
Instructional Playbook



JOLIET TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

2026-2027

INTRODUCTION

This playbook equips educators with the tools and resources to effectively support our mission in the classroom — grounding daily instruction in evidence-based practices from the start of a teacher's journey at JTHS 204 and throughout their ongoing professional learning.

It serves as the practical guide for bringing our instructional philosophy and norms to life in daily lessons, and directly supports Step 1 of Action Plan 1-4 in the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan:

Establish and train staff on a clear JTHS 204 instructional philosophy embedded in culturally sustaining philosophies and pedagogy.

24-25 Team

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INSTRUCTIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Staff at Joliet Township High School District 204 believe that every student deserves an engaging and equitable educational experience rooted in culturally sustaining pedagogy by holding and maintaining high expectations paired with a high level of support for every student. We challenge deficit thinking, intentionally consider diverse representation in curricular decisions, and provide opportunities for students to develop a love of learning. Through training and ongoing support, we seek to better understand and challenge historical inequities that shape our current educational landscape.

To achieve and maintain this vision, we collectively use our knowledge of students, curriculum, and instructional practices to create and deliver multifaceted, personalized, and impactful experiences that empower students to be successful in their post-secondary endeavors. As a result of ongoing research, professional learning, and collaboration, we provide students with scaffolded instruction and targeted feedback that reflect their current understandings while continuously elevating expectations for future growth.



INSTRUCTIONAL NORMS

The instructional norms identify the key moves that should occur in all lessons in order to decrease variability of the student experience from class to class.

We believe that effective instruction cannot occur without a foundation of relational capacity. In addition, lessons should include an opening, body, and close. Finally, students should receive frequent, ongoing feedback and set productive goals for future learning.



JOLIET TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT 204

INSTRUCTIONAL NORMS

WRITING

Students who write:

- Engage frequently, in every content area and classroom
- Cite evidence to support their thinking
- Deepen their understanding of content
- Demonstrate command of academic vocabulary
- Communicate as a content expert
- Communicate their thinking competently and confidently

INQUIRY

Students who inquire:

- Analyze and synthesize materials or ideas
- Clarify their own thinking
- Probe others' thinking
- Work through ambiguity
- Solve authentic problems

COLLABORATION

Students who collaborate:

- Create a safe and supportive physical and philosophical environment
- Work through identified structures and roles to achieve a common goal
- Develop positive interdependence
- Clearly communicate verbally and nonverbally
- Listen effectively to decipher meaning
- Deepen the learning of others through inquiry and active engagement

ORGANIZATION

Students who organize:

- Self-direct, self-evaluate, self-monitor, and self-advocate to reach academic goals
- Develop and use tools to organize thinking, resources, and time
- Develop and use processes, procedures, and tools to study effectively
- Prepare for rigorous courses and engage fully in instruction

READING

Students who read:

- Activate, engage, and extend beyond the text
- Make predictions and create visual images as they read
- Understand text structures
- Question the text and engage in deep inquiry
- Become content experts
- Evaluate sources for accuracy and bias



Opening of the lesson



- Gain students' attention
- State the goal of the lesson
- Discuss the relevance of the target skill
- Review critical prerequisite skills

Body of the lesson



Implement a gradual release of responsibility within lessons through meaningful classroom experiences that allows students to learn, grow, and build their confidence.

Activities should be rigorous and include one or more of the skills above that are highly valued in both the classroom and workplace.

Closing of the lesson



- Review what was learned
- Preview what will be learned in the next class period



Ideally, some form of formative assessment should occur daily. In addition, students should have frequent opportunities to assess the quality of their own performance and set productive goals for future learning. This information should be used to target specific student needs and set them up for success. Formative assessment offers a place to practice and grow.

FEEDBACK & GOAL SETTING

RELATIONAL CAPACITY



All students will take responsibility for their learning by checking their grades in each class on a weekly basis and advocating for their academic progress.

GRADING PRACTICES

At JTHS, we believe that grading should be a bridge to opportunity, not a barrier to success. Because we hold high expectations paired with high levels of support, our grading practices are designed to accurately reflect what a student knows and can do, independent of their personal circumstances or historical educational inequities.

Formative/Summative

All gradebooks utilize the grade breakdown of 80% summative and 20% formative. For final grades, formative assessments can only improve the grade.

Late Summative Assessments

A two-week grace period is granted for summative assessment submission with no penalty.

Remediation

Remediation occurs within two weeks of the due date of summative assessments. No penalty is imposed for students who participate in remediation (full credit). Students who participate in remediation and attempt a re-take will receive a minimum grade of 50%.

- A student keeps their original score in the gradebook until they successfully complete remediation and retake the assessment.

Final Exams

All courses give a final exam each semester to be placed within the 80% summative category.

