



STRATEGIES THAT APPEAR IN
ALL TYPES OF LESSONS

Highlighting Critical Information

THE **MARZANO COMPENDIUM** OF
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
HIGHLIGHTING CRITICAL INFORMATION	2
STRATEGIES	4
Repeating the Most Important Content	5
Questions That Focus on Critical Information	7
Visual Activities	9
Narrative Activities	13
Tone of Voice, Gestures, and Body Position	14
Pause Time	16
Identifying Critical-Input Experiences	18
Using Explicit Instruction to Convey Critical Content	20
Using Dramatic Instruction to Convey Critical Content	22
Providing Advance Organizers to Cue Critical Content	24
Using What Students Already Know to Cue Critical Content	26
REPRODUCIBLES	30

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, Dr. Robert J. Marzano published *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction*. The framework, composed of three lesson segments, ten design questions, and forty-one elements, was based on research showing that teacher quality is one of the strongest influences on student achievement—that is, an effective teacher can positively and significantly impact student learning. As such, *The Art and Science of Teaching* sought to identify specific action steps teachers could take to improve their effectiveness.

In 2015, Dr. Marzano updated *The Art and Science of Teaching* framework to reflect new insights and feedback. The Marzano Compendium of Instructional Strategies is based on this updated model, presenting forty-three elements of effective teaching in ten categories. Each folio in the series addresses one element and includes strategies, examples, and reproducible resources. The Compendium and its folios are designed to help teachers increase their effectiveness by focusing on professional growth. To that end, each folio includes a scoring scale teachers can use to determine their proficiency with the element, as well as numerous strategies that teachers can use to enact the element in their classrooms. Indeed, the bulk of each folio consists of these strategies and reproducibles for implementing and monitoring them, making the Compendium a practical, actionable resource for teachers, instructional coaches, teacher mentors, and administrators.

HIGHLIGHTING CRITICAL INFORMATION

This element involves the teacher identifying important information to which students should pay particular attention. Preparing students for critical information and emphasizing the important parts of a lesson can increase students' recall of the content. The teacher should make sure to select strategies that best suit the information being presented.

Monitoring This Element

There are specific student responses that indicate this element is being effectively implemented. Before trying strategies for the element in the classroom, it is important that the teacher knows how to identify the types of student behaviors that indicate the strategy is producing the desired effects. General behaviors a teacher might look for include the following.

- When asked, students can describe the level of importance of the information addressed in class.
- When asked, students can explain why the content is important to pay attention to.
- Students visibly adjust their level of engagement.

Desired behaviors such as these are listed for each strategy in this element.

Teachers often wonder how their mastery of specific strategies relates to their mastery of the element as a whole. Successful execution of an element does not depend on the use of every strategy within that element. Rather, multiple strategies are presented within each element to provide teachers with diverse options. Each strategy can be an effective means of implementing the goals of the element. If teachers attain success using a particular strategy, it is not always necessary to master the rest of the strategies within the same element. If a particular strategy proves difficult or ineffective, however, teachers are encouraged to experiment with various strategies to find the method that works best for them.

Scoring Scale

The following scoring scale can help teachers assess and monitor their progress with this element. The scale has five levels, from Not Using (0) to Innovating (4). A teacher at the Not Using (0) level is unaware of the strategies and behaviors associated with the element or is simply not using any of

Highlighting Critical Information

the strategies. At the Beginning (1) level, a teacher attempts to address the element by trying specific strategies, but does so in an incomplete or incorrect way. When a teacher reaches the Developing (2) level, he or she implements strategies for the element correctly and completely, but does not monitor their effects. At the Applying (3) level, a teacher implements strategies for the element and monitors their effectiveness with his or her students. Finally, a teacher at the Innovating (4) level is fluent with strategies for the element and can adapt them to unique student needs and situations, creating new strategies for the element as necessary.

