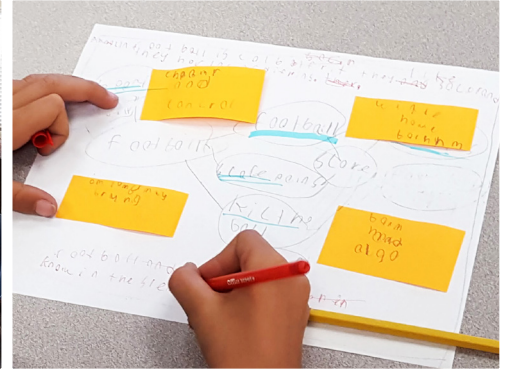
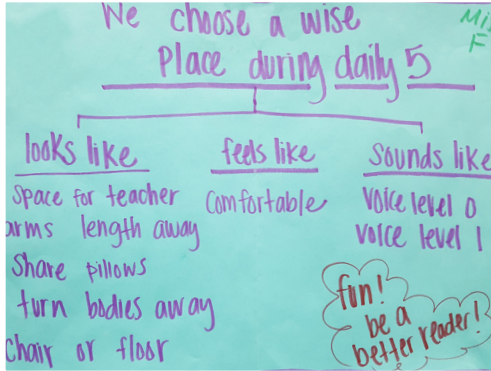




Lucia Mar Unified School District, San Luis Obispo County, California



Lucia Mar Unified School District is the largest school district in San Luis Obispo County, covering more than 550 square miles and serving a student population that is both geographically and demographically diverse. They implemented Thinking Maps in 2013 to build their students' critical thinking and writing skills. Their success hinges on a professional learning community grounded in sustained, embedded professional development to support deeper implementation of the Maps.

SNAPSHOT

Lucia Mar Unified School District

- 10,700 Students
- 11 Elementary Schools, 3 Middle Schools, and 4 High Schools
- 51.6% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 13.5% English Language Learners

MOVING FROM “ASSIGNING THINKING” TO “TEACHING THINKING”

Kelly Logue, a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) at the district, says they implemented Thinking Maps because they wanted to help their students build higher order thinking skills. **“We realized that we were just assigning thinking, rather than really teaching it,”** Kelly says. “That was reflected in the quality of work that we got back from the students, especially in project-based work. We needed to help students go deeper with analytical thinking about the topic before completing a project or writing assignment.”

The district didn't want another program or curriculum that teachers would have to figure out how to fit into the school day. They needed a solution that could be used across all grade levels and content areas and would fit seamlessly into the classroom with the other programs teachers were already using. Thinking Maps fit the bill.

BUILDING A SUSTAINED, EMBEDDED MODEL FOR PD

Kelly and her fellow TOSAs played an integral part in rolling out Thinking Maps across the district. For the first two years of implementation, the district was a recipient of a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant for teacher professional development. The grant allowed them to establish dedicated master teacher positions that were focused full time on peer coaching and training. These master teachers, including Kelly, became the first Thinking Maps Training of Trainers (ToT) participants. They initially trained two master teachers for every site participating in the TIF program.

At the beginning of the implementation, the trained master teachers delivered a full day of Thinking Maps training to all teachers at their schools. Over the course of the school year, teachers met weekly in grade level bands for ongoing professional development led by the

master teachers. During this time, teachers shared their experiences with the Maps, brainstormed new ideas for more in-depth implementation, and asked questions. The master teachers provided ongoing support and instruction targeted to the specific needs of each grade level band. They also were available to join teachers in the classroom to deliver model lessons or try a new Map strategy together.

“Late Start Mondays” each week, when students show up one hour later than the normal start time. This weekly time is used for continued PD.

Both the formal Thinking Maps trainings and the embedded professional development time is targeted to the specific needs of the school community. Lucia Mar serves a number of communities across a wide geographic area, and each school has

“Teachers need time to try things out, practice, and then come back together to share and ask questions.”

- Kelly Logue, Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA)

After the TIF grant ended, some master teachers returned to the classroom and some moved into other positions. Many of the released TOSAs continued to serve as peer mentors and trainers. To replace the dedicated weekly training time supported by the grant, the district implemented

its own unique mix of demographics and academic challenges. For example, while one building may have only a handful of English Language Learners, another may have a majority. This flexible approach to PD has helped teachers deepen and extend their use of the Maps over time.

