives teams a common literacy language to collaborate more effectively across content areas and improve student outcomes. Our coherent curriculum is based on disciplinary texts and discipline-specific close reading and academic writing, including argumentative, informational, narrative, and research writing.



The ThinkCERCA Platform



Schoolwide Literacy Instruction

The CERCA Framework gives teams a common language to collaborate more effectively across content areas and improve student outcomes.

Close Reading

Our platform includes a lesson library of relevant, leveled texts and tasks that build students' discipline-specific knowledge while making close reading engaging and fun.

- Standards-aligned, discipline-specific highlighting and summarizing practice
- In-text vocabulary and audio support
- Automated assessments for comprehension

Writing Across Content Areas

Scaffolded lessons walk students through the process of using evidence and details to support their argumentative, informational, and narrative writings across disciplines.

- Interactive Argument Builder; prewriting tools for narrative and informational writing
- Rigorous writing prompts focused on debatable issues and great literary models
- Standards-aligned sentence frames and supports for English language development

Differentiation

We make personalization simple with theme-based text sets that are differentiated for 10 levels of readiness and built-in tools that keep teachers at the center of instruction.

- Embedded differentiation tools to auto-assign by readiness level
- Leveling pre-assessments for reading and writing
- Real-time data to monitor student progress

Standards-Aligned Instruction

Our instructional designs were developed based on the research and practice of master teachers and nationally recognized literacy experts and meet the demands of new career and college readiness standards.

- Introductions to standards-aligned key skills and concepts
- Alignment with Common Core, NGSS, and C3
- Standards-aligned grading rubrics

Assessment Preparation

Research shows that frequent practice of CERCA increases test scores while building critical thinking skills.

ThinkCERCA's formative and summative assessments allow teachers to infuse practice with items found in new state assessments, including PARCC, Smarter Balanced, and ACT, as well as the new SAT and growth assessments such as NWEA.

- Development of analytical and synthesizing skills
- Practice of providing supporting evidence with discipline-specific language instruction
- Creation of constructed responses to text-based questions

C3 Framework

We collaborated with key thought leaders, including the designers of the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards, as we developed our social studies content. These leveled lessons—aligned to key topics across geographical locations and time periods—allow teachers to build discipline-specific background knowledge in a vertical plan while engaging students who may be ahead of or behind peers.

II. Lesson Types

ThinkCERCA's standards-aligned lessons provide engaging content and expert instruction to give all students the opportunity to grow their literacy skills.



APPLIED READING & WRITING

Practice close reading and academic writing.

ThinkCERCA's Applied Reading & Writing lessons are centered around debatable topics that get students thinking critically about real-world issues. Using the CERCA Framework and our built-in graphic organizer, these lessons walk students through the process of reading a text closely to construct cohesive argumentative, informational, or narrative writings. Highlighting and annotating tools, in-text vocabulary support, and audio and visuals guide students through the text to ensure overall comprehension. Students can also collaborate with one another through teacher-facilitated debates and discussions to practice their speaking and listening skills.



DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Introduce key skills and concepts.

ThinkCERCA's Direct Instruction lessons feature short, expert introductions to standards-aligned skills and concepts that students can strengthen over time. These skills include concepts and vocabulary related to the CERCA Framework, such as how to make claims, find evidence, and explain one's reasoning, in addition to other basic literacy skills. A flipbook-style format, built-in audio, supportive visuals, and real-time feedback are among the many features included within our direct instruction lessons to keep students engaged.







ADDITIONAL READING PRACTICE


Assign leveled texts and automated assessments.


Our Additional Reading Practice lessons contain high-interest, authentic informational texts—featuring videos, graphs, charts, and other visual sources— that build up students' discipline-specific background knowledge. At the end of each lesson, students answer five multiple choice questions to gauge comprehension and get them accustomed to the kinds of questioning found in growth assessments, PARCC, Smarter Balanced, and ACT Aspire. Additionally, in-text vocabulary and voice-over tools provide students with additional comprehension and support. All Additional Reading Practice lessons are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading.


III. Content Standards and Aligned CERCA Sets

Grade 6		
Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada, Europe, and Australia		
	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain conflict and change.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6H1, SS6H3 (Latin America & Europe)
	CERCA SET	The Transatlantic Slave Trade Perseverance World War II <i>*Cold War set coming soon</i>
	DOMAIN	Geographic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain the impact of environmental issues.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6G2, SS6G6, SS6G8 (Latin America, Canada, & Europe)
	CERCA SET	Personal Energy Use Energy Policy The Carbon Cycle Human Impact on Oceans
	DOMAIN	Geographic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Describe selected cultural characteristics
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6G10 (Europe)
	CERCA SET	Cultural Perception Family History


