



*Preparing
to Teach
the Adolescent
Learner*

*If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should
teach the way they learn.*

—Ignacio Estrada

THE ADOLESCENT LEARNER: A PROFILE

Today one merely needs to open a newspaper or tune in to a radio or television news broadcast to hear about the so-called crisis in education. Accountability testing, national reform movements, and state report cards have prompted educators and parents to reexamine age-old educational practices in light of the changing nature of our society and the people who populate it. And nowhere has this focus been more strongly applied than in the world of adolescent learning. Adolescents, after all, have the challenge of being “the next generation”; it will be up to them to assure our place in the world through their leadership, initiative, and creativity.

However, to those who currently embrace the task of teaching adolescents, the challenges faced can be daunting. Teaching adolescents is

no easy task. Having taught them for some 33 years, I know that, in many respects, the adolescents of today are not that dissimilar to the adolescents of the past. They have boundless energy, their emotional state is always in crisis, and their commitment to learning can vary from day to day, class to class, minute to minute. They tend to live “in the moment,” more concerned about what movie to see than about the geometry test on Friday. They strive to be liked and accepted by their peers. Anxious to fit in, they tentatively explore relationships and search to carve out an identity for themselves. They seek to establish control over their lives: They want to be treated as adults, have the freedom to choose, exercise their right to assert an opinion, and make decisions that are respected by others. Yet, even though they embrace these adult-like behaviors, overall they fear failure and making incorrect decisions and choices, and, in some cases, they are uncomfortable with the uncertainty of the future. Yet, all these young adults embrace the hope for a better future for themselves and their families.

However, while the “state” of adolescence has not changed significantly in the last 30 years, the context in which these adolescents live certainly has. Today, the largest generation of adolescents in history, 1.2 billion strong, faces a rapidly changing, fast-paced, technology-driven world where young people derive most of their information about the world, what to expect, and how to behave from their peers and from mass media. Today’s adolescents have inherited a world shaped by

- globalization of trade, investment, and economic relationships.
- instantaneous access to information and experiences through mass communications media.
- a changing nature of work, which will require new skills and capacities and may result in the need to change career choices several times, perhaps embracing a choice that does not yet even exist.
- urbanization and migration.
- changing family structures.

In addition to facing the turmoil of a changing society, adolescents themselves are facing great changes. According to information provided in *At the Turning Point: The Young Adolescent Learner* (n.d.), during the adolescent years students undergo a period of significant growth that occurs more rapidly than during any other time in their lives except, of course, during infancy. In effect, they grow physically, emotionally and psychologically, morally and intellectually. Physically, adolescents may sometimes feel restless and tired because they are undergoing huge hormonal changes in their bodies, but at other times they exhibit increased energy and crave physical activity. They are concerned with the changes that are taking place

in their bodies, and in their search to develop sexual awareness, they can often be seen touching and bumping into each other. Finally, they are often physically vulnerable, because they are quick to engage in risky behaviors and poor health habits.

Emotional and psychological changes occur as well. They may exhibit mood swings that are intense and unpredictable. They have sudden outbursts of activity because they need to release energy. While they crave independence, acceptance, and an adult identity, they are concerned about their own physical growth and maturity and are self-conscious and sensitive to personal criticism, believing that the problems, feelings, and experiences they face are unique to them (*At the Turning Point*, n.d.).

Morally, adolescents are beginning to grasp an understanding of the issues that face society, and they no longer perceive these issues as “black or white.” In their search for this understanding, they rely on adult role models who are trustworthy and will listen to their thoughts and ideas. They rely on these adults for advice but are vehement about making their own decisions. And, while they show an understanding of the difficulty of initiating change, they are often impatient with the time it takes to make that change. In addition, adolescents are quick to judge others but are slow to recognize their own faults (*At the Turning Point*, n.d.).

Finally, the adolescent is changing intellectually. These students have an intense curiosity and are willing to undertake a wide range of intellectual pursuits, although they may fail to sustain many of them over a long period of time. They prefer active, rather than passive, learning experiences shared through interaction with their peers and will exhibit a high level of achievement if they feel challenged and engaged. Finally, as their thinking moves from the concrete to the abstract, they begin to develop the ability to self-reflect (*At the Turning Point*, n.d.).

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO FACILITATE ADOLESCENT LEARNING?