TRANSLATING PROGRAM FIDELITY INTO STUDENT SUCCESS

Over the last few years, the district has continued to train new teachers and Thinking Maps trainers during the summers and has rolled out several *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond* modules, including Narrative, Expository/Informational and Argumentative. To help maintain program integrity across the sites, most principals have attended Thinking Maps Leadership training as well. Some schools have begun to implement *Path to Proficiency*, which focuses on using Thinking Maps with English Language Learners.

Their focused, sustained model for teacher training is paying off with results at the student level. Kelly reports that student work has demonstrated better thinking and analysis since they started using the Maps. Peter Ponomaroff, the Principal at Harloe Elementary, noticed the change as well. “I’ve been an administrator seven years, and a principal for five. One of the most significant changes I’ve seen since our district implemented Thinking Maps (is that) at every grade level I see students routinely prepare and organize their thoughts prior to beginning their writing. That is something I rarely saw in classrooms before.”

“Thinking Maps has given ALL of our students a powerful tool for thinking in the same “language” despite their native spoken language. It has provided familiarity and confidence when kindergarteners come into first grade already knowing the Maps and the basics of how to use them. We are able to start using Maps on day one of first grade and continue to use them across curricular areas every day following.”

- Kristen Curran,
1st Grade Teacher, Lange Elementary

TRANSLATING PROGRAM FIDELITY INTO STUDENT SUCCESS (CONT.)

Kelly ties student achievement gains on district benchmarks to each school's commitment to fidelity in their Thinking Maps implementation. "The data tells the story," she says. "When schools are using Thinking Maps with fidelity, we see scores go up." Some of the successes they have seen include:

- Higher scores on benchmark assessments in most grade levels, which has helped the district "close the gap" with California state averages. Gains were especially noticeable in reading across grades 3-8.
- An increase in the number of students testing on grade level on their fall benchmark assessment. Students are coming into each grade more prepared and able to implement the Thinking Maps strategies

they learned in their previous grade.

- Gains in writing at each of the middle schools. Two of the middle schools that had especially strong use of Thinking Maps and Write from the Beginning... and Beyond! were able to close the gap with a third middle school that had historically maintained higher performance.

Kelly now serves at the district level to support the other TOSAs. She says the district is committed to continuing to deepen their use of Thinking Maps. "They've become part of everything we do now," she says. "It's not seen as just 'one more thing' to do. The Maps support everything else that we are doing."

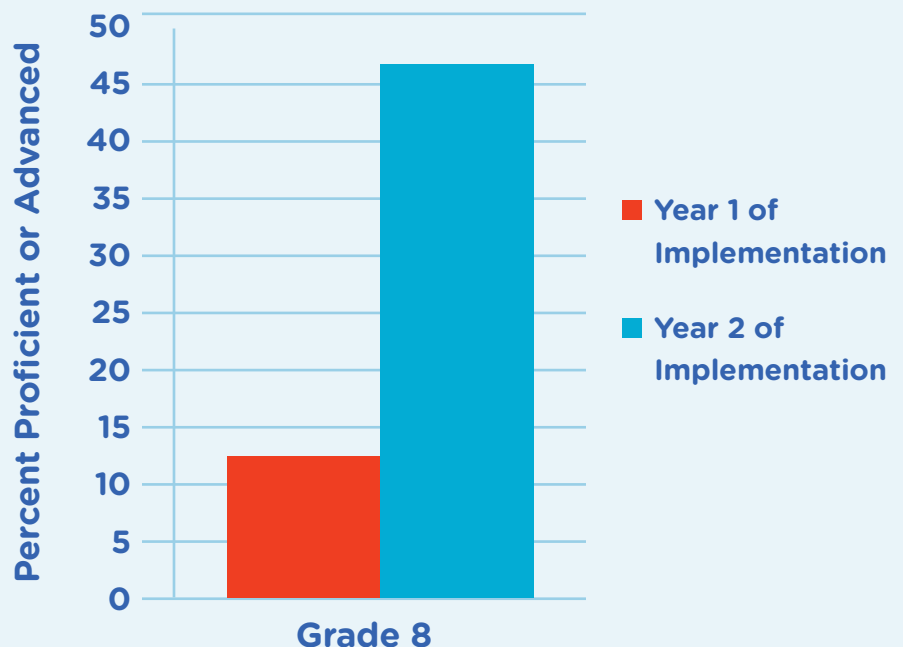
LUCIA MAR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

8th graders gained
9.3 RIT points in reading
between fall 2016 and spring 2017 on the MAP benchmark, closing the gap with state averages by 6.7 points.