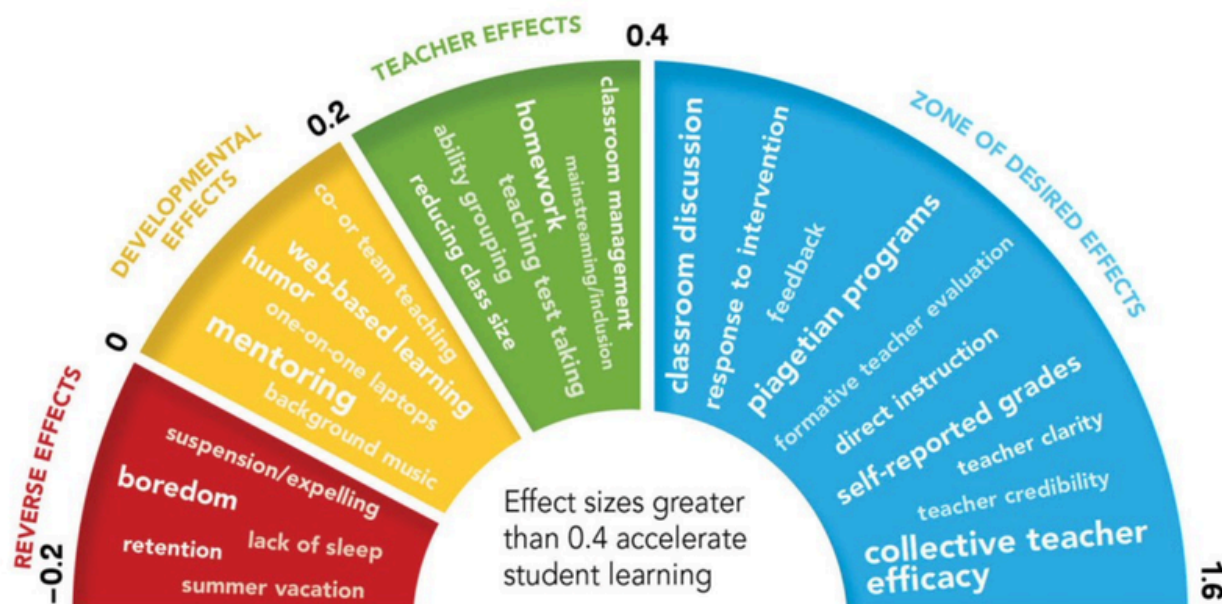
Academic Integrity

Our academic integrity policy prioritizes honesty while aligning with equitable grading by separating behavior from academic assessment. When plagiarism, cheating, or inappropriate use of AI occurs, the work in question is not graded, and no points are deducted as a penalty. Instead, teachers use restorative practices to help students reflect, take responsibility, and learn from the situation. Students are then given support and an opportunity to revise or complete an appropriate assessment so grades reflect demonstrated understanding and skill mastery, not compliance or punishment.

IMPACT OF EFFECT SIZE

Effect size helps us understand what truly makes a difference in student learning. For example, John Hattie's research shows that some teaching strategies have a much greater impact than others, and effect size gives us a way to measure that impact. Hattie identifies 0.40 as the "hinge point"—anything above that has a stronger-than-average influence on student growth.

By focusing on high-impact strategies like clear instruction (0.85), meaningful feedback (0.50), and formative assessment (0.41), we can be sure we're using practices that help students thrive. Effect size isn't about following trends or doing things the way they've always been done. When we know what works best, we can make every moment in the classroom count.





Pre-AP[®]



**Close Observation
and Analysis**



**SHARED
PRINCIPLES**



**Higher-Order
Questioning**



**Evidence-Based
Writing**



**Academic
Conversation**

Pre-AP courses allow students to slow down and focus on the most essential and relevant concepts and skills. Students have frequent opportunities to engage deeply with texts, sources, and data as well as compelling higher-order questions and problems. Across Pre-AP courses, students experience shared instructional practices and routines that help them develop and strengthen the important critical thinking skills they will need to employ in high school, college, and life. Students and teachers can see progress and opportunities for growth through varied classroom assessments that provide clear and meaningful feedback at key checkpoints throughout each course.

Use these instructional practices to apply the shared principles and areas of focus in your classroom.

FOUNDATION OF SIOP



The SIOP model is an instructional framework that centers on 30 effective instructional features organized under 8 Components that are proven to bring about statistically significant academic content and language growth.

MULTILINGUAL SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

Knowing Your MLS

Purpose 1: Plan instruction that matches language development and identity.

Key Practices

- Understanding English Language Proficiency (ELP) Levels
- Using WIDA Can Do Descriptors (on WIDA site or ELlevation)
- Using ELP Levels to determine supports for tasks/assessments/level reading materials

Purpose : To establish relationships and routines that increase student comfort, participation, and willingness to use developing language.

Key Practices

- Identity Web (statements that students circle)
- Four Corners
- Common Ground Challenge

Teacher Clarity

Purpose: Make learning and language expectations visible and attainable.

Key Practices

- Setting Norms
- Content Objectives
- Language Objectives
- Annotating Objectives

Clarity Tools

- One Sentence Summary
- SOLO Sandwich
- “In Other Words” (students paraphrase)
- Recasting (teachers restate modeling correct language)
- Provide a non-example

Scaffolds & Supports

Purpose: Maintain grade-level rigor while increasing access.