Given what we know about how adolescents grow and change and prepare themselves to exist in a world that is changing as well, educators are faced with the one overriding question: What can we do to facilitate adolescent learning? We are aware that these young people must be able to efficiently maneuver through vast quantities of written and electronic information and communicate effectively orally, verbally, and electronically. They will need to successfully explore, question, analyze, and synthesize information, and they will need to accomplish this all while working collaboratively with their peers. However, to truly facilitate adolescent learning, we must, as Lambert and McCombs (1998) suggest, understand how and under what specific

conditions that learning occurs. As good teachers who have successfully taught adolescents over the years and have read the research on best practices, we are aware that in order for adolescents to learn, they must be able to connect what they are learning to what they already know or have personal experience with (Alvermann & Phelps, 2001; Kamil, 2003; Van den Broek & Kremer 2000), and they must be willing and motivated to put forth the effort to learn (Langer, 2001; Moore, Alvermann, & Hinchman, 2000). However, as clarified in the work of Perkins (1992) and Sizer (1996), it is not enough to simply foster students' prior knowledge and get them excited about learning something. Instead, "Adolescent learning involves interactive, purposeful, and meaningful engagement" (Crawford, 2007, p. 5), and happens best, according to Crawford, when adolescents

- encounter developmentally appropriate learning that is presented in multiple ways and in interesting and enjoyable manners.
- are intellectually challenged by authentic tasks that they perceive to be challenging, novel, and relevant to their lives.
- share and discuss ideas and work collaboratively on tasks, projects, and problems.
- utilize multiple strategies to acquire, integrate, and interpret knowledge meaningfully and then demonstrate their understanding and apply their recently found knowledge to new situations.
- are provided opportunities to develop and use strategic thinking skills to reason and problem solve.
- are given guidance and immediate feedback on their progress and encouraged to monitor and reflect upon their personal progress and understanding.
- are situated in a safe, supportive environment where their personal ideas are valued and they are free from fear of punishment and embarrassment. (Crawford, 2007)

A METHOD TO FACILITATE ADOLESCENT LEARNING

The characteristics of today's adolescents and an outline of those conditions that facilitate their learning, as discussed above, have clear implications for the classrooms of today and naturally lead us to the overriding question: What method of instruction will best complement today's adolescents and most effectively help them learn? While a myriad of educational methods and reforms have been suggested across the years, one that has sustained popularity for the past 20 years has been the concept of extending the

length of class instruction time from the universally accepted 40- to 60-minute period to class periods of up to 90 to 100 minutes. This movement, Canady and Rettig (1995) suggest, comes from a variety of criticisms of traditional school schedules. These criticisms are centered around the fact that when students are required to pass through six, seven, or eight class periods a day and when teachers are required to teach five or six classes a day,

- instruction is fragmented, so the teacher is not engaged in in-depth teaching, and the student is not engaged in in-depth learning.
- the school takes on an impersonal factory assembly line environment, where teachers are asked to address the intellectual and emotional needs of over 100 or more students, and students are expected to adapt to the differing requirements, standards, and styles of a variety of teachers each day.
- discipline problems increase, because students transition from class to class several times a day, moving through narrow hallways under crowded conditions.
- actual instructional time is limited, so instruction is often accomplished by lecture only rather than the use of comprehensive laboratory work, Socratic seminars, learning centers, or cooperative learning structures.
- the opportunity for extended learning time for students who need it is not provided.

This movement to implement changes in the organization and use of time in middle and high schools comes from a variety of sources. As noted by the 1997 research report, *Alternative High School Schedules: A View From the Teacher's Desk* (Pisapia & Westfall, 1997), the daily schedule a school develops basically drives its curriculum and instructional practices. Yet, the traditional time structure embraced by most middle and high schools has remained essentially the same for a century and is based on the 1910 concept of the Carnegie Unit, which Canady and Rettig (1996) note is determined by seat time rather than the needs of the students, especially those whose learning patterns may differ from those of their peers. However, when the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education) reported that students were falling behind their counterparts in other industrialized nations, educators took note and began to consider ways to remedy the problem, toying with the concept of restructuring schools. Queen (2000), in his article "Block Scheduling Revisited," provides a succinct overview of the road that has led to the acceptance of block scheduling as a viable alternative to the traditional time structure used at most middle and high schools. Queen notes that

John Goodlad, in his monumental work, *A Place Called School* (1984), lobbied for creating a daily schedule that embraced larger blocks of instructional time when his study of the traditional school structure revealed it did not meet the needs of learners, since it failed to provide adequate time for individualized instruction, work in laboratories, or experiential situations, remediation, or enrichment. A later study by Canady and Rettig (1995) supported Goodlad's findings, noting that the traditional school day format of seven periods of 45 minutes each allows only 60% of the school day to be devoted to instruction.