Scale for Highlighting Critical Information

4	3	2	1	0
Innovating	Applying	Developing	Beginning	Not Using
I adapt behaviors and create new strategies for unique student needs and situations.	I signal to students which content is critical versus noncritical, and I monitor the extent to which students are attending to critical information.	I signal to students which content is critical versus noncritical, but I do not monitor the effect on students.	I use the strategies and behaviors associated with this element incorrectly or with parts missing.	I am unaware of strategies and behaviors associated with this element.

The following examples describe what each level of the scale might look like in the classroom.

Not Using (0): A teacher places the same amount of emphasis on all the content he presents, regardless of its importance.

Beginning (1): A teacher highlights some information but there is no strong relationship between the importance of information and how much it is highlighted.

Developing (2): A teacher highlights critical information directly, using repetition and tone of voice, but is not sure how to tell if she is helping students pay more attention to certain content or remember it better.

Applying (3): A teacher highlights critical information directly and with nonlinguistic cues. He is able to see that students respond by visibly adjusting their level of engagement. The assessment results that he tracks over time show that students are recalling the content more than before.

Innovating (4): A teacher uses various strategies to highlight critical information. When responses to her questions reveal that some students are having trouble recognizing the importance of certain new information, she designs an advance organizer to preview upcoming critical content and show how content relates to what they already know.

STRATEGIES

Each of the following strategies describes specific actions that teachers can take to enact this element in their classrooms. Strategies can be used individually or in combination with each other. Each strategy includes a description, a list of teacher actions, a list of desired student responses, and suggestions for adapting the strategy to provide extra support or extensions. Extra support and extensions relate directly to the Innovating (4) level of the scale. Extra support involves steps teachers can take to ensure they are implementing the strategy effectively for all students, including English learners, special education students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and reluctant learners. Extensions are ways that teachers can adapt the strategy for advanced students. In addition, some strategies include technology tips that detail ways teachers can use classroom technology to implement or enhance the strategy. Finally, each strategy includes further information, practical examples, or a reproducible designed to aid teachers' implementation of the strategy.

Repeating the Most Important Content

One way to highlight critical information is for the teacher to continually repeat the information that is important to the lesson or unit when opportunities present themselves. Repeating not only identifies which information is critical, but helps students remember that information for later recall. For example, repetition of the Pythagorean Theorem not only alerts students to the importance of the theorem but can help them to more easily recall it when solving problems involving right triangles.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying information important to the lesson or unit
- Repeating critical information to students when opportunities present themselves

Desired Student Responses

- Recognizing the repeated content as critical information
- Recalling the critical information without error after multiple repetitions

Extra Support

- Alerting students to the importance of the critical information before or after each repetition

Extension

- Prompting students to recall and repeat the critical information when opportunities present themselves

Strategies for Repetition

The use of repetition may vary based upon the purposes of the teacher, the needs of the class, and the type of information being repeated. The following strategies suggest ways in which repetition may be implemented effectively.

- **Use the appropriate interval of repetition:** Repeating information in quick succession (without pauses) can grab students' attention and alert them to the importance of the information; however, repetition that is too rapid can cause students to become bored and "tune out" the teacher. Repeating information with a pause between each statement gives students time to digest and consider between each repetition, which allows them to listen to each successive statement with increasingly greater comprehension.
- **Use the appropriate style of delivery:** For information that is important to remember with precision (for example, the alphabet or a mathematical formula), the teacher should use a constant tone, cadence, and body language. This can create associations in the students' minds that will help them recall the information in detail. For information that is important to understand conceptually (for example, a physical process or the events of a narrative), the teacher should use varied tone, cadence, and body language. This can discourage rote memorization and instead propel the student to a deeper understanding of the content.

