**Halifax County Schools** *Charting a New Course to Student Achievement*

**Board Configuration & Lesson Plan FAQs and Professional Support**

1. **How do I know what to post in my board configuration?**

Use your weekly lesson plan to script the classroom board configuration. Your weekly lesson plan should include the following lesson elements: standard, success strategy, essential question (EQ), connect activity, vocabulary, access background knowledge (ABK), building knowledge (BK), explain/model, guided practice, exit ticket, and students' independent practice playlist.

1. **Do I have to write a student-friendly "I can" statement?**

Yes, turn the standard into a student-friendly "I can" statement using the same verbs and noun/noun phrases and context. The verb can be adjusted as needed using the Depth of Knowledge Wheel (Reference:[**Link**](https://static.pdesas.org/content/documents/m1-slide_19_dok_wheel_slide.pdf)1, Reference [Link 2](https://www.google.com/search?q=student+friendly+objectives+video&biw=1152&bih=477&tbm=vid&ei=YXdAZNbANpml5NoPpae9wAY&ved=0ahUKEwiW9YXtirf-AhWZElkFHaVTD2gQ4dUDCA0&uact=5&oq=student+friendly+objectives+video&gs_lcp=Cg1nd3Mtd2l6LXZpZGVvEAMyBQgAEKIEMgUIABCiBDIFCAAQogQyBQgAEKIEOggIIRCgARDDBDoECCEQClCxCl)). However, if you're not familiar with how to write a student-friendly "I can" statement, then write the "standard" as is.

1. **Do I have to unpack the standard since the unpacking guide has already done so? If so, how do I unpack the standard?**

Yes. When you introduce the standard, refrain from just telling students what they will learn by reading the standard and moving on. Take time to unpack the standard with the class or student group. Tease out what they must know, learn, and be able to do, as well as the context of the learning.  To unpack the standard, circle the verbs. Tell students this is the "thinking" that we will learn to master in this standard. Underline the noun/noun phrases.  Tell students this is the exciting content that we will learn about. Highlight the context of the learning. Tell students this is the parameter of where the learning will take place and be tested. (Reference: [**Link**](https://www.google.com/search?q=unpacking+standards+video&oq=unpacking+standards+video&aqs=chrome..69i57j0i390i650l4.5971j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:71bbfbc7,vid:-USpAIMm2oU))

1. **What is meant by a "success" strategy?**

When students are told what standard they will learn, they should also be provided a means to learn the skill and comprehend the content with success (Explore: [**Link**](https://www.gcu.edu/blog/teaching-school-administration/what-scaffolding-education)).  The success strategy is a "bridge" to learning.  The "success strategy" is that "one tool" or algorithm that anchors the students’ connection to the learning process. It is a life-long learning support/strategy that the student can take with him or her at all times to perform the skill.  Non-examples are small group, textbooks, partners, collaboration, etc.   The non-examples are known as instructional strategies (Reference: [**Link**](https://www.washoeschools.net/cms/lib08/NV01912265/Centricity/Domain/228/Instructional%20Strategies%20List%20July%202015.pdf)**).** Students can't take either of these with them when they're taking a test.  Examples of student "success strategies" are students' use of graphic organizers to structure and clarify content, building models and acronyms for retrieval of information, visual cues for prompting of key steps or terms, process of elimination, colors, size, context clues, algorithms, tips, jingles, learning modalities, AVID, study tips, sketching, etc.  **Note:** The success strategy must be introduced and taught prior to the lesson skill.

1. **How do I figure out the success strategy for each standard?**

Begin by using the unpacking document.  The unpacking document provides clarity for the planning and lesson delivery.  Then go to the Literacy Instruction Standards' (Reference: [**Link**](https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/literacy-instruction-standards)**)** table of content **t**o get help with comprehension strategies.