Furthermore, as Queen (2000) notes, the trend toward urging that greater blocks of time be devoted to learning continued into the 1990s, and, in 1993, Tom Donahoe posited that any school restructuring effort should include the formal rearrangement of the use of time to foster a more active culture of learning (Donahoe, 1993, in Queen). His suggestion was supported by the National Commission on Time and Learning report *Prisoners of Time* (1994, in Queen) that urged schools to restructure themselves to focus on learning rather than be driven by time constraints. In addition, it suggested the concept of block scheduling, which organized courses of study around extended blocks of time, thus allowing teachers to engage their students in active instruction. This concept was quickly embraced by many, and, according to Queen, this movement to utilize the block-scheduling format in some form has increased from 40% in 1994 to 74% in 1998 and leads to a prediction that within a few years, 75% of all high schools will adopt this format.

While the focus of this book is not to glorify the concept of block scheduling, one cannot ignore the fact that one component of block scheduling revolves around a more effective use of time by extending the class period from 45–50 minutes to 90–100 minutes. And research-based evidence (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Bugaj, 1999) clearly shows the positive influences that extending class time has on teaching and learning. In effect, it provides students with all the conditions detailed by Crawford (2007) as supporting adolescent learning discussed above, and it takes into consideration all the characteristics of adolescent learners detailed earlier in this chapter. Research indicates that teaching students in an extended time period provides adequate time for teachers to

- get to know their students better, since the number of students seen daily and the number of classes taught daily is reduced.
- introduce and reinforce concepts to be learned in a single class period.
- utilize cooperative learning strategies.
- allow students to effectively utilize technology.
- make accommodations for individual learning styles.

- promote student inquiry as a method for achieving greater understanding.
- provide more hands-on activities for students.
- conduct laboratory classes that focus on in-depth learning experiences.

And, according to Canady and Rettig (1996), adolescents also benefit because

- the number of classes students must attend and prepare for is reduced.
- students are provided variable amounts of time to learn if they need it.
- students have more opportunities for accelerated learning.
- student learning and teacher instruction time is not fragmented, thus allowing for extensive practice, active learning strategies, and greater student involvement.

Unfortunately, while the positive effects of teaching in an extended time period are clear, the concept itself has caused some apprehension among middle and secondary schools teachers as they struggle with how to keep their students actively engaged in learning for 90–100 minutes. Merely lecturing while students take notes and then having them engage in busy work or begin their homework to fill the time just won't work with today's adolescents, who are used to the fast paced world of technological gadgets and tools. Thus, teachers committed to reaching all students need strategies and activities that will help students make effective use of these new extended periods of class time while increasing their learning. It is the purpose of this text to provide such strategies and activities.

THE FIRST STEPS: CURRICULUM MAPPING AND LESSON PLANNING

However, before teachers can begin to make effective use of the extended periods of class time made available to them, they must consider two overriding elements: curriculum and lesson planning. To do this effectively, teachers must answer the following questions:

1. What content and skills will be taught? (The Curriculum)
2. How will this content and these skills be taught? (The Lesson Plan)
3. How will this content be assessed? (The Lesson Plan)

Furthermore, in this age of accountability, it is especially crucial that administrators, teachers, parents, and students clearly understand what is

being taught and, more important, what students are really learning. The following sections of this text will address these issues in detail.

Curriculum Mapping

The concept of the curriculum is crucial to the success of teaching in an extended time period because, as Canady and Rettig (1996) note, “It is both wise and necessary to create a curriculum pacing guide” (p. 21), because it forestalls teachers from either simply stacking two single class periods upon each other or falling prey to the idea that they have lots of time to teach the curriculum and then running out of that time as the year draws to a close. In fact, according to Hayes-Jacobs as found in Merenbloom and Kalina (2007), mapping the curriculum not only identifies the essential learnings students need but also aligns with the curriculum the content and skills students will need to learn. In addition, the identification of these essential learnings lays the path for a rigorous curriculum and becomes the focus for both the formative and summative assessments given to evaluate those essential learnings (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006). As noted by Jacobs (1997), “If a commitment does not exist for when something will be taught, it will not be taught” (p. 4).

