Teengagement:

Design, Research, and Results Overview

Teengagement is a project-based teen literacy solution addressing the essential skills needed for success in college and career for the 21st century. Purposeful, relevant, rigorous, and engaging units of study form the basis of this unique literacy solution.

The objective of Teengagement is to increase secondary reading proficiency by challenging students with stimulating and rigorous print content that integrates reading, writing, critical thinking, and ethical problem-solving tasks. The core beliefs, curriculum design, and instructional practices of Teengagement are based on the research of thought leaders in the areas of reading process and reading instruction, including Jane Healy, Renate & Geoffrey Caine, Yvette Jackson & Eric Cooper, and Maryanne Katzir &Tami Wolfe, among others. Embedded within the curriculum are research-based reading, writing, thinking, and discussion techniques that build proficiency in reading and anticipate problem areas in communicating with text. It includes standard-based lessons and instructional components that help students complete project-based Authentic Assessment research tasks.

Instructional Design

Units of Study (UOS)

The heart and soul of Teengagement are high-interest, nonfiction units of study, each written at three Lexile bands and in ACT-style for student differentiation. Teengagement units of study are guided by an essential question and include paired text, data, and project-based authentic assessment. They deliver rigorous comprehension, writing, and critical thinking assessments for practice with standards and track performance.

UOS Instructional Components

Each unit of study is supported by instructional pieces for teachers, including student and teacher videos, Instructional Blueprints for curriculum mapping and a strategy "toolbox."

Assessment Accelerator and Instructional Plan

The scope and sequence of the Teengagement curriculum includes concentrated assessment preparation. With the Assessment Accelerator, students and teachers have access to rigorous, standards-based practice exams with detailed response item analysis for each question and standard-based progress monitoring. Teachers are provided with a targeted state assessment test-prep instructional plan and series of videos to use in conjunction with the Assessment Accelerator.

Teengagement Empower Professional Development

Teengagement Empower provides web-based professional development. Relevant, actionable, and instructional capacity-building videos provide teachers and coaches with meaningful professional development, delivered in an online format convenient for busy educators. Instruction and interactive videos focus on essential topics and standards for successful teen literacy instruction, allowing teachers to complete actionable, relevant professional development individually, on their own time.

Efficacy: Academic Outcomes

Figures 1 and 2 graphically depict the descriptive statistics for students participating in Teengagement during Spring, 2017 at Terry Parker High School. Research and analysis conducted by CIC Planning Group.

Fig 1. State Achievement Level Comparisons 2016 vs 2017   Fig 2. State Scale Score Comparisons 2016 vs 2017
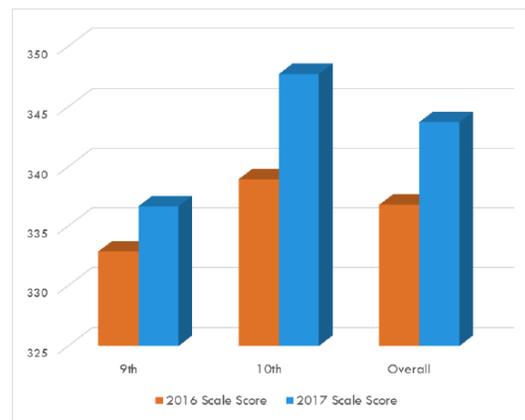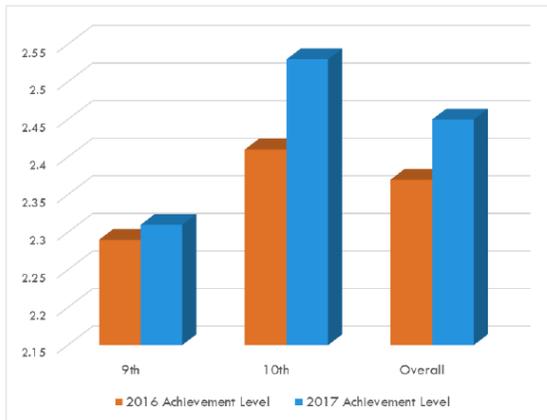
Tables 2 and 3 present 2016-17 State Exam gains for Terry Parker Teengagement students, shown by prior-year (2015-16) State Exam Achievement Level and Grade Level.

