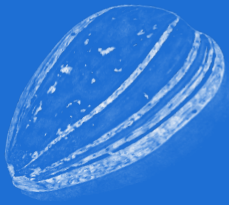




ELA Core Curriculum

for **GRADE 8**

 **ThinkCERCA™**



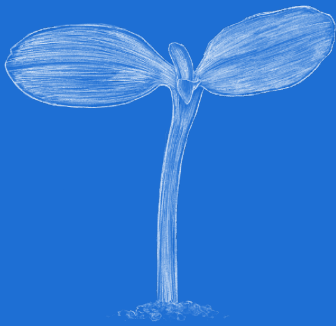
ThinkCERCA's Core Curriculum was designed to help students develop the skills, knowledge, and competencies to thrive in a global economy.

To be the problem-solvers, leaders, and job-creators of our future, students need to be able to consume complex information, think about it critically, and express their own points of view effectively.



Guiding Values in Our Design:

- Student engagement
- Comprehensive coverage of standards
- Ease of implementation
- Support for best practices in reading and writing routines
- High-quality authentic texts
- Deeper learning opportunities



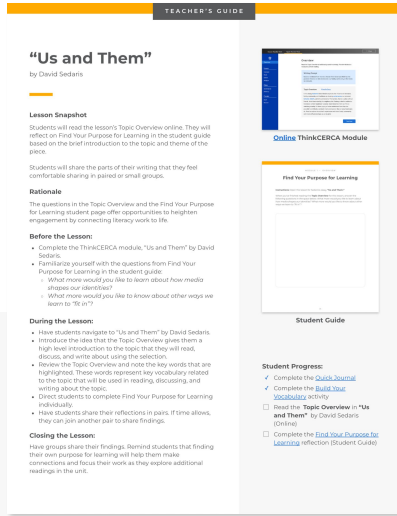
Each grade level invites students to engage in close-reading, analysis and collaboration, formal speaking and listening opportunities, and writing, research, and multimedia portfolio development – all grounded in our research-backed CERCA framework.

Ultimately, we espouse a pedagogy of confidence.

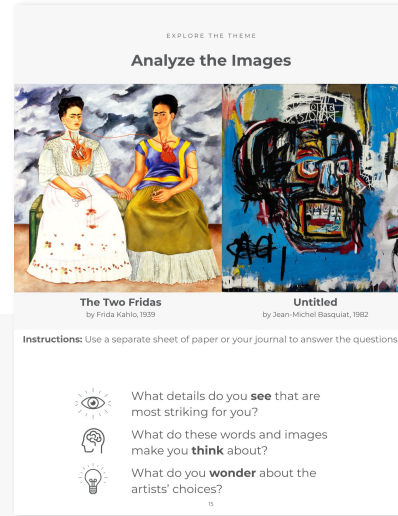
We truly believe that confident young people are the keys to the success of each and every one of our communities. This program is designed to help us spark courageous thinking!



Course Resources



Teacher's Guide



Student Guide

Course Overview

- Roadmap for course including assessment blocks (BOY, MOY, EOY) and unit snapshots
- Portfolio assessments listed to show progression by unit throughout the year
- Assessment practices aligned to SAT and ACT

Student Guide

- Previews for all unit features: goal-setting, modules, speaking/listening activities, portfolio, and reflection
- Offline activities for each module for each step: Before Your Read, Read, Analyze, Write

Unit Planner

- At-a-glance view of the unit lesson and activities included

Differentiation Guides

- Additional instructional supports and ready-made modified materials for both online and offline activities throughout each unit

Teacher's Guide with Facilitator Notes

- Step-by-step guide for unit instruction
- Module preview with summary, unit connection, and key knowledge, understandings, and skills
- Facilitator notes with detailed talking points

Direct Instruction/Skills Practice

- Comprehensive coverage of key skills + concepts
- Flexible implementation options for teacher-led, small group, or self-paced implementation
- Embedded assessment
- Additional leveled skills practice

360 Degrees of Text

Grade 8 Core ELAR

Comprehensive Assessment Resources



Benchmarks



Continuous Embedded Assessment



AP/ACT/SAT Aligned Practice

1

Who Do You Aim to Be?

How do various personal experiences, positive and negative, allow you to grow and change? Explore models of narrative nonfiction that examine growing up and becoming one's own person.

Portfolio: Narrative Essay Writing

2

How Do We Fuel a Community?