The concept of curriculum mapping can be traced back to the work of Dr. Heidi Hayes Jacobs (1997) and is, in reality, a process used to develop a database of the curriculum of a school. It presents a way to document how the various components of the curriculum relate to one another. If used effectively, curriculum mapping can become an analytic communication and planning tool. In other words, it is a method for identifying, collecting, and recording the core skills and content taught, the processes used to teach the skills and content, and the assessment used to determine whether students have learned the content. In effect, it is a true representation of what is really being taught, tested, and learned in the classroom.

While most school have complex curriculum guides that trace what students should know and be able to do, few actually focus in on what specific content and skills are used in instruction, the time frame students follow as they learn this content and these skills, and what assessments teachers use to determine whether students have learned what they have been taught. In essence, curriculum maps may be used for

- providing communication among teachers.
- aligning instruction to standards and outcomes.
- developing a framework for building instructional units.
- facilitating grade level planning.
- developing integrated or cross-curricular curriculums.

- providing a baseline for the curriculum review and renewal process and identifying unnecessary redundancies, inconsistencies, misalignment, weaknesses, and gaps in the curriculum.
- identifying staff development needs.

Coupled with traditional curriculum guides, the process of curriculum mapping “amplifies the possibilities for long-range planning, short-term preparation and clear communication” (Jacobs, 1997, p. 5), thus not only enhancing the learning of the students but fostering a climate of effective collaboration with a school.

The Process of Curriculum Mapping

The journey a school takes as it creates its curriculum map may be a variegated one, since schools have a plethora of components to choose from in creating the map as well as a variety of methods to follow as they work through the mapping process. As a result, one school’s curriculum map may well differ from another’s, as each will reflect those components that best help the school to gain insight into what students are truly experiencing and learning. As Jacobs (2004) notes, “Curriculum maps have the potential to become the hub for making decisions about teaching and learning,” and thus, “Mapping becomes an integrating force to address not only curriculum issues, but also programmatic ones” (p. 126).

While curriculum mapping is most effective when undertaken by an entire school staff, much success has also been seen in schools where the task is first attempted by one or two teachers mapping one or two classes or courses and then allowed to grow and blossom as other teachers see the enormous benefits of completing the process and turn their energies to the mapping process. In addition, while a myriad of software programs exists to facilitate the construction of curriculum maps, such as (1) Atlas Curriculum Management System (<http://www.rubiconatlas.com/mapping.htm>), (2) Curriculum Creator (<http://www.ael.org>), (3) Curriculum Mapper (<http://www.clihome.com/curriculummapper>), (4) MapSter (<http://mapster.gstbooces.org>), (5) Perspective Curriculum Map (fmdonaldson@earthlink.com), (6) Quality Leadership by Design (<http://www.qld-llc.com>), and (7) TECHPATHS (Info@perfpatternways.com), the use of a computer-based program is not essential, since many schools have completed the mapping process using a simple curriculum map template developed using a basic word-processing program. A blackline master of such a template is included in Figure 1.6 at the end of this chapter.

Once teachers have decided to undertake the process of curriculum mapping, they need to choose the components that will drive their mapping task. As noted above, there are several components that can be

included within the map. Among the most common are (1) the essential question, (2) time frame, (3) content, (4) skills, (5) assessments, and (6) resources. Each of these will be discussed below.