Highlighting Critical Information

- **Use repetition to revisit information:** Repetition does not have to be restricted to the moment when information is first introduced. Repeating information throughout the lesson, or even throughout the day, can emphasize its importance and promote quick recall.
- **Ask students to repeat the information:** Asking students to repeat the information back to the teacher or to each other compels them to pay close attention to the information being conveyed. Asking them to rephrase the information when they repeat it can also promote comprehension. Additionally, warning students ahead of time that they will be asked to repeat certain information will prompt them to pay closer attention during the lesson.
- **Repeat a student's answer:** Repeating a student's answer (or repeating only the correct information from the answer) can emphasize the information. Repeating information when a student volunteers it can also subtly convey to the class that the information is important in its own right, and not merely because it came from the teacher.
- **Use repetition to highlight related information:** Repeating certain pieces of information together can highlight and strengthen connections between them. For example, repeating the capital of each state along with the name of the state (Denver, Colorado, or Indianapolis, Indiana) can help students remember which capital goes with which state.

Questions That Focus on Critical Information

Questioning is a common method of highlighting critical information. Beyond merely reminding students of previous information, questions prompt students to understand the importance of information by highlighting connections to current content. These connections demonstrate the critical nature of important information.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying information important to the lesson or unit
- Using questions to link back to important content

Desired Student Responses

- Recognizing questions that link back to important content
- Answering questions that link back to important content accurately

Extra Support

- Reminding students of previously taught important content before or after asking questions

Extension

- Asking students to predict how previously taught critical content is relevant to the content currently being taught

Strategies for Highlighting Critical Information Through Questioning

There are multiple ways to question students about a given content area. The following suggestions provide several methods for highlighting the critical nature of important information.

- **Ask narrow questions:** Narrow questions are not to be confused with simple questions. Narrow questions are those that focus on a specific component, category, or property of information and highlight the importance of that information. For example, instead of asking students how to complete a perfect square polynomial, ask students to “describe the steps necessary to complete a perfect square polynomial.” Emphasizing the procedural nature of completing the square reinforces that it is an important skill to master.
- **Ask multipart questions:** Multipart questions are those that require several steps to be completed or that contain several smaller questions that need to be addressed. Multipart questions emphasize the importance of the underlying skills or content knowledge necessary to answer the question. For example, asking students to calculate the surface area of different classroom objects can highlight the importance of multiplication skills and taking accurate measurements.

Highlighting Critical Information

- **Ask students to explain why information is important:** Asking students to explain the importance of information not only emphasizes the information itself but also trains students in identifying other similar critical information. For example, asking students why the water cycle is important can prompt them to identify other important environmental processes.
- **Ask students to relate current information to previous content:** Asking students to connect current content to past content can help underscore the critical nature of the information being presented. These types of questions prompt students to examine the central themes or foundational nature of certain pieces of critical information. For example, asking students how the current discussion of World War II relates to a previous lesson on the Treaty of Versailles can illustrate the important social and economic factors of world politics.

Visual Activities

Visual activities or presentations of content can greatly enhance student learning. Using storyboards, graphic organizers, and pictures to highlight critical information can help students create mental pictures of the information and promote comprehension and recall. For example, illustrating a sentence with a storyboard can help students identify the parts of the sentence, such as the subject, verb, and object.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying critical information
- Using storyboards, graphic organizers, and pictures to highlight critical information

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining critical information as cued by storyboards, graphic organizers, or pictures

Extra Support

- Taking students on virtual or real-life field trips to locations where they can experience critical information

Extension

- Asking students to create their own storyboards, graphic organizers, or pictures that highlight critical content