How does a community find, source, and utilize energy effectively? Explore models of nonfiction arguments about energy sources and how communities are learning to fuel themselves on renewable resources.

Portfolio: Argumentative Writing

3

How Does Imagination Shape Our Vision?

Could futuristic concepts impact our reality? Delve into new ideas and concepts that could be our reality in the future. Read a variety of short stories that spark thinking about new possibilities.

Portfolio: Literary Analysis Essay Writing

4

How Can Travel Be Green?

How does packaging affect sustainability? Read several informational texts on a journey to creating a pitch deck designed to convince others to be more environmentally friendly with packaging.

Portfolio: Research Essay

360 Degrees of Text

Grade 8 Core ELAR

5

What Is the Legacy of Our Words?

What do people do when they seem powerless to conflict around them? Explore this question through a full-length drama and a variety of other pieces across genres.

Portfolio: Cause and Effect Essay Writing

6

What Directions Might You Take?

Where can you go to get the education that will lead you to the future you hope to achieve? Explore readings about the future of work and the resources and frameworks for determining your pathway in life.

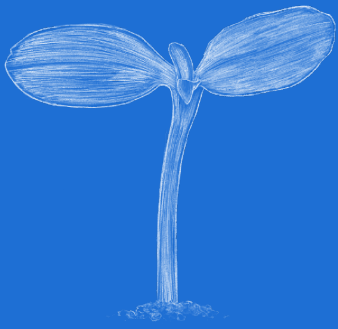
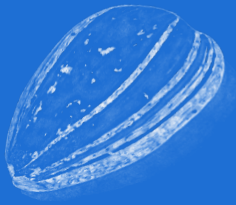
Portfolio: Research Paper

7

How Does Knowledge Change Perspective?

What can stories tell us about our traditions? Explore short stories and literary works about traditions that continue today.

Portfolio: Comparative Literary Analysis



Sample Units



Who Do You Aim to Be?

Grounding students in the experiences of others similar to and different from them allows students to develop self-awareness, social awareness, and empathy, while giving them opportunities to express their own ideas through a variety of formats.

Mentor Texts



Personal Narrative

I Am the Greatest

By James Bird



Short Story

Marigolds

By Eugenia Collier



Short Story

Amigo Brothers

By Piri Thomas



Personal Narrative

Off the Shelf

By Patti Smith

Read Across Genres



Multimedia

Gillian Anderson reads a letter of advice...

By Letters Live Series



Poetry

Experience

By Emily Dickinson



Poetry

One Wants a Teller in a Time Like This

By Gwendolyn Brooks



Informational Text

To Really Learn, Fail, Then Fail Again!

By Susan Moran



Informational Text

How Your Body Reacts to Stress

By Holly Blake

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Story Elements: Analyze character, setting, plot
- Author's Craft: Narrative techniques
- Theme: Use evidence to determine theme
- Poetry: Compare details and imagery using the SOAPSTone strategy
- Informational Texts: Determine and trace a central idea through details; Summarize

Use Language and Grammar

- Connotation and Denotation
- Sentence Structure: *but, because, so*
- Parts of Speech: Adjectives
- Punctuation: Non-restrictive elements

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Formal Socratic discussion

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a personal narrative
- Writing process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Error Analysis and Prediction

Essential Question

How do various personal experiences, both positive and negative, allow you to grow and change?

How Do We Fuel a Community?

Investigating real issues that affect real communities all over the country allows for students to build informed opinions on the ways to improve energy systems. From solar power to wind and water power, students investigate fuel solutions that can work better in the future.

Mentor Texts



Informational News Text
California Just Ran on 100% Renewable Energy, but Fossil Fuels Aren't Fading Away Yet

By Lauren Sommer



Informational News Text
Fueling Up

By Lee Gjertsen Malone



Informational News Text
Facing Budget Shortfalls, These Schools Are Turning to the Sun

By Cara Buckley



Opinion
Nuclear Fusion Breakthrough a Milestone for the Future of Clean Energy, US Officials Say

By Ella Nilsen

Read Across Genres



Multimedia
Renewable Energy 101

By National Geographic



Opinion
Why We Have a Love-Hate Relationship with Electric Scooters"

By Anthony Eggert



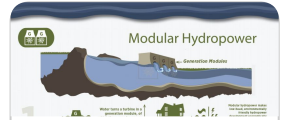
Opinion
E Is for Environment: Unpacking the Benefits of E-Scooters

By Francesca Perry



Photo Essay
A Day in the Life of a Wind Farm Operator

By Christine Duval



Infographic
5 Promising Types of Water Power

By US Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Argument: evidence, issues, and appeals
- Author's Craft: Analyze an author's evidence/coherence
- Informational/Argument Texts: Trace and evaluate an argument; Analyze structure
- Compare Arguments: Compare issues, appeals, and evidence in opinion texts
- Visual Texts: Trace and evaluate arguments in photo essays and infographics

Use Language and Grammar

- Connotation and Denotation
- Pronouns (case, intensive)
- Punctuation: Commas

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Formal Debate

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write an argumentative essay
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How does a community find, source, and utilize energy effectively?