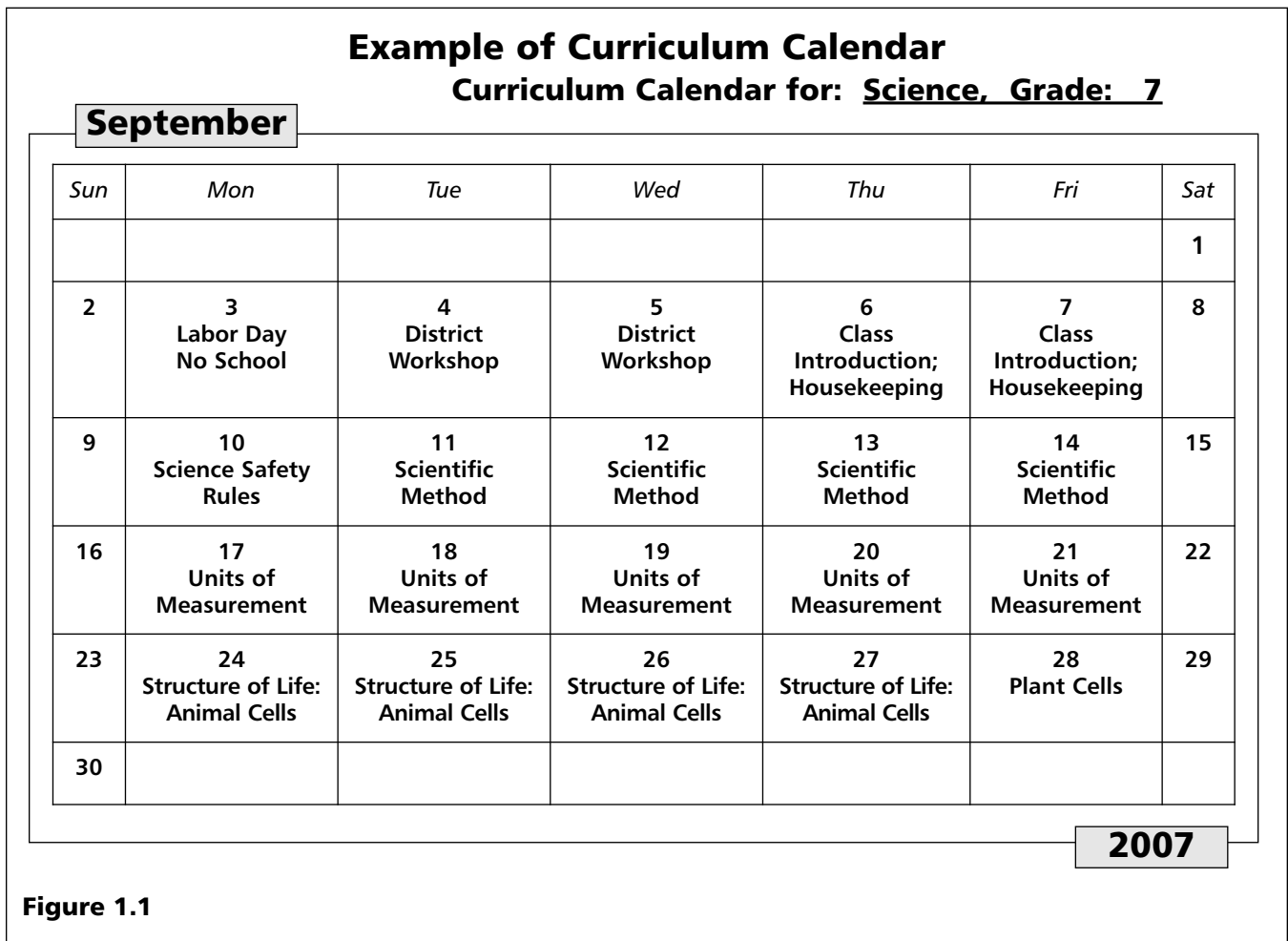
Essential Questions

Essential questions are complex questions that serve as the basis of the instructional units and guide student learning. By centering on major issues, problems, or themes, they help keep the curriculum focused. Effective essential questions are open-ended and of a high order, so they provoke deep thought and critical thinking rather than mere retention of facts. Finally, an important aspect of creating an essential question is that it must emphasize the why and how of the topic rather than the what. Jacobs (1997) suggests that the following criteria for writing essential questions be followed: Questions should

1. be phrased so that students can easily understand them.
2. be written in broad, organizational terms.
3. be reflective of the concepts that students will study in the curriculum.
4. be distinct and substantial.
5. avoid repetition.
6. be realistically addressed within the time frame allotted to their study.
7. be logical in sequence.
8. be posted in classrooms for all students to see.