1. **Do I have to write an essential question? What if I don't know how to write one?**

Yes, the essential question(s) opens up the learning context with real-world application and invites students' critical thinking to problem solve. The questions are open-ended. To learn more about essential questions and how to write them, explore the following: [**Link**](https://www.google.com/search?q=essential+questions+video&ei=So5AZNygO8aj5NoPr9OF6AE&ved=0ahUKEwjc7d3ZoLf-AhXGEVkFHa9pAR0Q4dUDCBA&uact=5&oq=essential+questions+video&gs_lcp=Cgxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAQAzIFCAAQgAQyBggAEBYQHjIICAAQigUQhgMyCAgAEIoFEIYDMggIABCKBRCGAzIICAAQigUQhgMyCAgAEIoFEIYDOgoIABBHENYEELADOgc) **1,** [**Link**](https://bcpslis.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/84708958/Essential_Questions_Handbook.pdf) **2,** [**Link**](https://www.ingenuity-inc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/What_Are_Essential_Questions.pdf) **3)**

1. **How long is the "connect "activity? How do I create a "connect" activity? Is it a daily activity? What are my options?**

The "connect" activity occurs within 5 minutes or less after the essential question is introduced. It is a quick warm-up task that connects students to the new learning standard's verb or content through relationships (content-to-content, content-to-self, or content-to-world). Once the new standard has been introduced, you do NOT have to continue to do a daily "connect" activity.  However, some classrooms use the time for "Do Now" or a readiness task.  This is fine as long as it does not cut into prime instruction time. 10 to 15-minute routine "Do Now" or readiness tasks are too long --as that is the length of a mini-lesson or guided practice activity, not a warm-up. Such lengthy tasks should be added on at the end of the lesson by way of guided practice or student playlist tasks. Remember, struggling students need immediate feedback to close gaps.

**…but what if the teacher is rotating to each student to provide feedback?** Again, if this is a warm-up, it should not last beyond 5 minutes. If so, it is no longer a quick warm-up but has become a guided practice session ahead of the actual lesson. At that point, you need to reflect/ponder "why" there is a need for such extensive practice time prior to the delivery of planned lessons each day. If it is because of a lack of prior knowledge, then include such tasks in the "Building Knowledge" component of the board configuration.

1. **What should I list for vocabulary?  Is this where I am supposed to post the vocabulary word list?**

This is not the place to post the vocabulary list.  This is where you post the focus of your vocabulary study. For example, word meaning, affixes, phonics or long/short vowels, vowel teams, contractions, or syllabication, compound words, irregular spellings, etc.). You will need to post your vocabulary word lists on chart paper or in another location of the board.

1. **How do I access background knowledge? Why is it important? How long should it take to access background knowledge?**

You can use a variety of methods to access students' prior knowledge. Begin by identifying the prerequisite skills and concepts that students will need to master the standard. For example, preassessment, KWL chart, concept mapping, brain dumps, performance tasks, etc.  The accessing prior knowledge engagement activity should tap into students' awareness of content and ability to add on new learning. This may take 10-15 minutes in whole group but 5-10 minutes in small groups. However, this is not a step that can be easily passed over.  It is the critical step in the "transfer" of learning process. Transfer of learning means the use of previously acquired knowledge and skills in new learning or problem-solving situations. Thereby, similarities and analogies between previous and current concepts establish new learning. Explore the following resources: [Link](https://www.hypertexted.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Transfer-of-Learning-1.pdf) 1,  [Link](https://scotlandcte.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/strategies-for-activating-prior-knowledge.pdf) 2.

1. **How do I build knowledge? I thought this was the Explain/Model component of the lesson. What does it look like?**

"Build Knowledge" is the teacher's "input" for departing content knowledge to students prior to explaining and modeling the algorithm/steps of application. The teacher's "input" is the pinpointing of the standard's content (nouns/noun phrases)in real-world experiences through "text" that introduces students to the concepts, places, people, time periods, and the context of the learning.  It is not about the skill (verb) at this point in the lesson.  Use the "Literacy Instruction Standards" (LIS/ [**Link**](https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/literacy-instruction-standards)**)** strategies to help you "build knowledge forward". Click on the link to locate your grade band; then, go to the table of contents. Look for "Build Knowledge Forward".

While "Build Knowledge" is the key to making learning interesting & fun, it is the most mismanaged component of the explicit lesson delivery process. Learn to master this component. Remember standards are just standards until the teacher brings them alive in stories, historical events, current news events, economic settings, disasters, world issues, and social-emotional connections, exposure to academic vocabulary discourse, and multiple dialogues, etc.  When the knowledge, "what students must know" and learn" is imparted in this meaningful manner, students have mastered the "content". They are now ready to move to the next step to master the skill/verb by way of application of the content known as "Explain/Model" (the algorithm of application).