Text & Task Scaffolds

- Amplified texts
- Chunking information
- Analyzing word, sentence, and discourse levels
- Identifying core meaning vs. precision language

Language Supports

- Word banks
- Sentence/paragraph frames
- Tri-level definition activities
- Word/phrase sort

Multimodal Supports

- Anchor charts / visuals
- Audio versions of texts

Metacognitive Modeling

- Teacher think-alouds (“This part is tricky, so I’m going to...”)

Student Engagement/Interaction

Purpose: Increase student talk, processing, and peer learning.

Key Practices

Structured Interaction

- High 5 and Decide who A partner will be and who B partner will be
- A/B Partners (structured talk during a lesson)
- A/B Lines (lines shift to give students multiple partners with whom to speak)
- QSSSA

Collaborative Meaning Making

- Write a headline
- Numbered Heads Together
- Reduce Teacher Talk

Instructional Input Habits

Purpose: Make grade-level content understandable to multilingual learners so they can meaningfully engage with content and learn academic language.

Key Practices

Teacher Delivery Models

- Slower rate of speech
- Intentional Pauses
- Simple / precise language
- Repetition of key words/phrases
- Write key words as you say them

Nonverbal & Visual Supports

- Eye contact
- Tracking text while reading
- Visuals
- Gestures/Total Physical Response (TPR)

Linguistic Supports

- Using student's L1 strategically (First Language)
- Using synonyms
- Provide examples

Feedback & Monitoring

- Friendly demeanor
- Positive feedback
- In the moment feedback
- Step by step instructions

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CULTURAL COMPETENCY

WHAT'S THE POINT?

At JTHS, we believe that meaningful relationships—rooted in trust, respect, and identity—are essential to academic success. We honor diversity across race, culture, language, gender identity, ability, and life experience by creating inclusive systems that affirm every student and uphold high expectations for all. Recognizing that communication is never neutral, we adapt our practices to be developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and responsive to students' needs and strengths. We understand that classrooms that center relationships use restorative approaches to build community, repair harm, and foster accountability through dialogue and shared norms.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

2b: Fostering a Culture for Learning

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

Effect Size

Teacher-student relationships	0.57
Teacher expectations	0.58

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Establish trust through predictable routines, warm language, and consistent follow-through.
- Use restorative conversations and circles to address harm and strengthen classroom community.
- Learn students' stories and integrate cultural references that validate their identities.
- Use inclusive language.
- Maintain respectful, de-escalated communication.
- Encourage student voice, especially in setting norms, goals, and classroom climate.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Build stronger personal and academic connections.
- Engage meaningfully in learning.
- Participate in repairing relationships and resolving conflict in constructive ways.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [Mindful Reflection Protocol](#)
- [Restorative Practices: Explained](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Diverse Texts](#)
- [Relationship Building Toolkit](#)
- [AVID 4 Stages of Building Relational Capacity](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher intentionally builds relationships grounded in trust, affirmation, and safety.

The teacher integrates students' identities, stories, and strengths into instruction.

The teacher uses restorative practices to prevent, address, and repair harm in the classroom.

CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND CULTURE

WHAT'S THE POINT?

A positive classroom climate is the heartbeat of an effective learning environment. It's where students feel emotionally and physically safe, respected, and connected to both peers and teachers. Classroom culture is co-created through intentional routines, consistent expectations, and equitable systems that empower all learners. Classroom climate shapes the day-to-day experience of how learning feels. It reflects how students experience safety, belonging, and the freedom to take academic risks.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students
2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
2b: Fostering a Culture for Learning
2d: Supporting Positive Student Behavior

Effect Size

Teacher-student Relationships	0.57
Strong Classroom Cohesion	0.66

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Establish clear goals and routines collaboratively.
- Uphold high expectations with fairness and consistency.
- Model respectful communication, active listening, and empathy.
- Create an inclusive, safe environment where every student feels empowered to learn.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Develop critical thinking and social-emotional skills.
- Take ownership of learning in a safe, respectful environment.
- Achieve stronger academic outcomes by strong peer and teacher relationships.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Developing a Supportive Classroom Culture](#)
- [Developing a Positive Classroom Climate](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Social Norms Contract](#)
- [Ice Breakers \(Video 1\)](#)
- [Ice Breakers \(Video 2\)](#)
- [Check-ins](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher co-constructs culturally responsive classroom norms with students.

The teacher establishes expectations that are consistent, inclusive, and affirming.

The teacher recognizes and reinforces appropriate behavior consistently.

The teacher models respectful listening, collaboration, and empathy.

The teacher responds to student needs.

The teacher creates classroom routines that foster a sense of belonging and safety.

Students feel empowered to take academic risks.

WRITING PROCESS

WHAT'S THE POINT?