	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Compare and contrast various forms of government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6CG1, SS6CG3 (Latin America & Europe)
	CERCA SET	The U.S. Constitution The Electoral College


	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain citizen participation in Government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6CG2, SS6CG4 (Canada & Australia)
	CERCA SET	Voting Modern Protest Social Responsibility

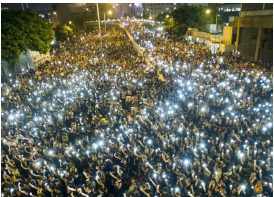
	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze different economic systems.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6E1, SS6E4, SS6E7, SS6E10 (Latin America, Canada, Europe, & Australia)
	CERCA SET	Value


	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Describe factors that influence economic growth and examine their presence or absence.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS6E3, SS6E6, SS6E9, SS6E12 (Latin America, Canada, Europe, Australia)
	CERCA SET	<u>Entrepreneurship</u>


Grade 7 - Africa, Southwest Asia (Middle East), Southern and Eastern Asia


	DOMAIN	Geographic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain environmental issues across the continents
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7G2, SS7G6, SS7G10 (Africa, Southwest Asia, Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Water Purification The Carbon Cycle


	DOMAIN	Geographic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze the diverse cultural characteristics.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7G4, SS7G8, SS7G12 (Africa, Southwest Asia, Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Cultural Perception Personal Identity Family History

	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Compare and contrast different forms of citizen participation in government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7CG1 (Africa)
	CERCA SET	Modern Protest Social Responsibility


	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze different economic systems.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7E1, SS7E4, SS7E7 (Africa, Southwest Asia, Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Value


	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Describe factors that influence economic growth and examine their presence or absence.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7E3, SS7E6, SS7E9 (Africa, Southwest Asia, Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Entrepreneurship


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze continuity and change.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7H2, SS7H3 (Southwest Asia, & Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Perseverance Mahatma Gandhi World War II Modern Protest


	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Compare and contrast various forms of government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER & CONTINENT	SS7CG4 (Southern and Eastern Asia)
	CERCA SET	Voting The Electoral College


Grade 8 Georgia Studies


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Evaluate the impact of European exploration and settlement on American Indians in Georgia.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H1
	CERCA SET	Christopher Columbus


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze the colonial period of Georgia's history.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H2
	CERCA SET	Jamestown Cultural Perception Personal Identity

	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze the role of Georgia in the American Revolutionary Era.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H3
	CERCA SET	Paul Revere and the Revolutionary War Thomas Paine and the Philosophy of Revolutions The U.S. Constitution Struggle of a New Nation


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain significant factors that affected westward expansion in Georgia between 1789 and 1840.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H4
	CERCA SET	Westward Expansion


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze the impact of the Civil War on Georgia.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H5
	CERCA SET	Economic Strategies in the Civil War


	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze Georgia's participation in important events that occurred from World War I through the Great Depression.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H8
	CERCA SET	Time in the Industrial Revolution Progressive Era Child Labor The Great Depression

	DOMAIN	Historical Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Describe the role of Georgia in WWII.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8H9
	CERCA SET	World War II

	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Describe the foundations of Georgia's government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8CG1
	CERCA SET	The U.S. Constitution The Electoral College Voting Social Responsibility

	DOMAIN	Government/Civic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Analyze the role of the judicial branch in Georgia state government.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8CG4
	CERCA SET	Technology and the Fourth Amendment Supreme Court Decisions: Free Speech

	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Evaluate the influence of Georgia-based businesses on the State's economic growth and development.
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8E2
	CERCA SET	Entrepreneurship

	DOMAIN	Economic Understandings
	CONTENT FOCUS	Explain the principles of effective personal money management
	RELATED GSE NUMBER	SS8E3
	CERCA SET	Risk Taking

IV. Supporting Bilingual Learners

ThinkCERCA provides teachers with everything they need to support developing bilinguals in their academic English fluency. In addition to research-based approaches embedded in the pedagogy of our software, we provide direct instruction in standards-aligned practices that help developing bilinguals succeed. Review these resources at <https://thinkcerca.com/eld/>.