1. **I believe that students need to explore and make sense of their own learning. When does "Explain/Model" occur in the lesson? What takes place during "Explain/Model"?**

The "Explain/Model (show & tell) component of the lesson is about intentionally and thoughtfully developing students' ability to apply and leverage the use of the standard's skills, processes, and practices in the context of the learning.  For some students, the algorithm of the application comes easily or naturally; however, for others, it may be a struggle.  Therefore, the teacher only focuses on the explanation of the application of the skill step by step --repeatedly until the student can mimic the process. If the student is to infer, distinguish, determine, or summarize, then the explanation narrows to depict the use of the skill. The explain/model (show/tell) process requires the teacher to "think aloud" while demonstrating a skill.  Thus, the "think aloud" process (processing of clarifying, describing, and making sense of information) makes visible the explanation of those practices and processes that happen internally, and often remain invisible to learners if not explicitly named, explained, and shared.

Through explain/model (show/tell), teachers make the application of the skill explicit by clarifying, describing, demonstrating, and modeling. This is critical to ensuring diverse learners have access to the "how-to" of applying the skill across tiers. Struggling learners need explicit & systematic routines for the transfer of new learning. This does not mean that they do not get to explore and make meaning for themselves, as that is also necessary for critical thinking development.  However, it does mean that the teacher must first establish an entry point for them to learn how to explore and make sense of their learning within a meaningful context.  When differentiating instruction, teachers must make judgments about whether and when to model or explore specific skills or practices to ensure equitable support for all students as needed. (Reference [Link](https://www.google.com/search?q=explicit+instruction+video&ei=Uf9AZMDNEvGe5NoPlb2aiA8&ved=0ahUKEwiAutm-jLj-AhVxD1kFHZWeBvEQ4dUDCBA&uact=5&oq=explicit+instruction+video&gs_lcp=Cgxnd3Mtd2l6LXNlcnAQAzoKCAAQRxDWBBCwAzoNCAAQigUQyQMQsAMQQzoKCAAQigUQsAMQQzoMCAAQigUQQxBGEPkBOggIABCABBCxAzoFCAAQgAQ6CggAEIoFELEDEEM6CwgAEIAEELEDEIMBOgcIABCABBAKOgcIABCKBRBDOhEILhCABBCxAxCDARDHARDRAzoPCAAQigUQ6gIQtAIQQxgBOg0IABCPARDqAhC0AhgCOg0IABCKBRCxAxCDARBDOhQILhCABBCxAxCDARDJAxDHARDRAzoICAAQigUQkQI6CwgAEIoFELEDEJECOg0IABCKBRCRAhBGEPkBOggILhCxAxCABDoTCC4QsQMQgAQQ3AQQ3gQQ4AQYAzoFCC4QgARKBAhBGABQogZY2Glgi3JoBnABeACAAXOIAZsUkgEEMzQuMZgBAKABAbABEsgBCsABAdoBBAgBGAfaAQYIAhABGAraAQYIAxABGBQ&sclient=gws-wiz-serp&safe=active&ssui=on#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:0eaa5e2f,vid:i-qNpFtcynI))

1. **How much guided practice (We Do) should I provide before releasing students to independent and collaborative tasks?**

Guided practice is the "We Do" component of the lesson wherein the teacher and students are still working together to establish a working understanding of the application of the skill and content in meaningful segments or chunks. Collectively, all students will not reach an acceptable level of mastery with one dose of guided practice.  Therefore, small group instruction should be employed to ensure the learning is progressing at students' brisk or delayed pacing. In short, less whole-group instruction and more small-group data-driven instruction are needed to secure tiered learning progressions.

1. **What is meant by an "exit ticket"?  Do I always have to require an exit ticket?**

Exit tickets are a means of providing evidence of student learning prior to transitioning to another subject area. Student responses can be used to inform the next step of the learning process.  Exit ticket ideas may focus on one particular concept or skill that students are expected to study that day. "Exit ticket" ideas may include multiple choice, short answer, or even a few sentences answering an exit question. (Reference: Video[**Link**](https://www.structural-learning.com/post/exit-tickets#:~:text=Exit%20Tickets%20or%20%22Tickets%20to,they%20are%20teaching%20in%20class.)**).** Exit tickets are only required when assessing snapshots of students' learning.  It is a quick formative assessment of the lesson to provide ongoing feedback for lesson pacing and content adjustment.