Table 2. 2016 – 2017 Outcomes by 2015 – 2016 State Exam Achievement Level

2015-16 FSA Level	N Students	2016-17 FSA			
		Average Scale Score % Gain	% Students Increasing Scale Score	% Students Increasing Achievement Level	2017 Scale Score Difference (*t*-value)
1	80	3.18%	84%	38%	6.40**
2	111	2.19%	79%	24%	7.74**
3	102	1.54%	70%	22%	5.46**
4	35	1.36%	71%	6%	3.02*
5	12	1.39%	58%	---	1.23
OVERALL	340	2.09%	76%	24%	11.53**

Note. *t*-values, a measure of magnitude of gains, were derived from Paired Samples T-Tests, described below. ** $p < .001$, * $p < .01$.

Table 3. 2016 – 2017 State Exam Outcomes by Grade Level

Grade Level	N Students	2016-17 FSA			
		Average Scale Score % Gain	% Students Increasing Scale Score	% Students Increasing Achievement Level	2017 Scale Score Difference (*t*-value)
9th	122	1.17%	70%	21%	3.52**
10th	218	2.61%	79%	25%	12.56**
OVERALL	340	2.09%	76%	24%	11.53**

Note. ** $p < .001$.

This data suggests large gains from 2016 to 2017, with an overall average gain of over 2%. 76% of students exhibited increases in scale score and 24% increased achievement levels. Of these:

- 38% of students scoring at a Level 1 in 2016 improved to a Level 2 or higher in 2017.
- 24% of students scoring at Level 2 improved to a Level 3 or higher.
- Nearly 4% of students grew two achievement levels from 2016 to 2017.

These results mirrored gains found across Teengagement Progress Monitoring assessments.

Theoretical Perspectives

The Teengagement instructional design, delivery model, and framework are based on many research-based theoretical perspectives.

Jane Healy

Healy's research indicates that more students can be successful in an instructional setting if teachers modify their practices to accommodate the learning needs of the mind. Many students have insufficient academic foundations upon which to build, including poor skills foundation and an inadequate network of early experiences. This contributes to a lack of perseverance in the face of complex activities and blocks the desire to think beyond the literal or concrete dimensions of a concept. Teengagement provides an instructional plan broken into manageable units, meaningful application activities that push students incrementally beyond current capabilities, and foundational review/practices. Teengagement recognizes comprehension as a neurological series of events that responds well to curiosity, perseverance, confidence, and active integration of activities.

Renate and Geoffrey Caine

The cornerstone of Caine and Caine's research is a set of 12 brain/mind learning principles that clearly describe what influences learning. When students are exposed to great instruction, they flourish as learners – despite negative maturational elements. Imagine a classroom of students who arrive at school with the intent to learn, personal instruction plans in place, all able to focus on current learning objectives. Students are engrossed in the study of relevant topics, willing to collaborate within a small group structure, and involved in rich open-ended learning experiences that include discussion and cooperative investigations. In other words, imagine a classroom immersed in a Teengagement unit of study.

Katzir, Wolfe, and Other Vocabulary Research

The relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is clear; it acts as the "bridge between word level process of phonics and the cognitive processes of comprehension." Staying-connected-to-text reading fluency depends on the successful integration of phonological, orthographic, semantic, syntactic, and morphological processes. Teachers must build a receptive language vocabulary base that provides rich visual impressions of large numbers of concepts and related sub-concepts. Teengagement includes content area academic vocabulary in a structured manner in all subjects. The instructional blueprint guides vocabulary quizzes that draw on strategies (Connect 2, Composing with Three, Vocabulary Concept Word Chain, What do You Think?, Concept Connection) that evaluate comprehension.

Summary

Long term success in critical reading happens because of an investment in an "on-the-job" reading apprenticeship between the teachers (who are engaged content experts) and their students. Students rapidly progress in reading efficiency, reading stamina and comprehension accuracy if they are shown how to read texts and articles. The role of the teacher is to create a climate where students are challenged but not threatened by what is expected of them in class. When the teacher proves to the students that they are capable of making progress in all learning endeavors, a state of relaxed alertness grows. This positions the student to take on a growth mindset and allows the student to welcome future challenges. They know when to seek peer or teacher support and how to refocus on their objectives. This is the Teengagement framework. Contact info@teengagement.com with the subject line "Research Request" to receive our full white paper, "Teengagement: Instructional Design, Efficacy, and Theoretical Perspectives."