The writing process is essential for students as it equips them with the skills to communicate effectively across various modes, from argumentation to storytelling. In an era of instant communication, the ability to craft clear, thoughtful, and purposeful writing remains critical. Teaching the writing process reinforces that writing is a structured, non-linear effort, not a one-draft task, and highlights the importance of the writer-reader connection in achieving communication goals.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

- 1e: Planning Coherent Instruction
- 1f: Designing and Analyzing Assessments
- 3e: Responding Flexibly to Student Needs
- 4a: Engaging in Reflective Practice

Effect Size

Effective Writing Instruction	0.82
Technology in Writing	0.71
Writing Programs	0.50

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Incorporate Daily Writing: Writing to learn and process writing.
- Create Authentic Tasks: Assign writing connected to the discipline.
- Facilitate Feedback: Use peer reviews and teacher conferences for improvement.
- Leverage Technology: Utilize digital tools for drafting, revising, and publishing.
- Encourage Reflection: Have students assess progress and set writing goals.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Pre-Writing: Generate ideas.
- Drafting: Write the first version.
- Feedback Loop: Work with peers to assess strengths and areas for improvement.
- Revising: Improve content and organization.
- Polishing: Fix grammar and spelling.
- Publishing: Publish and celebrate.
- Evaluation and Reflection: Consider what worked and what didn't.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Reimagining the Writing Process](#)
- [AVID Ed Tip: Writing](#)
- [AVID Writing to Learn](#)
- [AVID Power up and Enhance the Writing Process with Technology](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [Writing Process Activities](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher incorporates daily writing practice – Encouraging consistent writing through varied formats like process writing, on-demand writing, and writing to learn.

The teacher facilitates feedback and revision – Implementing peer reviews, teacher conferencing, and revision strategies to improve clarity, structure, and content.

The teacher emphasizes editing and refinement – Guiding students in checking for grammar, mechanics, and style through expert editing groups and self-assessment tools.

The teacher provides publishing and reflection opportunities – Showcasing student work through displays, digital platforms, or portfolios while encouraging self-evaluation and goal-setting.

DESIGN AND PURPOSE OF WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Well-designed writing assignments engage students in critical thinking and application of content knowledge. Assignments should have clear objectives, scaffolded supports, and authentic, discipline-specific purposes.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

- 1e: Planning Coherent Instruction
- 3a: Communicating About Purpose and Content
- 3c: Engaging Students in Learning
- 3d: Using Assessment for Learning

Effect Size

Scaffolding	0.82
Teacher Clarity	0.85
Inquiry-based Teaching	0.49
Evaluation and Reflection	0.75

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Create assignments with clear language and content objectives to drive learning.
- Design assignments visually for clarity and ease of understanding.
- Structure assignments using gradual release, supporting students as they move from guided practice to independence.
- Incorporate authentic, inquiry-based tasks to promote critical thinking.
- Integrate opportunities for feedback like peer review, teacher conferencing, and self-assessment.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Understand the purpose of assignments and how they connect to learning goals.
- Receive step by step scaffolded support.
- Engage in inquiry, collaboration, and structured discussions to enhance understanding and inform their writing.
- Monitor learning by reflecting on feedback and progress toward meeting goals.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [Transfer as the Goal of Education](#)
- [Understanding Depth of Knowledge](#)
- [6 Types of Academic Writing Assignments](#)
- [Document Design Checklist](#)
- [Designing Effective Writing Assignments](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Creating Effective Writing Assignments](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher provides clear learning objectives by making content and language goals explicit.

The teacher uses scaffolded support, breaking down the complexities of the content to provide students with supported practice as they move to independent mastery.

The teacher provides authentic and relevant tasks with the assignment, mirroring real-world/discipline specific writing applications that encourage inquiry.

The teacher facilitates opportunities for collaboration where students engage in discussion, teamwork, or problem solving.

The teacher provides structured time for feedback and student reflection.

The teacher accounts for the purpose of the task (persuade, inform), the audience for the work, and the genre it fits into (lab, research, argument).

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Inquiry-based learning is driven by both teachers and students through the use of intentional questioning. Teachers guide students with questions that lead to deeper understanding, while students use questioning to analyze texts, solve problems, clarify their own thinking, probe others' thinking, and work through ambiguity. When aligned with instructional goals, questioning techniques serve as a powerful engagement tool.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
2B: Fostering a Culture for Learning
3B: Using Questioning and Discussion
Techniques
3C: Engaging Students in Learning

Effect Size

Strategy to Integrate with Prior Knowledge	0.93
Class Discussion	0.82
Evaluation and Reflection	0.75
Problem-Solving Teaching	0.61

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Foster collaboration and dialogue.
- Check for understanding and identify misconceptions.
- Encourage self-reflection and goal-setting.
- Move beyond recall to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Create a classroom culture that nurtures thinking and inquiry.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Prepare for and engage in shared inquiry.
- Connect with and think critically about what they read.
- Evaluate and clarify their learning.
- Construct knowledge and understanding.
- Investigate and solve problems.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Overview for Utilizing Costa's Levels of Thinking](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Costa's Levels of Thinking by Discipline](#)
- [AVID Socratic Seminar](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox for Question Design:

Check:

Teacher plans questions in advance that align with instructional goals.