1. **What's the difference between guided practice and independent practice? Where does the independent practice (You do") and collaborative practice take place in the lesson? What does it look like?**

Guided practice is where the instructor helps to guide the students and does the work together, while independent practice is where students must complete the work tasks by themselves without any help. Independent practice (or independent task) is also known as the “you do” component of an explicitly taught lesson. Independent practice provides an opportunity for students to practice the skills or concepts from the lesson. Its purpose is to increase the student’s fluency, enabling a more automatic recall of the skills that have been learned, as well as freeing up space in working memory so that higher-order tasks can be applied.

Independent practice (independent task) should be meaningful and directly linked to the key concepts and the content taught within the lesson. Independent practice or independent tasks can be completed by students individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Teachers can use phrases such as "In a few minutes, we will go over the answers to Problems 1 and 2 or "I graded your project using the rubric that was provided". Students should know how to complete the tasks as well as understand the teacher’s expectations for completing independent tasks.  (Explore: [**Link)**](https://www.aisnsw.edu.au/Resources/WAL%204%20%5BOpen%20Access%5D/Principles%20of%20Instruction%20-%20Independent%20Practice%20Handout.pdf)   During this component, teachers should still check for student understanding and provide effective feedback. Independent practice definitely takes place after guided practice. This is the section of the lesson where students must be able to understand the concept that was taught and complete it on their own. Independent practice can take the form of a homework assignment or worksheet, but it is also important to think of other ways for students to reinforce and practice the given skills.

1. **What is meant by "student playlists" and "choice boards"? How do I balance students' needs and interests in learning? Are there examples to view?**

The goal of the gradual release of the teaching & learning process is that students become independent thinkers and learners within a multi-tiered system of supports. Therefore, teachers are required to employ a variety of instructional strategies that meet the needs of all learners across MTSS tiers to develop student agency.  Lesson plans must offer opportunities for "choice" to demonstrate mastery.

Student "agency" refers to learning through activities that are meaningful and relevant to learners, driven by their interests, and often self-initiated with appropriate guidance from teachers. Student agency provides students with a voice and/or choice in how they learn (Reference: [Link](https://www.renaissance.com/edword/student-agency/)). Students' weekly data-driven learning tasks should consist of playlists, which include independent practice, [small group instruction](https://practices.learningaccelerator.org/strategies/targeted-small-group-instruction) with the teacher, group work, instructional games and hands-on activities, and online instruction. Each playlist is aligned to the week’s learning goal, broken down into both [required activities and optional, extension activities](https://practices.learningaccelerator.org/strategies/providing-pacing-guidance-with-must-dos-and-may-dos). Students are provided "choice" throughout the week over which activities they "must do" and "may do" by way of a personalized playlist or by posting their name to station rotations as appropriate to elementary and secondary instructional guidance.  Students are responsible for monitoring their progress and recording completion on the paper/electronic playlists, prioritizing their time each day to ensure they complete required activities by the end of the week. (Explore: [**Link**](https://practices.learningaccelerator.org/strategies/balancing-student-choice-and-needs-with-playlists)) [**Link 2**](https://www.google.com/search?q=How+to+create+a+playlist+or+choice+board&oq=How+to+create+a+playlist+or+choice+board&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64.26444j1j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:ff27056c,vid:YcCgIhvaxHw)**,** [**Link 3**](https://www.google.com/search?q=How+to+create+a+playlist+or+choice+board&oq=How+to+create+a+playlist+or+choice+board&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i64.26444j1j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:392acc4e,vid:tnWcLlEMWwo)**,** [**Link**](https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-now/2018/06/08/using-playlists-to-personalize-learning#:~:text=Playlist%20creation%20is%20fairly%20straightforward,%2C%20interest%2C%20and%20background%20knowledge.) **4,** [**Link**](https://hapara.com/blog/offering-student-choice-voice-with-playlist-based-instruction/) **5)**

Students can also skip parts of the playlist by demonstrating mastery of the week’s learning goal in the [pretest](https://practices.learningaccelerator.org/strategies/using-pretests-and-posttests-to-identify-learning-growth-and-needs) taken at the beginning of the week. If students show mastery, they either work on extension activities from the playlist or alternate projects that apply and deepen their understanding of the week’s learning standard. At the end of each class, teachers lead the class in a whole-group reflection, prompting each student to record their daily progress and reflect on their work. Explore: [**Link**](https://catlintucker.com/2022/02/playlists-vs-choice-boards/#:~:text=Unlike%20a%20playlist%2C%20the%20choice,rarely%20personalized%20for%20individual%20students.)