How Does Imagination Shape Our Vision?

Short stories are often full of imaginative characters, worlds, and adventures, all of which shape our society. In this unit, students will explore the essential question, “How do people use their imaginations to entertain, reflect on the past, and explore new ideas?” to explore how creative thinking can shape the future.

Mentor Texts



Short Story
The Ingredients
By Jason Reynolds



Short Story
The Attack
By Lulu Delacre



Short Story
My Country is a Ghost
By Eugenia Triantafyllou



Short Story
Tiger Mending
By Aimee Bender

Read Across Genres



Poetry
Memory
By Lawson Fusao Inada



Poetry
The Owl
By Edward Thomas



Multimedia
The Power of Imagination
By Sir Ken Robinson



Informational Text
6 Ways to Spark Your Creativity
By Christine Nunez



Informational Text
How One Hour of Slow Breathing Changed My Life
By James Nestor

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Story: Determine characters, setting, plot, and theme in short stories
- Author's Craft: Setting, point of view, character, narrative techniques
- Compare Texts Across Genres
- Informational Texts: Use evidence to support central ideas

Use Language and Grammar

- Pronouns
- Context Clues
- Verbs

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Story Telling

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a short story
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How do people use their imaginations to entertain, reflect on the past, and explore new ideas?

How Can Travel Be Green?

Students will explore the positive and negative effects of different modes of transportation. Throughout this unit, students will research which transportation methods are both effective and sustainable.

Mentor Texts



Informational Text
For the Climate and Fairness, Take Buses and Sidewalks Before Electric Cars
 By Dan Charles



Opinion
The Holy Grail of Transportation is Right in Front of Us
 By Farhad Manjoo



Opinion
Electric Scooters on Collision Course with Pedestrians and Lawmakers
 By James Sallis



Informational News Article
What Can Convince Chicagoans to Rely Less on Cars? City Aims to Make Transit-Oriented Development the Answer
 By Sarah Freishtat and Alice Yin

Read Across Genres



Infographic
12 Best Ways to Get Cars Out of Cities—Ranked by New Research
 By Kimberly Nicholas



Opinion
Should Cars Be Banned in Cities?
 By TIME for Kids



Multimedia
Energy 101: Electric Vehicles
 By National Geographic



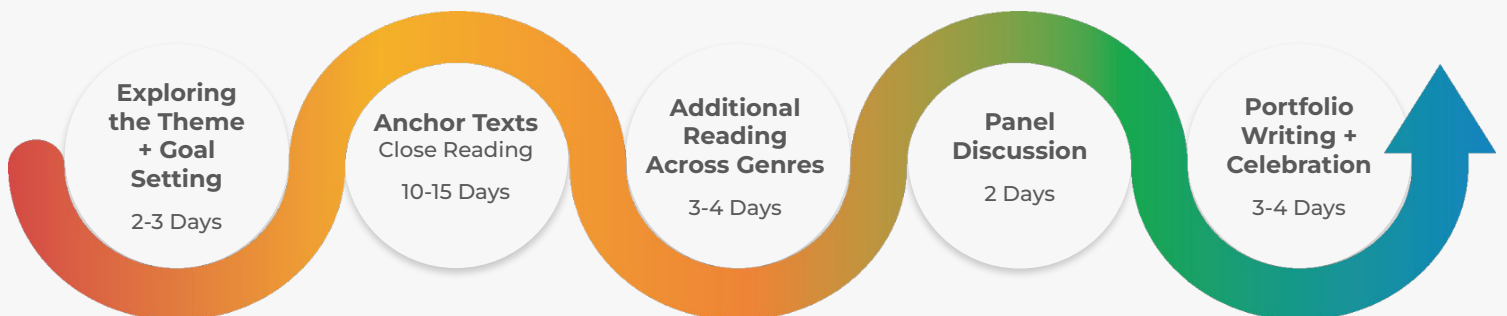
Informational News Article
Trucks Are Banned on Oakland's I-580. These Sixth Graders Wondered Why
 By Laura Kilvans