Teacher begins lessons with questions to activate students' prior learning and backgrounds.

Teacher's questions are aimed at moving beyond simple recall to deeper levels of thinking.

Teacher challenges students with questions that ask them to make connections between ideas or concepts.

Teacher's questions encourage students to analyze, compare, and contrast information.

Teacher asks students to justify their answers with evidence or reasoning.

Building your Toolbox for Fostering Student Engagement:

Check:

Teacher prompts students to ask their own higher-level questions.

Teacher encourages students to reflect on and discuss their answers with peers.

Teacher allows time for students to process complex questions and formulate thoughtful responses.

Teacher calls on a variety of students instead of relying on the same volunteers.

Teacher provides multiple modes of responses to cultivate a no-opt-out culture.

Teacher provides scaffolds or prompts to help students break down complex questions into manageable parts.

Teacher uses follow-up questions to prompt further analysis and expand class discussion.

USING INQUIRY TO INCREASE RIGOR

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Rigorous, inquiry-based learning empowers students to actively construct their own understanding by engaging deeply with complex problems and connecting their learning to real-world contexts. Through authentic experiences and community connections, students explore diverse perspectives, analyze information, and synthesize new insights. When teachers foster a classroom culture that supports curiosity and critical thinking, students develop resilience, creativity, and a sense of ownership over their learning.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
1C: Setting Instructional Outcomes
1E: Planning Coherent Instruction
2B: Fostering a Culture for Learning
3B: Using Questioning and Discussion
Techniques
3C: Engaging Students in Learning

Effect Size

Strategy to Integrate with Prior Knowledge	0.93
Class Discussion	0.82
Evaluation and Reflection	0.75
Problem-Solving Teaching	0.68
Inquiry-based Teaching	0.49

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Craft thought-provoking questions or experiences to encourage critical thinking.
- Design projects or investigations that connect curriculum to real-world issues, student interests, or local/community contexts.
- Support students as they develop questions, conduct research, and navigate their learning paths.
- Create opportunities for peer discussion, group problem-solving, and structured feedback.
- Build in time for students to reflect and refine their understanding or approach.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Identify and pose questions about issues and topics that interest them.
- Gather, evaluate, and synthesize information from credible sources or empirical research.
- Collaborate to debate ideas, challenge assumptions, and build deeper understanding.
- Apply knowledge creatively to develop solutions, develop presentation or projects, or connect learning to community and career interests.
- Reflect on their progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine their thinking through teacher or peer feedback.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Set the Stage and Get Started with Project-Based Learning](#)
- [AVID Wrap Authentic Project-Based Learning in Inquiry](#)
- [AVID Support Student Reflection, Critique, and Revision in Project-Based Learning](#)
- [PBL: Essential Project Design Elements](#)
- [PBL: Project Based Teaching Practices](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [Inquiry Instruction in the AP Science Classroom: An Approach to Teaching and Learning](#)
- [AP Research: QUEST Framework Essential Questions](#)
- [5 E Instructional Planning Process](#)
- [Teachable Moments 5E Model](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

Teachers will design experiences that pose complex, open-ended questions that students explore by critically analyzing information from multiple sources.

Teachers will create opportunities for students to apply their learning to authentic, real-life context that are personally and culturally meaningful.

Teachers will support student ownership by guiding students in the inquiry process of developing questions and setting personal goals.

Teachers will facilitate meaningful collaborative activities to build student interpersonal skills and provide timely constructive feedback to refine student understanding and skills.

Teacher will structure regular reflection to help students evaluate their progress, set goals and synthesize their learning.

Students create and present a culminating artifact to showcase their learning.

STRUCTURED DISCUSSION/ACCOUNTABLE TALK

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Structured classroom discussions, which have guidelines and a specific purpose, are valuable because they encourage active participation, critical thinking, and exploration of different perspectives, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding of the material and a sense of academic community moving students beyond passive listening to support their thinking with evidence.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
2b: Creating a Culture of Learning
3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
3c: Engaging Students in Learning

Effect Size

Classroom Discussion	0.82
Evaluation and Reflection	0.75
Metacognitive Strategies	0.58

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Use structured discussion for critical thinking and engagement on class topics.
- Model academic language and respectful discourse.
- Provide a framework for students to explore ideas, share perspectives, and engage in meaningful dialogue.
- Debrief discussions to reinforce learning and provide feedback.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Engage in meaningful academic dialogue.
- Practice supporting their ideas with evidence.
- Provide feedback to other participants to improve discussion skills.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Academic Conversation Protocols](#)
- [AVID Academic Language Scripts](#)
- [AVID Academic Thinking Skills](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [5 Structured Discussion Ideas](#)
- [AVID Fishbowl](#)
- [AVID Pairs Check](#)
- [AVID Philosophical Chairs](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

Before the Discussion

The teacher sets the purpose and structure.

- Define goals (e.g., critical thinking, multiple perspectives) and choose a format (e.g., Socratic Seminar, Fishbowl).

The teacher prepares students.

- Share materials and discussion questions in advance; create norms and assign roles if helpful.

The teacher supports all learners:

- Offer tools like sentence starters, vocabulary lists, or graphic organizers.

During the Discussion

The teacher reinforces norms and language.

- Review expectations and model respectful, academic dialogue.

The teacher promotes participation.

- Use strategies like wait time, turn-taking tools, and teacher prompting to ensure all voices are heard.

The teacher guides and scaffolds the discussion.

- Circulate, listen, and support students in staying on topic and deepening responses.

After the Discussion

The teacher and students reflect and assess.

- Debrief as a class, assess using rubrics, and give targeted feedback.
- Plan Next Steps: Identify discussion skills to develop in future sessions.

COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURES

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Collaborative learning supports engagement, differentiation, and academic achievement. When students work interdependently with clear roles and expectations, they build both content understanding and communication skills.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
3C: Engaging Students in Learning
2B: Establishing a Culture for Learning

Effect Size

Cooperative Learning	0.55
Cooperative vs. Individualistic Learning	0.62
Jigsaw	0.92

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Establish norms that create parameters for effective collaboration.
- Choose the collaborative structure and grouping of students that best support the learning goals.
- Use consistently so students learn to focus on a task, use active listening, take turns, reach consensus, and be accountable to each other.
- Provide a well-constructed cooperative learning activity that gives every student a learning task at every minute during an activity. All students are engaged and learning.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Work together to accomplish shared goals.
- Develop and deepen their understanding of texts and topics.
- Utilize interpersonal skills for productive communication.
- Reflect on their learning and the collaboration process to improve as active participants.
- Practice interdependence by contributing consistently and equitably with their peers.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Quick Start Tips for Collaboration](#)
- [Cooperative Learning Slides](#)
- [Using Collaborative Learning](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Norm Creation Protocol](#)
- [8 Classroom Activities to use Today](#)
- [AVID Collaborative Study Groups](#)
- [AVID Jigsaw](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher establishes clear expectations for group work and accountability.

The teacher groups students intentionally based on instructional goals.

The teacher ensures group tasks require contributions from all members.

The teacher monitors and provides feedback during collaboration.

ORGANIZING MATERIALS

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Student organization is a cornerstone of educational success. By developing strong organizational skills, students can better manage their resources, arrive prepared for class, and avoid the frustration from lost assignments. As technology becomes more prevalent, educators are increasingly focused on teaching students how to organize their digital work, along with traditional methods. Fostering these habits and routines support student success in college and future careers.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

1d: Using Resources Effectively

2c: Maintaining Purposeful Environments

2d: Supporting Positive Student Behavior

Effect Size

Organizing and Transforming

0.85

Teacher Clarity

0.85

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Teach and model strategies for organizing paper and digital materials.
- Develop students' skills around the use of tools for organizing materials.
- Support students as they synthesize these tools into a system for organizing materials.
- Provide accountability for routine use of these systems, refining them, and adapting them to any task or goal requiring organization.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Organize materials effectively, reducing resource loss and enhancing academic retention.
- Become independent learners by referencing well-organized past work.
- Prioritize tasks using daily, weekly, and/or monthly checklists.
- Apply the organizational strategies they develop across both academic and extracurricular settings, promoting overall success.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Develop Your Students' Time Management Skills](#)
- [AVID Student Handouts - Organization, Time Management, Goal Setting, Learning Logs](#)
- [AVID Develop Your Students' Digital Organization Skills](#)
- [Using a Planner: Benefits, Tips, and Ideas for Beginners](#)
- [Building Older Students' Organizational Skills](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Using Organizational Tools to Develop Organizational Systems](#)
- [AVID Using Organizational Checks to Foster Accountability and Guide Feedback](#)
- [AVID Organizing Materials Long-Term using Portfolios \(Physical or Digital\)](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher incorporates the use of student planners in daily lessons to develop time-management skills.

The teacher consistently incorporates student grade checks with goal setting activities to ensure that students are using available supports.

The teacher implements an accountability system to help students develop organization skills (e.g. binder checks or conferences).

The teacher allows for student voice and choice for improving their organizational best practices to enhance student and teacher organizational strategies.

FOCUSED NOTES

WHAT'S THE POINT?