1. **The “I Do; We Do; You Do” and “teaching points” confuse me.**  **How can I make sense of the Board Configuration process**?  **Do I have to perform the components in order?**

The "I Do; We Do; You Do is the instructional framework known as the "learning continuum". The comprehensive "teaching points" are the lesson elements that teach that skill: ABK, BK & Explain/Model. The model is designed to meet the needs of students who are at-level, below-level, and at intensive intervention levels. While skipping an element is highly discouraged, you may adjust the amount of time spent on individual lesson elements according to tiers. For example, struggling learners may need more explicit "explain/model and guided practice opportunities, while at-level students may soar with a front-loaded video and/or brisk pacing.

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Components of the board configuration are scripted within the weekly lesson plan and posted in the board configuration.   Pre-K-12 teachers communicate their daily teaching & learning process through the board configuration. The Classroom Board Configuration breaks the gradual release of instruction learning cycle into an academic flow of essential understanding:

* For every **"standard**" taught, there is a "**success strategy**" to sustain the application of the skill;
* For each lesson concept (noun/noun phrase) explored, there is at least one "**essential question**" asked to bring learning to life in a real-world application.
* Each essential question provokes critical thinking and encourages "**connectivity"** to the academic concept(s).
* Each academic concept(s) engages a wide range of "**vocabulary**" enhancements: word meaning, phonics, and usage to prompt knowledge, etc..
* Teaching the skill & concepts require "**accessing background knowledge**" to assess foundational bridges to "**build knowledge**" forward. (These two steps are critical for evoking an emotional attachment to the learning process and ready students for the "how-to").
* Sharing the "how-to", also known as "**explain/model",** invites students to join in making sense of the skill & content through "**guided practice**" while applying the “**success strategy**”.  (Guided practice is the collecting and analyzing of student performance data. Therefore, multiple practices are needed to inform sustained progress. )
* Teachers pace the number of guided practice tasks on students' personalized playlists of “must do” & “may do”.
* Seventy percent or higher indicates readiness for "**independent"** and "**collaborative" work with peers, and/or project-based learning.**

1. **Are the board configurations the same across elementary and secondary? Do I have an option for choosing?**

Halifax County Schools’ MTSS triangle is inverted. The 2021-2022 EOY data indicated more than 80% of students are below level in math and more than 75% are below level in reading. Therefore, the district’s approach to closing gaps is the planning of explicit & systematic lessons. These lessons are formatted with the gradual release of instruction process, also known as the “I Do; We Do; You Do” learning continuum. (Reference: [**Link**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-qNpFtcynI)**)**.

The district’s lesson plan format and board configuration align to the gradual release model. The lesson plan dictates the board configuration lesson elements. Principals have the option of tweaking their school’s lesson plan format, but their school lesson plans must have the stated basic components listed below. The district’s lesson plan components align with the NC DPI focus for teaching the NC SCOS, Unpacking Standards, Implementation of Literacy Instruction Standards/Strategies (LIS), MTSS tiered instruction model, EC accommodations, differentiated small grouping, digital learning, student agency, research-based practices, and academic rigor. Each school is expected to include the state requirements listed above when adjusting the school’s lesson planning format. The format should be uploaded into the NCStar School Improvement Plan for feedback from the district and state.

**District’s Board Configuration**

* Date
* Standard
* Success Strategy
* Essential Question (EQ)
* Connect Activity
* Vocabulary
* Access Background Knowledge (ABK)
* Build Knowledge (BK)
* Explain/Model
* Guided Practice
* Exit Ticket/Closure
* Student Playlist

**District’s Minimum Lesson Plan Format**

* Date
* Standard/I can statement
* Performance Standard
* Unpacking of standard
* Tiered Vocabulary
* Essential Question
* Connect Activity
* Access Background Knowledge (Preassessment)
* Build Knowledge (Elaboration of content/input)
* Explain/Model
* Guided Practice
* Formative/Summative Assessment
* Differentiated Small Group Playlist
* EC/AIG/ELL Accommodations/Modifications

**19.  What about the use of instructional an instructional agenda? Do I need to write out my full schedule?**

The district requires all classrooms to close the achievement gap by reducing the minutes of whole-group instruction on a daily basis to increase data-driven small-group & personalized instructional minutes. The instructional agenda only displays the use of minutes, not the full schedule.  You only need to post the number of minutes that will be used: whole-group, small-group, and closure each day.  Instructional minutes vary across elementary, middle, and high school classrooms.  For example, the "Instructional Agenda" could be listed as follows: