

DePaul Center for Urban Education and Assessment

Using the Block Schedule to Support Student Learning

Start by clarifying your priorities for teaching and learning.

Then check the resources in this toolkit for materials to support your work to reach those priorities.

This toolkit includes:

1. Structure of a Clear Learning Journey
2. Examples of Organizers to Make the Journey Clear to Students
3. Activity Bank to Expand and Adapt
4. Student Reporter Guides

Development of these resources was supported by the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs and the Polk Bros Foundation Teacher Leadership Network

Structure of a Clear Learning Journey: It starts with the destination

Week: _____

Standard: _____

Assessment: _____

Recommended Assessments:

Weekly report on learning.

Student-created glossary

Quiz/test with

graphic organizer students construct or complete

multiple choice questions

open-ended questions

plus: for reading intensive classes, a short unfamiliar text students read and respond to questions about

(example)

Week: March 29th

Standard: Can analyze how structures of government affect individual citizens.

Assessment:

X learning log

X open log report (students use logs to write synthesis of week)

X words of the week—explain them and use them to write about the week's topic

Make the Destination Clear

The following chart could be used by the teacher to plan and also as an open chart for students to complete as they work through the week. If the teacher posts it as the students learn the week's content, it will help students remember what's important this week. If students keep their own essential content and vocabulary charts, they will know what's important.

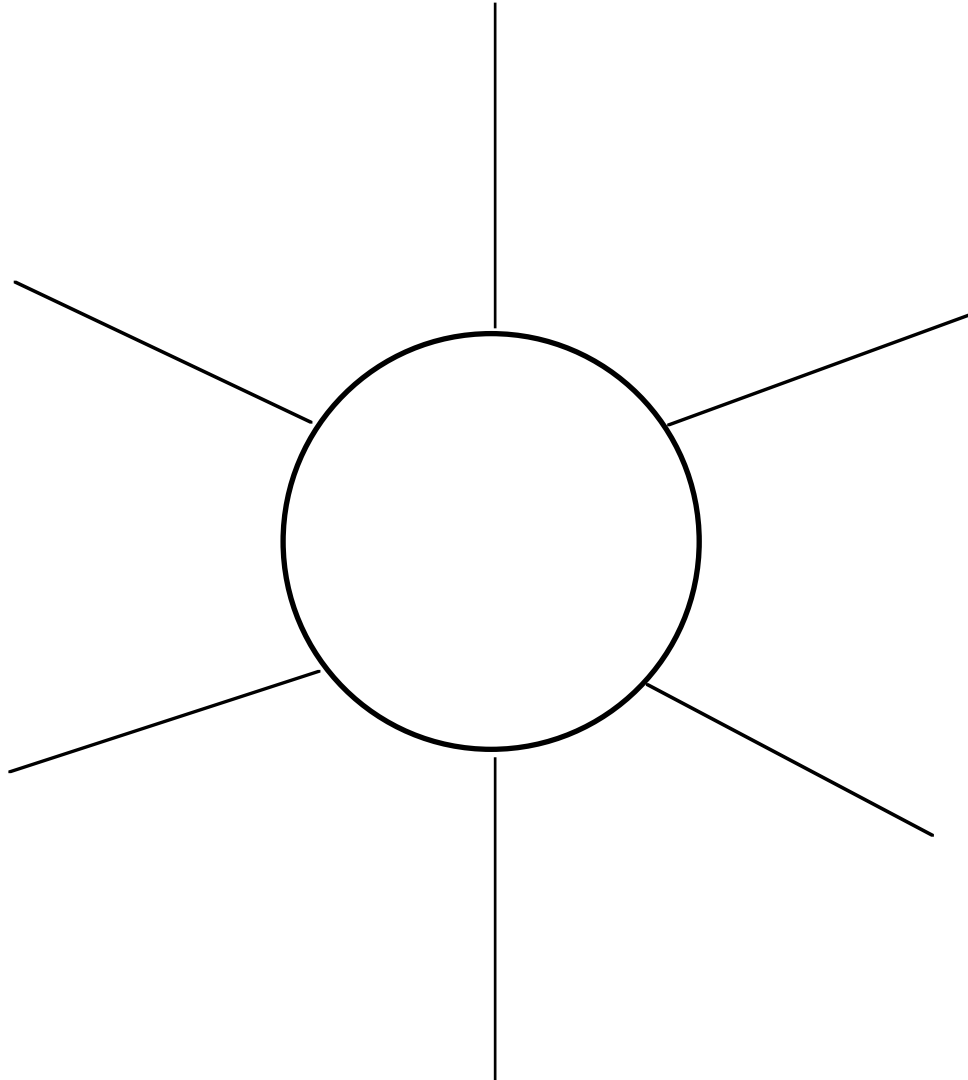
Essential Content	VOCABULARY

This Week: What's Important?

Essential Content	VOCABULARY
The President has specific powers. The US government has changed over time. The government affects every person.	power authority decision contract Presidency

The next page shows another way to show what's important.

What's Important?



Think it through.