After implementing Thinking Maps, the percentage of K-3 students performing on or above grade level on benchmark reading assessments **grew from 66% to 76%.**

Middle school students' average **writing scores** on a district assessment **grew from 5.56 to 6.19** after implementing Thinking Maps.

LUCIA MAR UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT WRITING SCORES

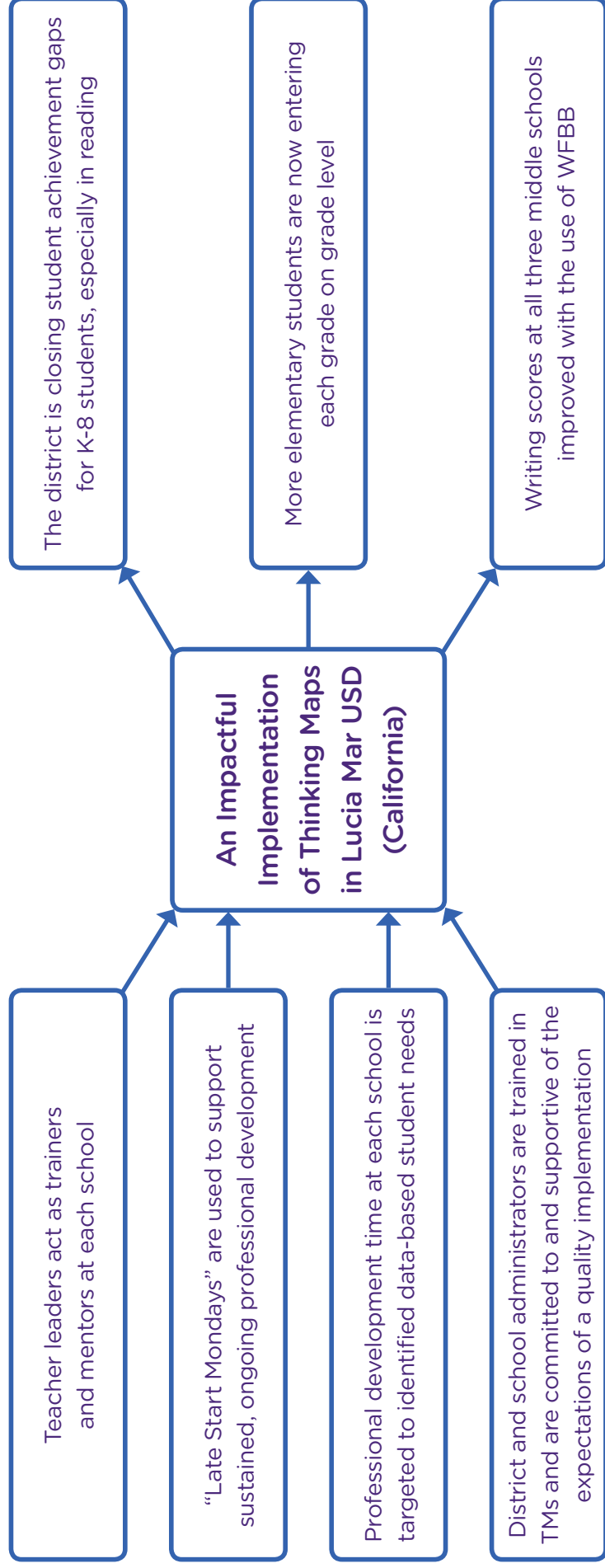


LUCIA MAR UNIFIED DISTRICT

AN IMPACTFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THINKING MAPS

Thinking Maps is the common visual language in the district because both teachers and students use them at the same time.

State and local data
Teacher leader experiences



10,700 Students
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“The data tells the story. When we see schools using Thinking Maps with fidelity, we see scores go up.”

- Kelly Logue