- Supports for English language development in any classroom setting
- Resources for students at a WIDA Level 3 and above
- Research-based best practices for developing bilinguals
- Online and offline tools and instructional practices, including speaking and listening activities

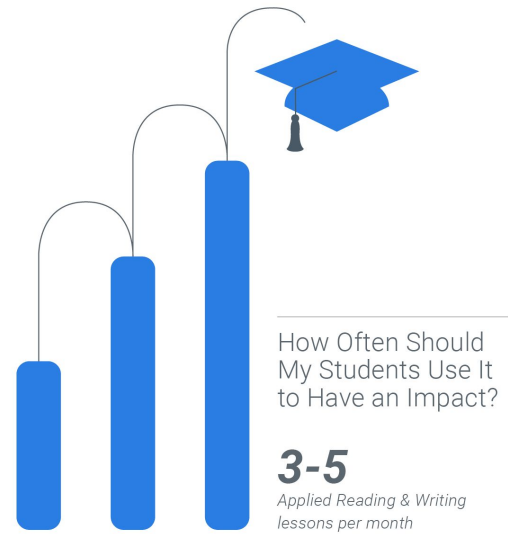
<p>Conventions of Standard English</p> <p>Direct Instruction</p>	<p>ThinkCERCA's Direct Instruction lessons help students with conventions of standard English usage, mechanics and grammar, and parts of speech. They also provide instruction in discipline-specific, academic vocabulary across subjects.</p>
<p>Personal Connections</p> <p>Applied Reading and Writing</p>	<p>Each Applied Reading and Writing lesson provides an opportunity for students to connect personally with the topics in the text. By encouraging collaboration and peer-to-peer discussion, in a group, or even whole class, students engage in meaningful discussions and high-interest topics that expose them to the language they need to successfully navigate the world.</p>
<p>Tier 2 Vocabulary</p> <p>Direct Instruction, Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>Tier 2 vocabulary words with definitions are provided for pre-reading support. Explicit instruction in academic vocabulary helps students access content in disciplines.</p>
<p>Audio Support</p> <p>Direct Instruction, Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>All ThinkCERCA texts have audio support so students can listen to the text while reading along. Student have the option of listening multiple times or even listening to small sections of the text. Real human voices model fluent and expressive English and allow students to access texts beyond their independent English reading levels.</p>
<p>Non-Print Features</p> <p>Direct Instruction, Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>ThinkCERCA provides non-print features to support students in connecting to background knowledge and developing new meaning. The strong visuals in our Direct Instruction lessons and the images embedded in our texts, including infographics, multimedia, and video presentations, support learning for everyone, including English language learners.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Sentence Frames</p> <p>Applied Reading and Writing Lessons</p>	<p>Sentence stems help students crack the code of college- and career-ready English. By understanding the most common frames and practicing them, students build confidence in their critical literacy skills.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Blended Learning and Small Groups</p> <p>Direct Instruction, Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>ThinkCERCA provides a framework for teachers to incorporate into small group instruction, independent collaboration, and individual personalized instruction in a blended learning environment. In this dynamic environment, students are given a variety of opportunities to engage with language through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Structure and Language of Genre</p> <p>Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>ThinkCERCA exposes students to the language of various genres and disciplines. The consistency of the text structures in the overview, summary, sentence frames, and counterargument gives students repeated exposure and familiarity with both structure and language.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Oral and Written Language</p> <p>Direct Instruction, Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>ThinkCERCA supports the critical relationship between oral and written language by requiring students to discuss and negotiate complex issues with multiple perspectives. Readings about debatable topics open up opportunities for structured conversations in small groups, with partners and as a whole class. Discussions require students to use accurate and relevant text-based information to support claims and to explain their reasons as well as reasoning. By toggling back and forth from text to conversation, and finding evidence to support thinking, students increase and deepen their understanding of the text at hand.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Culture</p> <p>Applied Reading and Writing, Additional Reading Practice</p>	<p>Readings respect and honor the cultures of multiple groups and offer broad representation of not only various cultures, but also discussions about global issues.</p>

V. Implementation Results

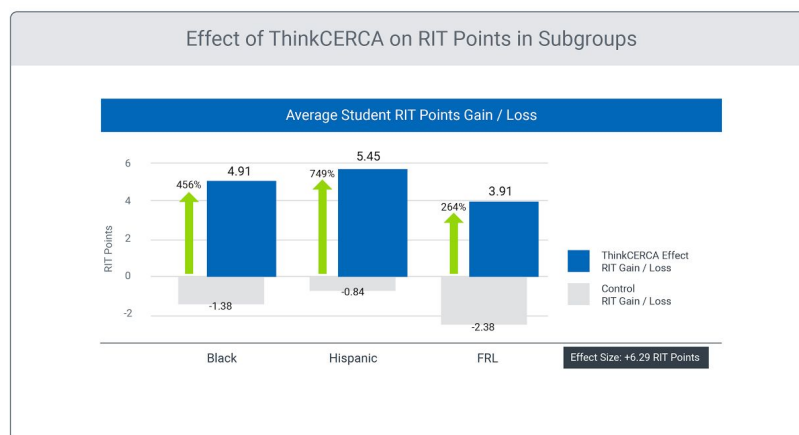
Research-based Impact

ThinkCERCA is built upon an ever-growing body of research from institutions like the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, which confirms that reading, writing, and argumentation three to five times per month across subjects helps students become career- and college-ready. Third-party efficacy data shows that students gain an average of 1.5 to 2.5 years of reading growth when ThinkCERCA is implemented with fidelity. More information at www.thinkcerca.com/results.