Structure of a Clear Learning Journey

Day 1: Make It Clear

Day 2: Develop It and Keep It in Focus

Day 3: Complete the Week with Clarity

Example of a Planner that Connects 1, 2, 3

This Week's Topic	This Week's Standard	This Week's Assessment
Words of the Week:		
<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Day 2</i>	<i>Day 3</i>
Introduce	Connect/Continue	Connect/Continue
Develop	Develop	Develop
Clarify/Assess	Clarify/Assess	Complete/Assess

Example

<p>This Week's Topic How the Presidency has changed since 1950</p>	<p>This Week's Standard Can analyze how structures of government affect individual citizens.</p>	<p>This Week's Assessment Make a Venn diagram to contrast the role of Truman and Bush.</p>
<p>Words of the Week: power, authority, decision, contrast, presidency</p>		
<p>Day 1</p>	<p>Day 2</p>	<p>Day 3</p>
<p>Introduce List what students know about Bush.</p> <p>Develop Students skim chapter on Truman's Presidency, list what they think are important facts.</p> <p>Clarify/Assess Start the Venn—what's important about Truman's presidency.</p> <p>Learning log: What was important to you today?</p> <p>Homework: Ask parents what they think are important facts about Bush.</p>	<p>Connect/Continue Ask what students' parents said about Bush.</p> <p>Develop Set up two teams, one to continue to collect Truman facts, the other to use newspaper to collect Bush facts.</p> <p>Teams add facts to the class Venn.</p> <p>Class makes up survey about Presidency.</p> <p>Clarify/Assess How would you answer the survey and why? Support your answers. Think-pair-share.</p> <p>Learning Log: What surprised you about the topic today?</p> <p>Homework: Take the survey of one other student.</p>	<p>Connect/Continue Class completes the Venn and gives it a title.</p> <p>Develop Set up two teams for debate: It's Bush It's Truman</p> <p>Students debate the question: which one had greater influence on individual Americans.</p> <p>Complete/Assess Use your Learning Logs and today's session to answer this question: How has the Presidency changed since 1950?</p> <p>Learning Log: What were your top five words for the week--and what do they mean? Extra credit: Use them to write a sentence about this week's topic.</p>

Learning/Assessment Activity Bank

The following activities can be used to teach **and** to assess student learning.

Projects incorporating active learning approaches:

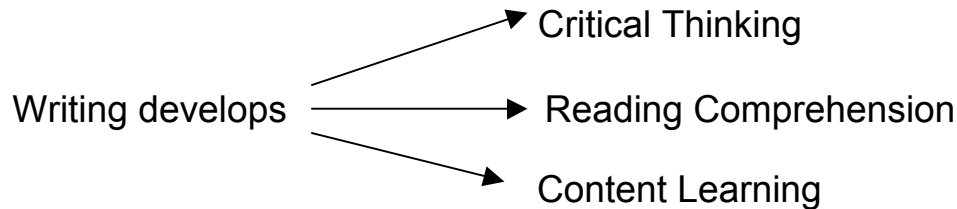
- Collect and classify information in a data bank on a topic.
- Modify today's problem and give it to another student to solve—with an answer guide that the student gets after he or she solves your problem.
- Create a glossary.
- Each student writes one page in a class chapter about the topic.
- Plan, write, illustrate a booklet about the topic.
- Write a diary as if you were a person in the situation you are studying.
- Construct a multiple-choice question about the topic you are learning.
- Use pictures or symbols to communicate the topic without words
- Draw a cartoon to show the sequence in a skill or in an event.
- Create a crossword puzzle for the words of the week.
- Add illustrations to our textbook.
- Rewrite your textbook chapter so a younger student would enjoy it.
- Make a time-capsule of the important information you need to take with you from this week's lessons—you can use that time capsule when we get to the quarter exam.

PLUS

Add your effective activities here.

Assess and Expand Learning with Writing

The Writing Connection



There is clear evidence that activities involving writing (any of the many sorts of writing) lead to better learning than activities involving reading and studying only. To improve the teaching of writing is also to improve the quality of thinking required of students....

[How Writing Shapes Thinking](#)

Research has established a powerful relationship between the opportunity to write and the ability to read.

Learning logs help students reflect what they have learned. The goal is not to repeat what the book or teacher said. Rather, the student is expected to connect new material with previously learned material.

[Becoming a Nation of Readers](#)

Learning Log Vocabulary + Vocabulary = Ideas

I can identify important terms and ideas. (ILS 1A, Content ILS)

Each day, write three important words that are part of this week's learning.

Then use some of those words to write one important idea you learn.

M	
T	
W	
T	
F	

At the end of the week, use words from your log to write what you think is most important about this week's learning.

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?

Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.

Think It Through: What's Important to You

What's important?

List the five most important things you learned.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Which is most important to you?

Why?

Learning Log

Question of the Day

Collect information to answer it.

Homework:

Write about today's topic.

You can write:

___ a letter

___ a poem

___ a quiz (you have to give answers as well as questions)

___ a page in a textbook

___ directions

___ a news feature

___ (another format)

What's Important? FACT COLLECTOR

ILS1B I can locate important information.

As you collect information about a topic, list your information.

Topic: _____

Important Information

List the "top ten" facts you find about it.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Which is the most important fact you found?

Why do you think it is most important?

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?

Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.

Get It Together

ILS 5A: Can identify and synthesize important information.

Topic: _____

What I Knew

What I Learned

What I Think

Take what you knew and what you learned and explain this topic in your own words.

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?

*Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.*

How to Summarize

ILS1B: I can summarize information.

Topic: _____

List the “top ten” words that are part of what you learned.

What are the two or three most important points you learned?

Write a one-paragraph summary. Include the main points.

Meet the standard:
Check your work—is it
✓ complete?
✓ correct?
✓ clear?

*Exceed the Standard:
Write what you learned by
doing this project.*

Showing Meaning: Idea and Information

Use a diagram to show how facts can make one idea clear.

Here's an example you can try out with any class—and with any page from a textbook. Start with the topic or idea—put it in the circle. Then list facts—note them with a few words in each rectangle.