Time Frame

While this component seems like it would be the easiest to develop, it is often the one that is most quickly revised or changed. In essence, the mapping of the time devoted to each content topic can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Some teachers utilize “diary mapping,” developing a year-long log of what they have actually taught, while others develop a “consensus map,” which presents a sort of bottom line of what all students must learn and be able to do. An easy way to generate the initial map is to develop a basic calendar using the Calendar Wizard function in Microsoft Word. Once the calendar has been created, teachers should enter all information that reflects a change in the usual school day process, such as days classes do not meet, early release or late start days, and days when assemblies are held as well as when grading periods begin and end. After these items have been entered, teachers may then record the number of days to be devoted to each aspect of the content to be covered. See Figure 1.1 for an example of a curriculum calendar.



Content

When completing the content portion of the curriculum map, teachers need to recognize that they are not developing a lesson plan for the content to be covered but, rather, are merely listing the major concepts within the content that will be covered. Content is best defined as the subject matter or the key concepts, facts, and events of a discipline, and it is usually organized around topics, issues, works of literature, art or music, a problem, or themes. Examples of content are (1) multiplication or fractions in mathematics classes, (2) narrative writing or *Othello* in English classes, (3) revolutions or the death penalty in social studies classes, and (4) water pollution or electricity in science classes. Note: The content to be studied is expressed as a noun.

Skills

Once the content to be learned has been identified, the teacher must clearly identify what precise skills need to be taught, learned, or used in

order for students to successfully master the content. Basically, two types of skills exist: precision skills that are related to specific disciplines like math, science, and English and that identify what students must be able to do in order to learn in a specific content; and cross-disciplinary skills that are used in all disciplines, such as reading, listening, speaking, editing, and revising. Examples of skills are (1) classify plants based on structure in science classes; (2) convert mixed numbers to improper fractions in mathematics classes; and (3) locate, access, and use maps, charts, and graphs in social studies. Often the list of key skills in a discipline is a great deal longer than the list of content items identified, because each skill must be specifically described. Note: the skills students exhibit are expressed as verbs.

Assessment

Assessments are best defined as the observable evidence, whether it be a product or a performance, that learning has occurred. In effect, assessments are designed to reveal how students have acquired the skills and learned the content studied. This component of the curriculum is crucial, because it identifies how the teacher will know if the students have learned what has been taught. Therefore, the assessments listed should be both formative and summative as well as formal and informal. In addition, assessment strategies for both skills and content should be identified, and the forms the assessments take should be reflective of the learning outcomes desired.

Resources

A final component of the curriculum map is a list of resources, which may include texts, novels, CD-ROMs, films, Web sites, et cetera.

Figure 1.2 provides a curriculum map for social studies, and Figure 1.3 provides an example of a curriculum map for English/language arts. Figure 1.5 at the end of this chapter presents a blackline master for the curriculum map template.

As noted earlier, making the transition from teaching in a traditional time format to teaching in an extended time period requires that we pay attention not only to the question of curriculum, or what content and skills will be taught, but also to the question of how this content and these skills will be taught and how they will be assessed. While mapping answers the question of curriculum, the question of how the curriculum will be taught and assessed is better addressed through the use of effective lesson plan formats.

Example of Curriculum Map for Social Studies Curriculum Map for Unit on the Road to the Civil War

Time	Essential Questions	Content	Skills	Standards	Assessments	Suggested Activities	Materials/Resources
3 weeks	<p>What political, social, and economic factors caused the Civil War?</p> <p>What were the conflicting perspectives on slavery?</p> <p>What is to be done with the institution of slavery?</p> <p>Must sectionalism ultimately lead to disunion?</p>	Road to the Civil War	<p>Explain causes of the Civil War.</p> <p>Discuss importance of slavery, states' sectionalism.</p> <p>Compare and contrast Union and Confederate states.</p>	<p>16.A.3b Make inferences about historical events and eras using historical maps and other historical sources.</p> <p>16.D.3 (W) Identify the origins and analyze consequences of events that have shaped world social history including famines, migrations, plagues, slave trading.</p>	<p>Civil War Portfolio: compare/contrast North and South</p> <p>Analysis of political cartoon</p> <p>Graph data of Civil War</p> <p>Flow chart of Civil War progress</p> <p>Unit Test</p> <p>Debate over secession/slavery</p> <p>Civil War newspaper</p>	<p>T-charts to compare/contrast strengths, weaknesses, objectives of North and South</p> <p>PowerPoint presentations highlighting key events of war</p> <p>Graph of Civil War data comparing North and South on a variety of measures</p> <p>Map of major battle sites, defining the Union and Confederate states, position of Union blockade, and major troop movements</p> <p>Chart showing battles, objectives, outcomes to accompany map</p> <p>Reading of primary source documents</p> <p>Reading and discussion of significance of Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, Lee's surrender, and results of the war</p>	<p><i>The American Journey</i>, Glencoe. Chapter 16</p> <p><i>American History: The Early Years</i>, Glencoe. Chapter 18</p> <p><i>American Nation</i>, Prentice Hall. Chapter 17</p> <p><i>Creating America</i>, McDougall Littell. Chapters 16, 17</p> <p><i>Ordinary Americans: U.S. History Through the Eyes of Everyday People</i>, Linda R. Monk. Close-Up Publications. Primary source document.</p> <p>Civil War photographs.</p> <p>Activities in <i>History Alive</i>, Sections 2 and 3</p> <p>Web organizers</p> <p>Battle charts</p> <p>Civil War time line</p>