LEAP Innovations Controlled Study

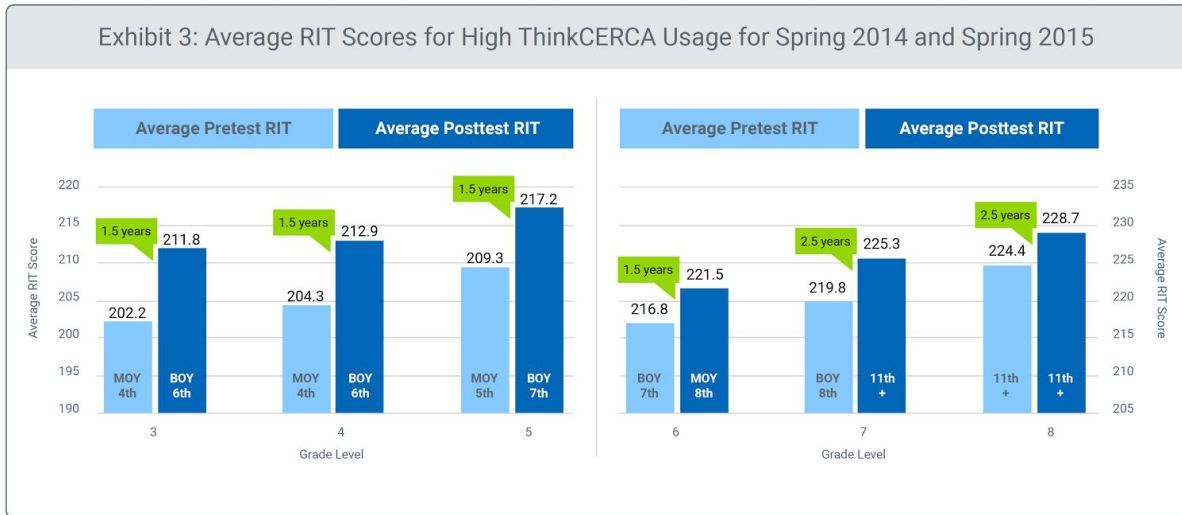
On average, students using ThinkCERCA gained an extra year's worth of academic growth. This is equivalent to closing the achievement gap by 264 percent for low-income students, 456 percent for black students, and 749 percent for Latino students. Read the full study at go.thinkcerca.com/leapstudy



Leap Innovations, "Results from the LEAP Innovations Pilot Network" study, 2014-15

Atlantic Research Partners Third-Party Study

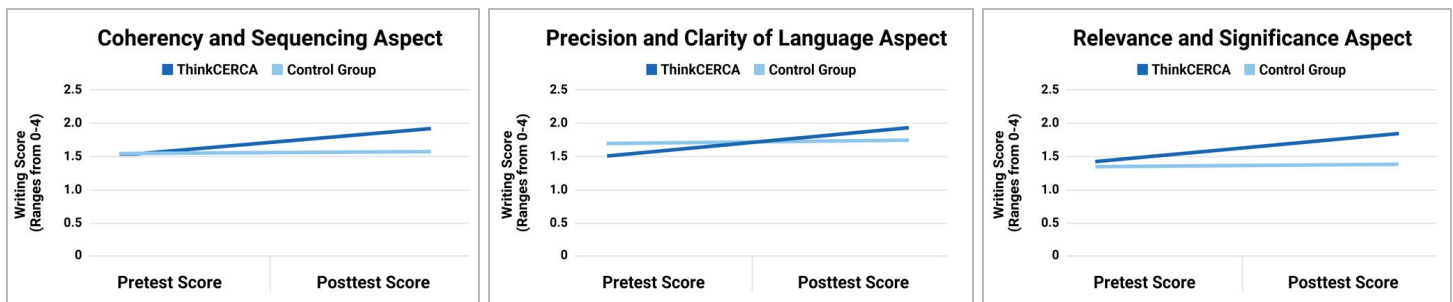
Students in grade levels with significant use of ThinkCERCA outperformed their peers nationally on NWEA growth at different attainment levels in the 2014-2015 academic school year. Read the full study at go.thinkcerca.com/arpstudy



Source: Atlantic Research Partners, "Literacy Instruction with ThinkCERCA: Findings from Chicago Public Schools" study, January 2016

SRI Education Controlled Study

Gains in student writing scores in the elementary grades were positive across all writing aspects and statistically significant for five of the six aspects. Read the full study at go.thinkcerca.com/sristudy



Source: SRI Education, "Literacy Courseware Challenge Evaluation: Results of ThinkCERCA Participation" study, January 2016