Technology Tips

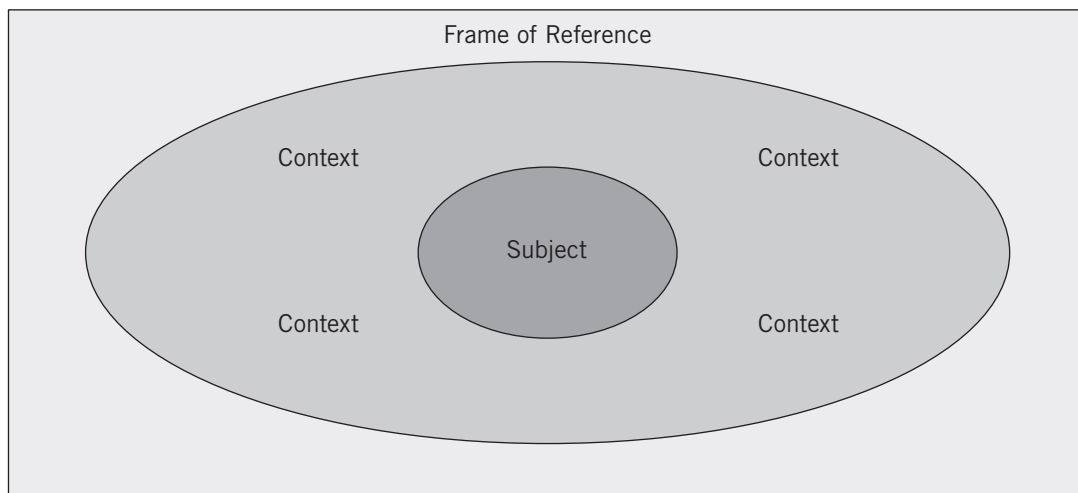
- Use interactive whiteboard or presentation software to embed a visual, video, or nonlinguistic representation of the critical information into a presentation.
- Use interactive whiteboard or presentation software to provide visual cues (such as changing the color of text) that help students identify and focus on important information.
- Use interactive whiteboard or presentation software to hide critical pieces of information in layers beneath a visual prompt, such as an image or symbolic representation of information, and slowly reveal the information as students make predictions about the new knowledge.
- Use visuals (such as a graphic organizer or flowchart in interactive whiteboard software) to help students understand the links between past content and new content and to contextualize new information within a body of previously acquired knowledge.

Graphic Organizer Examples

The following are examples of graphic organizers a teacher can use to highlight critical information.

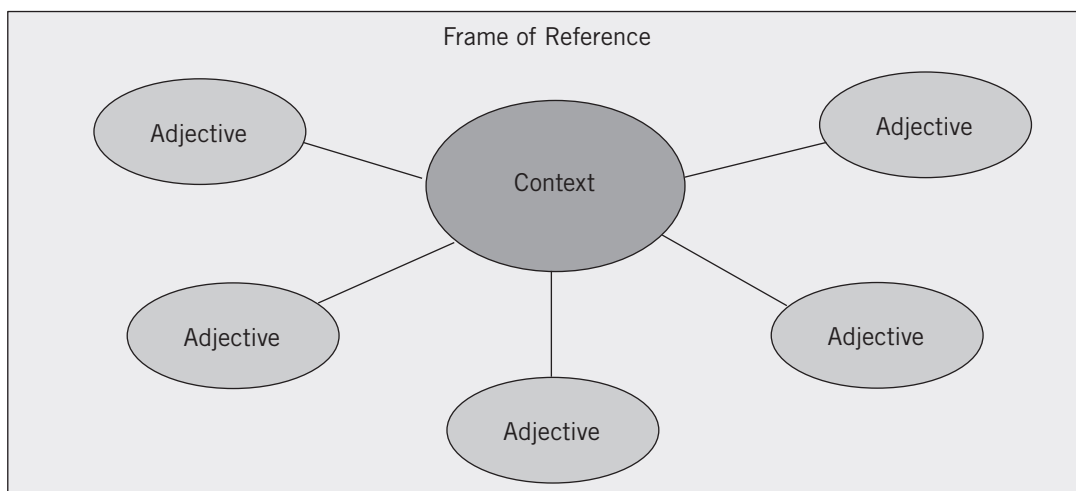
Circle Maps

A circle map is used for defining in context. Each shape represents how mental parameters are created when people try to define things. Students place the subject in the center of the map, surrounded by details which place the subject within a particular context. The frame of reference around the circle map allows the student to fill in properties that relate to the personal lens through which they view the topic, such as their cultural background, life experiences, and emotional point of view.