Figure 1.2

Example of Curriculum Map for English/Language Arts

Curriculum Map for Unit on *The Grapes of Wrath*

Time	Essential Questions	Content	Skills	Standards	Assessments	Suggested Activities	Materials/Resources
3 weeks	How did the Great Depression affect the common man? What great changes came about in the United States as a result of the Great Depression? What lessons for the future did the Great Depression teach us?	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Analytical reading Figurative language Literary elements Author's style	Respond to passages. Analyze appropriate selections from appropriate sources. Identify purpose of specific setting. Identify and paraphrase dialect and idiomatic language. Identify author's purpose with point of view. Identify historical relevance of novels. Compare and contrast the pursuits of characters in novels with the social attitudes of the 1920s and 1930s.	1.8.17 Identify the outcome or conclusion of a story or nonfiction account based on previous occurrences or events. 1.8.18 Identify the causes of events in a story or nonfiction account. 1.8.19 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge. 2.8.03 Identify the author's message or theme.	Open-response questions Formal essay Formal exam	Read <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . Read positive and negative reviews of novel. Analyze lyrics of "The Ghost of Tom Joad" by Bruce Springsteen. Examine Dorothea Lange's photography and relate to the Great Depression and <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . Read "The American Dream." Discussion: Socratic seminar/shared inquiry Reciprocal teaching Reflective journal	Reader's Handbook Question-Answer Relationship strategy Film clips: <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> Lyrics: "The Ghost of Tom Joad," Bruce Springsteen Newspaper articles—downward mobility

Figure 1.3

Lesson Plan Formats

Lesson plans serve as guides to help teachers select the best time frame, activities, and assessments to use to help students understand the concepts they are being taught. Williams and Dunn (2008), in their text *Brain Compatible Learning for the Block*, liken good lesson plans unto recipes, blueprints, and game plans that engage students in a successful learning process. While there are a myriad of possibilities for lesson plan formats, almost all of them suggest that students move through at least three transitions during the extended class period. Canady and Rettig (1996) propose the following three parts and the time frames for each:

- Explanation: A 25- to 30-minute block of time devoted to presenting information to students through mini-lectures, reviews, modeling, demonstrations, viewing video clips, or textual reading
- Application: A 40- to 60-minute block of time when students are engaged in active learning strategies
- Synthesis: A 15- to 30-minute block of time when students reflect on and are evaluated on what they have learned

In addition, they offer that the three stages described above may be broken down into the lesson format illustrated in Figure 1.4.

Lesson Plan Format		
<i>Phase</i>	<i>Elements of Phase</i>	<i>Time Frame</i>
Presentation	Homework review	10–15 minutes
	Presentation	20–25 minutes
Application	Activity	30–35 minutes
	Guided practice	10–15 minutes
Synthesis	Reteach	10–15 minutes
	Closure	5–10 minutes

Figure 1.4

Williams and Dunn (2008) provide yet another lesson plan format that is based on the concept of the “three-story” intellect championed in the work of Bellanca and Fogarty (2003) and follows what Williams and Dunn identify as the natural progression of the learning process, wherein the learner

- identifies past experiences and their impact on the learner’s knowledge and perception of the topic to be studied.
- is provided opportunities to gain new insights, information, and understandings and to make appropriate connections.
- is encouraged to act on the information and participate in complex tasks.
- is encouraged to apply the concepts, skills, and information in new settings.

