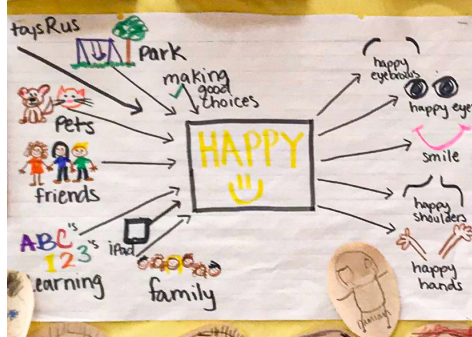




David Crockett Early Education School, Grand Prairie I.S.D., Texas



Young learners are doing some big thinking at David Crockett Early Education School. Pre-K students in Grand Prairie Independent School District are using Thinking Maps to build literacy and cognitive skills in both English and Spanish. These students are entering Kindergarten ready to learn and succeed.

## SNAPSHOT

*David Crockett Early Education*

- 600+ Students
- 35 Teachers
- Dual Language Campus
- Whole-School Title I
- 96% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 50.4% English Language Learners

## A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THINKING SKILLS

David Crockett Early Education School serves more than 600 Pre-K students in Grand Prairie, Texas. Most of their students come from low-income neighborhoods and many are English Language Learners (ELLs). Kathy Hasty, the Instructional Coach at Crockett, says, “Many of our students are considered to be academically at risk. It is our job to make sure that they are entering Kindergarten with the skills they need to be successful learners.”

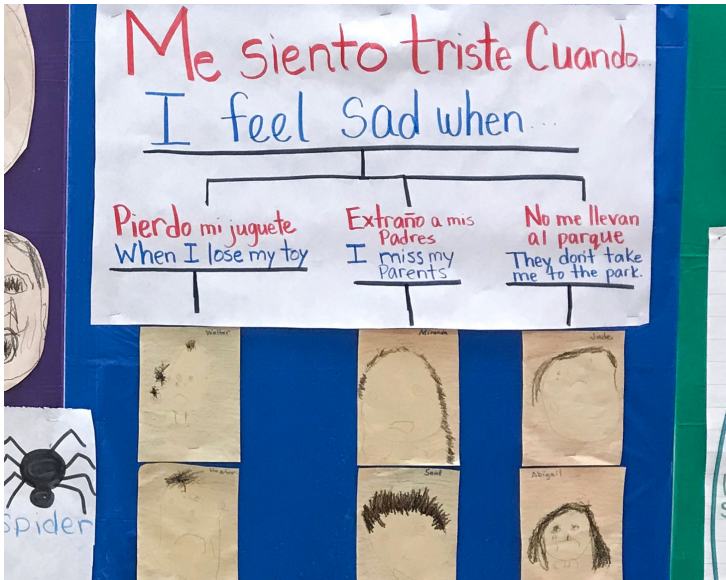
When Crockett opened in 2015, the administrative team was charged with choosing the programs that fit the campus expectations and academic needs for the two-way dual

language program. They knew they wanted Thinking Maps to be a part of it. The team had experience in using Thinking Maps — a “visual language for learning” — with elementary students. Kathy says, “Thinking Maps had worked so well with

**“It’s amazing to see what these children are capable of when you give them the right tools for learning.”**

- Kathy Hasty, Instructional Coach

## A DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THINKING SKILLS (CONTINUED)



my first graders. I couldn't see any reason why it wouldn't work with Pre-K also."

Thinking Maps was incorporated into the two-way dual language program from the very start. The visual approach works well for their students because the strategies can be applied in any language. The visual Maps are used to help students build vocabulary and early literacy and thinking skills in English and Spanish. Kathy explains, "Most of our students are coming to us with poor vocabulary and pre-literacy skills in both English and their native language, because they don't have enough exposure. Thinking Maps is helping them close those gaps."

## ADAPTING THE MAPS FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

Thinking Maps uses a series of eight visual patterns to help students activate cognitive processes including defining, describing, comparing and contrasting, classifying, sequencing, cause and effect, part/whole relationships, and analogies. Hortencia Piña, the Thinking Maps consultant who trained the teachers at Crockett, says, "A lot of people think that three- and four-year-olds aren't able to handle all eight thinking processes, but that isn't true. These processes are inborn and provide the foundation for learning for even very young children."