Bubble Map

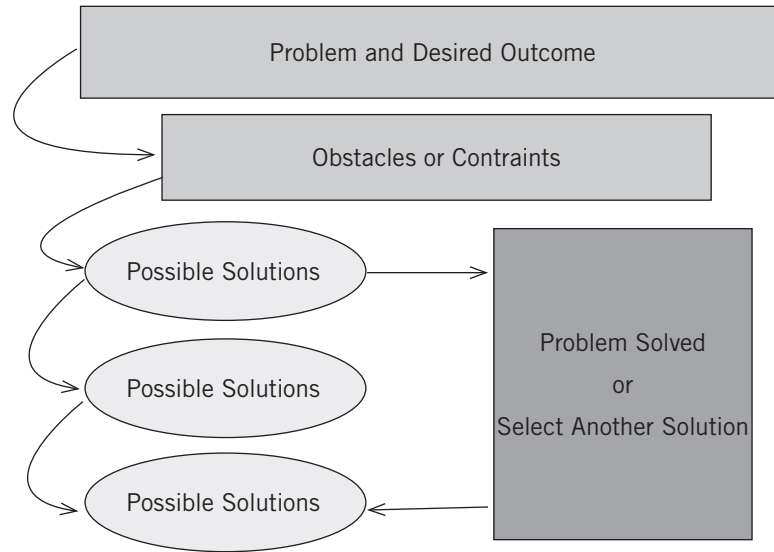
Bubble maps are used for describing with adjectives. They offer a flexible way to explore the various attributes of something in more depth. The frame of reference can be used with a bubble map to cite textual evidence that supports the descriptors and further show the influences on a student's thinking.



Highlighting Critical Information

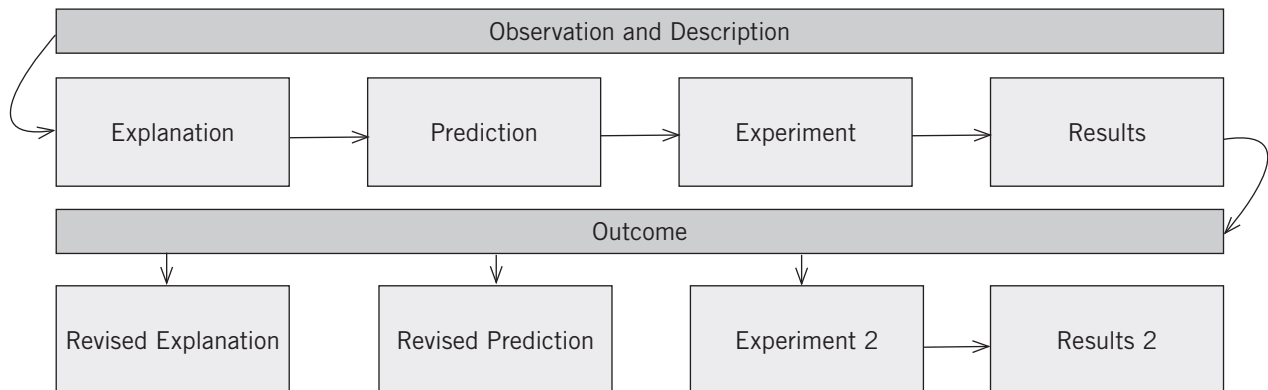
Problem/Solution Map

The problem/solution map helps students think through the basic structure of a problem. It helps students to (1) identify the problem and desired outcome, (2) identify obstacles and constraints to solving the problem, (3) generate multiple solutions, (4) pick the best solution and try it out, and (5) reflect on the outcome.



Experimental Inquiry Map

The experimental inquiry map helps students think through the basic structures of generating and testing hypotheses. Many times, when students think of conducting experiments, they expect to be given instructions about materials to gather and steps to follow. Experimental inquiry, however, begins when students observe something that they are unable to explain and are interested in investigating further. Experimental inquiry involves: (1) observation of something that has occurred; (2) an explanation of why it has occurred using background knowledge, theories, or rules; (3) a prediction based upon the explanation; (4) an experiment conducted to test the prediction; (5) an evaluation of the results; and (6) a possible revision of the explanation and prediction as well as the conduction of another experiment.