Informational News Article
The Environmental Impacts of Cars, Explained
 By National Geographic

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Structure in Informational Texts: Interpret words and phrases, analyze sentences, paragraphs, and portions of the text
- Author's Craft: Understand point of view and purpose; describe structure in informational texts
- Compare Texts Across Genres to understand a topic through multiple perspectives

Use Language and Grammar

- Revising for Style and Word Choice
- Figurative Language

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Pitch Deck Presentation

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a research paper
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

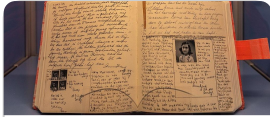
Essential Question

How can transportation be both effective and sustainable?

What Is the Legacy of Our Words?

Students will discuss and analyze how people react when they feel powerless in the face of conflict. By reading the dramatization of Anne Frank’s experience during the Holocaust, experiencing a virtual tour of the Anne Frank house, and reading more about who Anne Frank was, students will see a real life example of people’s reactions to conflict.

Mentor Texts



Drama
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act I, Scenes I-II

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett



Drama
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act I, Scene III

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett



Drama
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act I, Scenes IV-V

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett



Drama
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act II, Scenes I-II

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett



Drama
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act II, Scenes III-V

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

Read Across Genres



Drama Excerpt
The Diary of Anne Frank: Act II, Scenes IV-V

By Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett



Multimedia
Diary of Anne Frank Live Scene



Multimedia
A day in the Secret Annex | Anne Frank House



Informational Text
Resisting During World War II

By Emilie Bishop



Informational Text
Anne Frank: The Real Story of the Girl Behind The Diary

By Bart van Es

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of a Drama: Determine how characters, setting, plot and theme evolve in a drama
- Author's Craft: Analyze the impact of author's choices and how playwrights develop character and theme in drama
- Compare interpretations and uses of drama across genres
- Informational Texts: Use evidence to understand context and impact

Use Language and Grammar

- Verbs
- Understanding Relationships Captured in Words

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Performance

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a cause and effect essay
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Context Clues; Analyzing Word Choices

Essential Question

How do people react when they feel powerless in the face of conflict?

What Directions Might You Take?

Students know they have to choose something to do in their postsecondary life, but may not be sure of how to choose. Throughout this unit, they will be given the tools and opportunities to look at various pathways after high school graduation. This will allow them to plan for their future before the start of high school, an essential piece to the postsecondary planning process.

Mentor Texts



Informational Text
Bringing to Light Dark Matter: The Story of Vera Rubin
 By Joseph Taylor



Informational Text
10 Steps to Choosing the Right College
 By Katy Hopkins and Sarah Wood



Informational Text
7 Things to Do in High School to Make Your College Application Stand Out
 By Chelsea Castonguay



Informational Text
First in the Family Make Their Mark in College
 By Melissa Ezarik

Read Across Genres



Multimedia
My Path to Boston University—A Real Student’s Story
 By Yesh Datar



Informational Text
My Path to Community College and Beyond
 By Haseeb Khan



Multimedia
Sal Kahn’s Story: Exploring College Options
 From Khan Academy



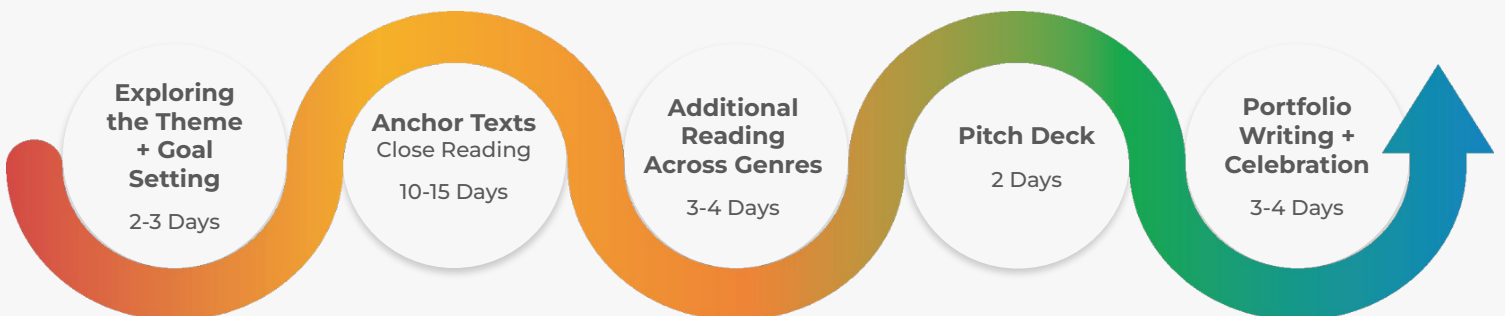
Extension Activity
College Changes Everything