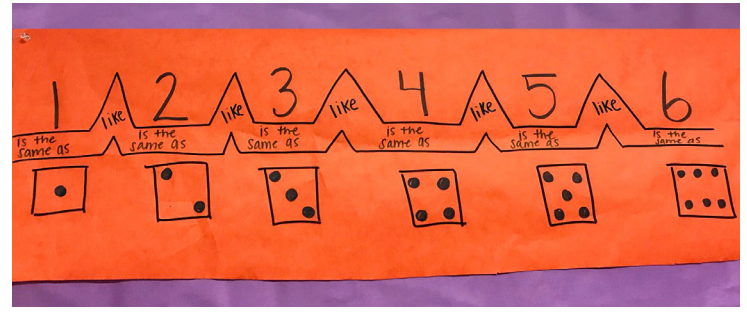
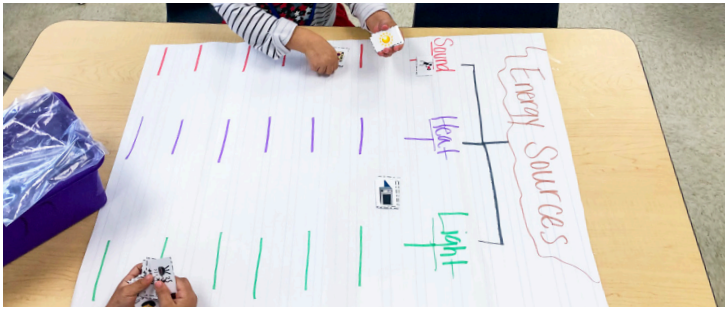
Children at Crockett are introduced to the Maps as soon as they enter the program. In the beginning of the school year, teachers use a lot of modeling to show students how to organize ideas using the different Maps. Children start out using pictures and manipulatives. For example, they may classify shapes by placing blocks on a large Tree Map drawn by the teacher. As their language and literacy skills grow, teachers start adding words along with pictures to Maps that students and teachers build together. By the end of the school year, children are drawing their own Maps using pictures and simple words.

Kathy says that her young students learn how to use Thinking Maps quickly. "The kids love creating Maps. This way of thinking makes total sense to these little people."

Teachers have fully embraced the Maps as well. They are using Thinking Maps across all content areas to help students develop language, literacy, and critical thinking skills. Students use the Tree Map to classify letter sounds, the Bridge Map to explore rhyming words, and the Flow Map to retell stories or learn about the life cycle. They also use the Maps for social and emotional learning, as a springboard to talk about feelings, relationships, and behavioral expectations. "Teachers are using the Maps in so many creative ways—ways I never would have imagined!" Kathy says.



# PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN ELEMENTARY AND BEYOND



Students at Crockett are thriving with Thinking Maps. Prior to 2015, 74% of students entering Kindergarten were non-readers. By 2018, the number of students entering Kindergarten as non-readers decreased to 45%. More than 55% of students attending Pre-K in Grand Prairie ISD are now entering school ready for Kindergarten with grade appropriate literacy skills. Kathy attributes much of this success to Thinking Maps. Thinking Maps is now used in all of the early learning programs for Grand Prairie I.S.D.

"We conduct progress monitoring throughout the year to see how our students are doing. Most of our students start out the year very low on these benchmark tests. When we have our data meetings throughout the year, we watch their scores rise against the benchmarks. By fourth quarter, they are blossoming. Thinking Maps is helping to close the gaps," Kathy says.

**"I can't imagine what we would do without Thinking Maps. The Maps are part of our culture now, and the teachers have really embraced them in everything they do."**

- Kathy Hasty, Instructional Coach

Magdalena Garcia, who was the Assistant Principal at the start of the Thinking Maps Implementation and is now Principal, says, "Our goal at Crockett is to set a strong foundation and ensure our students are leaving our campus

Kindergarten-ready, not just academically but also socially and emotionally ready for their elementary years. Thinking Maps has provided a process on our campus to create critical thinkers in all aspects."

For Kathy, the most exciting thing is watching students learn how to think critically and take information off the Maps. "The Maps challenge them to think in different ways. We ask a lot of questions to get them thinking with the Maps. The things they come up with are incredible!"

David Crockett Early Education School has become a model for early education programs in Grand Prairie and surrounding districts. They often have visitors from other districts in Texas and other states come to see what makes them successful. Kathy says, "You really need to see Thinking Maps in action here to believe it. When people see and hear what these kids are doing, they are amazed. There is a level of sophistication that people just don't believe is possible until they see it. These kids come here wanting to learn. Thinking Maps gives them the tools they need to be successful."





# CROCKETT BUBBLE MAP

When we know our students and give them the opportunity, children will rise to our expectations.

Teachers model often and create whole group Maps, and then read, speak, and write off the Map

Teachers use pictures along with language on the Maps

Students do kinesthetic Maps, such as walking the Flow Map

Students are allowed to take information off the Maps in a variety of ways

Students are allowed to draw information on the Maps to demonstrate understanding

Students are taught the language of the Maps so they learn to speak off the Maps and strengthen their oral language skills

Use manipulatives to construct Maps

Providing strong foundational skills will lead to higher levels of academic success.