By transforming passive recording into an active and structured learning process, focused note-taking cultivates student engagement, sharpens critical thinking, and improves organization. Teaching effective note-taking goes beyond just the layout; it's about equipping students with best practices to create notes that are both organized and useful for ongoing review. This teaching approach centers on these core strategies while also empowering students to identify and incorporate additional techniques that make their notes even more valuable for learning.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:
3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
3c: Engaging Students in Learning
3d: Using Assessment for Learning
3e: Responding Flexibly to Student Needs

Effect Size

Advanced Organizers	0.41
Elaboration and Organization	0.72

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Teach and model the [key 5 phases of focused note-taking](#).
- Guide students with essential questions as they set up note pages to focus their learning.
- Facilitate the processing of notes through well designed questions or annotation activities.
- Design activities to require student to revisit their notes and apply them in meaningful ways.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Select a note-taking format that suits the learning task and their personal style.
- Actively listen, read, and paraphrase key concepts to record information in their notes.
- Interact with notes through annotations and adding personal connections or questions in the margins.
- Summarize the main ideas and answer essential questions to solidify learning.
- Review and revise notes regularly to reinforce retention and deepen comprehension.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Focused Note-Taking Quick Start Resources](#)
- [AVID Resources from FNT Professional Learning Workshops](#)
- [AVID Resources for Digital Focused Notes](#)
- [AVID examples of Focused Notes by Content Area and Type of Notes](#)
- [AVID Marking the Text Annotations](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Collection: Develop Your Students' Digital Focused Note-taking Skills](#)
- [AVID Reflection on your Current Focused Notes and Refining your Resources](#)
- [AVID Note-Taking Templates](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher provides explicit instruction in the focused note-taking process and models the practice of these skills during class time to maximize student buy-in and demonstrate the usefulness of this process.

The teacher creates an essential question to guide the notetaking and guides students to select the best format for the notes (e.g. Cornell notes, graphic organizer) while also assisting learners in selecting, paraphrasing and arranging information thoughtfully.

The teacher provides opportunities for student to collaboratively process their notes and revise to clarify content and organization.

The teacher asks the students authentic questions on comprehension, predictions, anomaly detection, applications, planning and strategy.

The students summarize their learning by answer the essential question and reflecting on the usefulness of their notes.

The students demonstrate their learning or apply it to a new situation.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Disciplinary literacy emphasizes the specialized knowledge and practices of different academic disciplines, going beyond general reading and writing skills. All educators should view themselves as teachers of reading. Key components for integrating reading into all classrooms include academic thinking skills, gradual release of responsibility, digital integrations, exercising agency, and WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) connections.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

1a: Applying Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

3a: Communicating About Purpose and Content

Effect Size

Mnemonics	0.65
Vocabulary Programs	0.65
Strategy to Integrate with Prior Knowledge	0.93

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Incorporate reading as a core function of learning in their classrooms.
- Utilize the necessary tools for teaching students to think, question, and respond to texts as content experts.
- Apply the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework to reading to ensure that all students can access rigorous text.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Access and understand rigorous texts across curriculums.
- Understand and connect key academic and content-related vocabulary to aid in deeper comprehension of the text.
- Develop skills to read, comprehend, and connect content to their learning.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [Integrated Language and Content Fundamentals](#)
- [AVID Academic Thinking Skills-Disciplinary Stems](#)
- [AVID Academic Language and Literacy](#)
- [What are Literacies within the Disciplines?](#)
- [Using Ellevation to Support Multilingual Learners](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Vocabulary Awareness Chart](#)
- [AVID Reciprocal Teaching](#)
- [Vocabulary Building Strategies to Use When Working with ELL Students](#)
- [Academic Vocabulary](#)
- [Concept Definition Map](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher aligns intentional reading strategies and academic thinking skills that allow for differentiation and scaffolding while facilitating the reading process.

The teacher identifies both content-specific and general academic vocabulary necessary for understanding the text while planning for reading.

The teacher integrates vocabulary building throughout the entire reading process as a means of supporting literacy.

The teacher embeds opportunities for students to use target vocabulary in discussions, writing, and presentations.

ANALYZING TEXT & VISUALS

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Effective analysis of texts and visual texts requires more than comprehension. Students must interpret evidence, recognize patterns, and draw inferences about purpose and meaning. Teachers model and scaffold these strategies, helping students build the independence and confidence needed to interpret complex texts. This skill is essential for college and career readiness and must be developed through intentional practice with challenging content.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

- 1f: Designing and Analyzing Assessments
- 3a: Communicating About Purpose and Content
- 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques
- 3c: Engaging Students in Learning
- 3e: Responding Flexibly to Student Needs

Effect Size

Comprehensive Reading Programs HS	0.61
Dual Coding / Visual Representations	0.57
Graphic Organizers	0.52
Metacognitive Strategies	0.58

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Model and scaffold reading strategies such as questioning, predicting, and analyzing.
- Guide students through interactions with complex texts by providing structured support.
- Encourage discussion, interpretation, and the defense of ideas to deepen understanding.
- Gradually release responsibility as students gain confidence in their reading skills.
- Assess and provide feedback to help students refine their critical reading strategies.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Actively engage with texts by questioning, making connections, and analyzing key ideas.
- Use teacher-modeled strategies to navigate complex and ambiguous material.
- Develop autonomy in interpreting, evaluating, and defending their understanding.
- Apply critical reading techniques independently across different subjects and contexts.
- Choose and refine their own methods for unpacking and discussing challenging texts.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Quick Overview of the Critical Reading Process](#)
- [AVID Critical Reading Process](#)
- [Classroom Examples in Various Disciplines](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Marking the Text with Different Content Examples](#)
- [Articles by subject to practice critical reading strategies with students](#)
- [AVID Interacting with Texts and Visuals/Reading for Understanding/ Graphic Organizers \(see pages 3-38\)](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher guides students to pre-read with purpose.