Highlighting Critical Information

Decision-Making Map

The decision-making map helps students think through the process of making a decision. To use the decision-making process, students need to understand alternatives and criteria. Alternatives are the different options that one is deciding between. Criteria are the things that are important to the person making the decision. Decision making involves (1) describing the decision to be made, (2) generating a list of alternatives, (3) selecting criteria that will influence the decision, (4) evaluating the alternatives in light of the criteria, and (5) making the decision.

Criteria	Alternatives			
0 — Does not meet criterion 1 — Meets criterion slightly 2 — Meets criterion 3 — Strongly meets criterion	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Criterion 1				
Criterion 2				
Criterion 3				
Criterion 4				
Total				

Drawing and Sketching

Drawing and sketching can also be useful strategies. Pictographs may be inserted for text in most graphic organizers, and techniques such as a storyboarding provide nonlinguistic representations of a narrative that can help students become comfortable with content.

Narrative Activities

Stories are a powerful way to introduce new content. Stories can be used by a teacher to anchor information in students' memory and signal to students that certain information is important. The narrative structure of a story is also particularly useful for highlighting important relationships between different events or pieces of information.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying critical information
- Telling stories about critical information

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining critical information as cued by teacher stories

Extra Support

- Using pictures, audio, and video clips while telling stories about critical information

Extension

- Asking students to tell stories that illustrate critical information

Tips for Using Narratives

Narratives can be especially useful in providing critical content with context and for illustrating connections between information. The following are suggestions for using narratives to highlight critical content.

- **Use stories to personalize content:** Some subjects and processes can be hard for students to comprehend, but a story can personalize content in a way that makes it easier to assimilate. For example, students may have trouble grasping the water cycle, but telling a story about a water droplet who journeys from the Pacific Ocean to fall as a snowflake in London provides an approachable context for framing the processes of evaporation and precipitation.
- **Use stories to bring historical events to life:** A history lesson may come across as dry and uninteresting to students who have difficulty connecting it to their daily lives. A story, however, can communicate historical events in a way that makes them relevant to the lived experiences of students. For example, a unit on the American Civil War may quickly become a jumble of dates and strange names, but having students read excerpts from historical fiction about the siege of Atlanta can bring the history to life.
- **Use stories to familiarize students with other cultures:** Many students have little contact with other cultures in their daily lives. The details of life in other cultures can be difficult to visualize, but stories can help students relate to them. For example, a story about a Mexican family visiting their relatives in the cemetery can ground an unfamiliar holiday like the Day of the Dead in the familiar framework of a family get-together.
- **Have students tell their own stories:** Not all stories need to come from the teacher. Rephrasing concepts in their own language can help students understand difficult content, and stories are a great way to do this. For example, having students write or storyboard a narrative about a caterpillar becoming a butterfly can help them understand the stages of a butterfly's life cycle.

Tone of Voice, Gestures, and Body Position

Nonverbal communication is extremely important in the classroom. Students' level of interest in the content can be strongly influenced by the level of interest displayed by the teacher. Tone of voice, gestures, and body position are all important when presenting content, though the teacher should be aware that overuse may lessen their effect.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying critical information
- Raising or lowering voice, making eye contact with students, using gestures, or moving around the room when presenting information

Desired Student Responses

- Recognizing when the teacher is presenting critical information
- Describing specific behaviors the teacher uses when presenting critical information

Extra Support

- Displaying a picture for each important idea or concept and pointing to the appropriate picture when talking about a particular idea or concept

Extension

- Asking students to create a gesture for each important idea or concept of the critical information and having them make a gesture whenever that idea or concept is mentioned

Positive and Negative Nonverbal Communication

	Positive Nonverbal Communication	Negative Nonverbal Communication
<i>Displays</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest • Excitement • Confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinterest • Boredom • Insecurity
<i>Tone of Voice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lively • Varied pitch and volume • Pausing or slowing down for emphasis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotone
<i>Gestures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional gestures that emphasize or coordinate with speech • Animated facial expressions • Smiling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping pencil, and so on • Blank facial expressions
<i>Body Position</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing up straight, open posture • Head up, making eye contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slouching, leaning on something • Looking down, avoiding eye contact • Crossing arms over body