Extension Activity
College Search
 By ThinkCERCA staff

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Informational Text: Use evidence and central ideas from a variety of texts
- Author's Craft: Analyze how text features and connections within informational texts help develop central ideas
- Develop a robust understanding of the postsecondary process
- Extensions: Engage in activities to support postsecondary planning

Use Language and Grammar

- Revising for Clarity, Development, and Organization
- Figurative Language

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Panel Discussion

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write postsecondary plans
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Understanding Question Stems; Verify Your Answer

Essential Question

How can different pathways help you meet your postsecondary goals?

How Does Knowledge Change Perspective?

As students prepare to enter high school, they are gaining more knowledge about the world and life itself. Throughout this unit, they will explore the positive and negative effects of gaining knowledge as they come of age.

Mentor Texts



Fairy Tale
The Bee-Man

By Alice Moore
Dunbar-Nelson



Short Story
The Necklace

By Guy De Maupassant



Short Story
Stop the Sun

By Gary Paulsen



Short Story
No Me Dejas

By Mark Oshiro

Read Across Genres



Poetry
Nothing Gold Can Stay

By Robert Frost



Poetry
My Grandma Told Me Stories or Cautionary Tales

By Marlanda Dekine



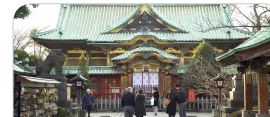
Multimedia
Choices

From Tess Gallagher



Informational Text
Things You Cannot Unsee (and What They Say About Your Brain)

By Alexis C. Madrigal



Informational Text
Three Wise Monkeys of Tōshōgū Shrine

From Atlas Obscura

Unit Progression

(22-26 Days of Instruction)



Concepts & Skills Focus

Students are introduced to a variety of literacy skills that will empower them as they progress through the course to increasingly more sophisticated readings and tasks.

Read and Analyze

- Parts of an Informational Text: Analyze connections within informational texts
- Author's Craft: Analyze how various genres of literature and informational texts draw from other sources
- Develop a robust understanding of aspects of various literary forms and genres
- Extensions: Engage in informal research of a variety of myths and tales from across the globe

Use Language and Grammar

- Roots and Affixes
- Words that Capture Relationships
- Sentence Structure
- Revising for Clarity and Organization

Speak and Listen

- Small group discussion
- Socratic Discussion

Respond and Write

- Write claims, evidence, and reasoning using the CERCA framework
- Quick Journals
- Final Product: Write a Comparative Analysis
- Writing Process: map, draft, revise, peer edit, publish

Build Skills for Success

- Goal-setting and SMART goals
- Test Prep: Analyzing Verbs in Writing Prompts

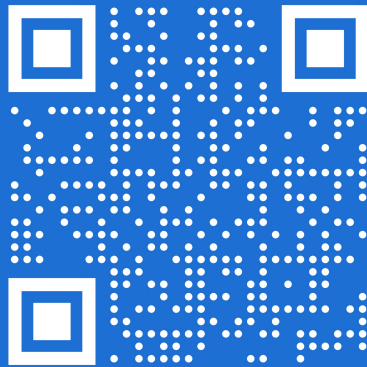
Essential Question

What is the impact of stories and storytelling on our perceptions of our lives and the lives of those around us?

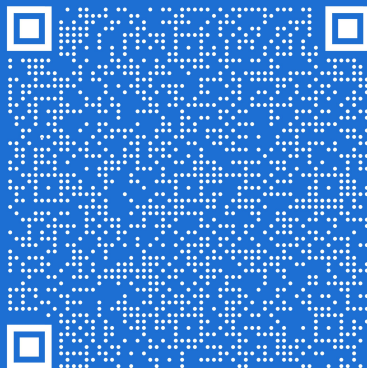
Next Steps

Ready to learn more about our Core ELA?

We'd love to partner and pilot Core with you! Scan the QR codes below to learn more or schedule a demo of Core ELA!



[Learn More](#)



[Schedule a Demo](#)