The stages of this lesson plan format are (1) the *Inquire Phase*, (2) the *Gather Phase*, (3) the *Process Phase*, and (4) the *Apply Phase*.

As noted above, Williams and Dunn’s (2008) lesson plan format follows the natural progression of learning and, as such, also mimics the stages of the reading process: before reading, during reading, and after reading, a format that has been proved effective for learning across all curricular disciplines. The reading process, first observed by Robinson in 1978, centers on providing activities for students to do before their eyes meet the page, while their eyes are on the page, and after their eyes have left the page, since during the stages of this process students construct their own knowledge, which is different from merely acquiring information. In effect, during the process, students activate prior knowledge, monitor and repair their comprehension, make inferences, draw conclusions, set purposes for their learning, and formulate the questions that will serve to guide their learning. Finally, they utilize what they have learned by applying it to new, creative, real-life situations.

Both Canady and Rettig (1996) and Williams and Dunn (2008) provide a strong format for what a good lesson in an extended time period might look like. Furthermore, according to Merenbloom and Kalina (2007), “The foundation for student success rests on a series of carefully constructed activities, scaffolds, or learning engagements that lead to formative or summative assessment” (p. 144). And Sousa (2006) stresses that, in order to maximize learning during a class period, teachers need to give credence to the adolescent brain’s need for novelty and quick-paced action and to orchestrate a series of short activities that last approximately 20 minutes each and vary in type to ensure more prime-time learning and less down time. This is further supported by Merenbloom and Kalina, who remind us that the brain cannot remain intensely focused for long periods of time, so

effective learning and better retention occur when lessons are divided into 10- to 20-minute segments. Such short learning experiences, according to Sousa, heighten students' retention, fortify their ability to make connections, and thus lead to a better understanding of what they have been taught.

In addition, armed with this information and the theoretical underpinnings of the lesson formats of both Canady and Rettig (1996) and Williams and Dunn (2008) discussed above, I have created the following lesson format that will serve as the basis for the instructional strategies presented in this text. The format has four phases, each varying in time from 10 to 25 minutes. These phases are

1. Phase 1: Entice the Learner, approximately 10–15 minutes in length
2. Phase 2: Enlighten the Learner, approximately 15–20 minutes in length
3. Phase 3: Engage the Learner, approximately 20–30 minutes in length
4. Phase 4: Extend the Learner, approximately 20–25 minutes in length

Each phase of this lesson plan format will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 of this text, and appropriate instructional strategies to use during each phase will be presented. It is important to note, however, that while the strategies suggested for each phase can easily be utilized in both traditional class periods and extended class periods, their real power lies in the fact that, when the strategies are utilized in an extended time frame, students are allocated additional time to complete the strategies in depth and with greater understanding. Furthermore, in an extended time frame or block schedule, as students engage in the strategies, they can smoothly transition through each phase of the learning process, sometimes spiraling back upon one phase or another as needed, thereby not only intensifying the learning experience for them but assuring that their learning is successful. An overview of what such lessons might look like can be seen in Chapter 7. Finally, Figure 1.6 at the end of this chapter provides a blackline master for the one-day lesson plan format, and Figure 1.7 presents a blackline master for the week-long template for content areas, while Figure 1.8 provides a template for English/language arts classes.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Teaching adolescents today can be a challenge. However, current research into what constitutes best practices in teaching and learning provides a myriad of excellent methods that, if utilized, can help facilitate adolescent

learning. One of these methods is extending the teaching time in the classroom from the usual 45–50 minutes to an extended period of 90 minutes, often referred to as the block schedule format. However, in order to facilitate learning in the block schedule, best practice suggests the development of a comprehensive curriculum map that details the scope and sequence of the content and skills students are taught and the assessments that illustrate that the content and skills have been learned. Finally, in an effort to effectively meet the needs of the adolescent student enrolled in the block schedule, best practice dictates that teachers utilize an organized lesson plan format that carefully and concisely moves students through the 90 minute class period while keeping them successfully enticed, engaged, enlightened, and extended, thus motivating them to learn. This chapter has focused on these three elements and has provided a plan of action to help guide the reader along a path to accomplish them. The next chapter will feature a series of tools that have proved to be successful in delivering instruction in an extended block schedule class period format.

BLACKLINE MASTERS

Blackline masters for implementing the strategies in this chapter may be found on pages 19 through 22.