- Clearly identify the purpose of reading (e.g. author's intent, argument structure)
- Activate prior knowledge and preview the text features (titles, visuals, headings).

The teacher facilitates student interaction with the text.

- Teach and model annotation strategies (highlights, questioning, summarizing).
- Encourage students to mark key ideas, unfamiliar vocabulary, and text structure cues.

The teacher helps students organize their thinking.

- Support students in creating graphic organizers (e.g. 2-column notes; concept maps)
- Provide sentence frames or guiding questions to scaffold critical analysis.

Students summarize and reflect.

- Students paraphrase and summarize key points in their own words.
- Students reflect on how the reading connects to larger concepts or themes.

FEEDBACK

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Providing timely, meaningful feedback helps students understand where they have met expectations, where they need more practice, and how to close the gap between current and desired performance. Equally important is the feedback students provide to teachers, offering insights into misconceptions and informing adjustments to instruction that enhance learning. When teachers actively seek and use student feedback, and when assessments are viewed as tools for instructional improvement rather than mere progress reports, teaching and learning become more aligned and effective.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

1f: Designing and Analyzing Assessments

3d: Using Assessment for Learning

3e: Responding Flexibly to Student Needs

4b: Documenting Student Progress

Effect Size

Feedback	0.50
Formative Assessment	0.41

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Use the feedback from students via surveys, conferences, and discussions to gain information on pacing, practice, and current level of understanding of the material.
- Devise more effective ways to deliver comments to validate strengths and share goals.
- Provide feedback that is actionable, with a clear connection to student growth.
- Use feedback from formative assessments to adapt and guide future instruction.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Use the feedback from teachers to improve and remediate their work.
- Draw conclusions about their own understanding of the material and design a plan for improvement.
- View feedback as a tool for growth, not judgment.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [5 Research-based tips for student feedback](#)
- [Seven Keys to Effective Feedback](#)
- [Teacher Feedback Practices](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [60-Second Strategy: TAG Feedback \(Video\)](#)
- [60-Second Strategy Respond, Reflect, and Review \(Video\)](#)
- [Creating a Schoolwide Culture of Critique \(Video\)](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher provides students with opportunities for feedback from multiple sources, including peers, the teacher, and digital editing/revision resources.

The teacher provides timely feedback that provides clear direction for students to adjust their work with minimal teacher guidance.

The teacher provides ongoing specific feedback throughout the learning process and not only at the end of the unit. Specific feedback is aligned to learning objectives, including instructive, imperative, and objective feedback.

The teacher both acknowledges students' strengths and offers feedback in other areas for improvement on the work.

The teacher utilizes student feedback to adjust and inform future instruction.

GOAL SETTING

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Setting clear, measurable goals helps students focus their efforts, track progress, and stay motivated as they work toward specific academic outcomes. This practice not only deepens their understanding of the learning process but also builds essential skills in time management, perseverance, and self-regulation. Over time, goal setting fosters resilience and prepares students for success in school, college, and beyond.

EVALUATION CONNECTION & EFFECT SIZE

Danielson Framework:

- 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes
- 3a: Communicating About Purpose and Content
- 4a: Engaging in Reflective Practice
- 4b: Documenting Student Progress

Effect Size

Clear goal intentions	0.44
Self-reported grades	0.96

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY TEACHERS?

- Guide students in setting specific, measurable academic goals that align with class objectives.
- Support students in developing action plans to achieve their goals, breaking tasks into manageable steps.
- Monitor student progress, providing regular feedback and adjustments to ensure goals remain relevant and achievable.

HOW WILL THIS BE USED BY STUDENTS?

- Set clear, specific academic goals that help focus their efforts and track their progress.
- Develop action plans to achieve their goals, breaking down tasks and staying organized in their approach.
- Reflect on and adjust their goals to build growth mindset and strengthen their ability to self-regulate their learning.

HELPFUL TOOLS/RESOURCES

- [AVID Example of Goals to Set by Grade Level](#)
- [AVID Course Grades Goal Planning](#)

ACTIVITIES

- [AVID Daily Goal-Setting Outline](#)
- [Goal-Setting Outline Example](#)

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS

Building your Toolbox:

Check:

The teacher guides students in breaking down their goals into manageable tasks or steps, helping them create a clear plan to reach their objectives.

The teachers provide timely, constructive feedback on students' progress toward their goals, helping them make adjustments and stay motivated.

The teacher provides structured time for students to regularly reflect on their progress and revise their goals as needed, with teacher support, ensuring continuous improvement.

The teacher consistently communicates specific, measurable learning goals for students to achieve during lessons or units.

The teacher creates a classroom culture where students actively participate in setting their own academic goals, ensuring they are relevant, realistic, and aligned with the curriculum.