Pause Time

Pausing during the presentation of new content can signal its importance. This creates a sense of anticipation about what will occur next. The use of pause time when presenting information is also useful for making sure that students have sufficient opportunity to take in and process the content. Used in this manner, pause time gives students time to organize their thoughts and prepare questions.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying key points of critical information
- Pausing after key points while presenting critical information
- Prompting students to think during pauses about what was just said

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining why the teacher pauses while presenting critical information
- Thinking during pauses about the information just presented

Extra Support

- Immediately before pausing, providing students with a picture representing critical content and asking them to consider why the picture is important

Extension

- Asking students to write down what they are thinking during pause time and then work in groups to organize their comments into categories

Technology Tips

- Use a countdown tool to perform a ten-second countdown after stating critical information in order to give students time to reflect on their understanding of new information, connect new information to past knowledge, or generate analogies to deepen comprehension.

Strategies for Using Pause Time

Pause time can be a powerful tool, but it is important to know when and why to use it. The following chart suggests effective uses for pause time.

Situation	Description
After introducing information that seems simple or inconsequential but is actually very important	Pausing here ensures that students do not overlook the importance of the information being presented.
After introducing information that presents a new viewpoint or sheds new light on previously learned information	Pausing here not only signals the presence of important information but can also prompt students to re-evaluate their understanding of previous information.
After introducing information that is surprising in light of previously learned information	Pausing here prompts students to more deeply consider the current content as well as re-examine their overall understanding of the unit or section.
After a student arrives at an important conclusion during his or her response	Sometimes students expect critical new information to come only from the teacher. Pausing here signals to the rest of the class that the information given by their fellow student was important.
After introducing an abundance of information	Pausing here gives students time to digest and organize the new information.
After introducing information that is confusing or difficult	Pausing here allows students time to parse the information and allows the teacher time to gauge student reactions and judge whether further explanation is necessary.
After introducing information that is controversial	Pausing here allows time for students to formulate and re-evaluate opinions about the topic.
To allow students to respond or elaborate to the information	Pausing for student input signals to the students that the information, as well as their own understanding and opinions, are important.

Identifying Critical-Input Experiences

Critical-input experiences introduce important new content to students and are vital to enhancing student learning. It is vital that a teacher recognize which activities that have been designed for students are the most important. Visual, dramatic, and narrative activities in particular help students visualize, understand, and store new content effectively for later recall. Choosing two to three well-structured input experiences per learning goal and identifying them clearly not only provides focus for the teacher but also signals to students that the information being presented is critical to their understanding of the content.

Teacher Actions

- Identifying critical content
- Designing two to three critical-input experiences per learning goal

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining which content is most important to achieving the learning goal
- Explaining which learning goal is being addressed by a critical-input experience

Extra Support

- Using audio-visual cues to alert students that they are about to experience information that is critical to achieving a learning goal

Extension

- Having students rate their level of understanding of critical information and participate in guiding the teacher's instruction

Technology Tips

- Use interactive whiteboard or presentation software to create a slide with images, sound, and text to convey that you are about to introduce a critical segment of the content.
- Use multiple-choice polling technology (clickers with text input or mobile device software) to have students rate their level of understanding of critical information using a four-point scale.

Preparing Students for Critical-Input Experiences

Identifying critical-input experiences is vital not only for the teacher but for the student as well. Signaling the presence of a critical-input experience before it begins can help prepare students to more effectively absorb, store, and understand the information. The following are suggestions for preparing students for critical-input experiences.

- **Use nonlinguistic cues:** Before beginning a critical-input experience, cue students that the following activity will present critical information. This may be done by simply telling them that the information will be important, but cues can be nonlinguistic as well. For example, a teacher might insert a linked image into a presentation that plays a particular sound, such as the sound of a trumpet or a drumroll, when clicked. When used regularly, nonlinguis-

Highlighting Critical Information

tic cues can quickly alert students to pay special attention to the information about to be presented.

- **Ask students to summarize what they already know:** Before beginning a critical-input experience, ask students to summarize the information they already know about the new content. This can be general knowledge or information learned from previous lessons. Have them organize that knowledge into categories or processes, paying special attention to gaps or areas of uncertainty. Summarizing what they already know not only helps students review previously learned information but also prepares them to quickly identify and categorize critical new information.
- **Ask preview questions about the upcoming content:** Before beginning a critical-input experience, pose a few questions to students about the content about to be presented. Students should be made aware that they are not expected to know the answers yet but should give the questions careful consideration during the input experience. Inferential questions, which require students to go beyond what they already know, are especially useful. Questioning students beforehand stimulates curiosity and prepares them to identify key information during the critical-input experience.

Using Explicit Instruction to Convey Critical Content

Explicit instruction is one of the most powerful and essential means of introducing critical content. It is especially important if students seem to be struggling with the content area or when the information itself is foundational or leaves no room for errors. Teachers should use plain, clear language to identify and convey critical content and should pace the delivery of content so that students have plenty of time to process the information.

Teacher Actions

- Explicitly identifying and conveying critical content
- Pacing the delivery of critical content so that students have time to process and ask questions about the information
- Using plain language to clearly convey critical content

Desired Student Responses

- Visibly adjusting engagement during explicit instruction of critical content
- When asked, identifying critical information conveyed during explicit instruction
- Providing correct responses to questions about critical information conveyed during explicit instruction

Extra Support

- Developing and implementing classroom routines that identify content as critical

Extension

- Asking students to identify and explain why certain information is critical to the content

Explicit Instruction Guidelines

The following chart suggests guidelines for teachers to keep in mind before, during, and after presenting critical information. Teachers can consult it while planning for instruction and during the explicit instruction of critical content.

Before Presenting Critical Information	
Organize the information	Make sure that the information is broken into manageable chunks. If possible, plan to begin with something students already know and then connect it to the new information.
Get the class's attention	Make sure students are calm, undistracted, and focused. Answer any questions or deal with any outstanding issues before beginning.
Identify the information as critical	Clearly and explicitly cue the upcoming information as critical. Identify why it is important.
While Presenting Critical Information	
Speak clearly and plainly	Speak clearly and loudly. Paraphrase difficult words, phrases, or concepts with easy-to-understand language. If applicable, model a skill or process for the class.
Move at a slower pace	Take the content one chunk at a time. With new and complicated information, students need time to process and assimilate one step before moving on to the next.
Monitor class engagement	Continuously check to make sure students are focused and attentive. Look for signs that students are distracted or struggling with the material and adjust your clarity and pace appropriately.
Don't be afraid to repeat	Repeating or revisiting material helps cement it in students' minds. Re-explaining information in a new way can also help struggling students understand difficult content.
After Presenting Critical Information	
Check for comprehension	Check to see whether students appear to have absorbed and understood the material. Ask them to repeat or explain the new information. Identify and revisit areas they may be struggling with.
Ask for questions	Solicit questions from students. Some students may not be sure of what they need to ask or how to phrase the question, so give them plenty of time. Try prompting them with questions of your own.

Using Dramatic Instruction to Convey Critical Content

The teacher asks students to participate in a dramatic activity that conveys the critical content. Dramatic activities can range from skits and role playing to hand gestures and other body movements. It is important that the teacher asks students to link dramatic instruction to the critical content being conveyed. Dramatic instruction should also include all students, as merely observing the dramatic activity does not convey the critical information as effectively as participating.

Teacher Actions

- Designing dramatic activities that effectively convey critical content
- Ensuring that all students participate in dramatic activities
- Asking students to link dramatic activities to critical content

Desired Student Responses

- Participating fully in dramatic activities that convey critical content
- Explaining how dramatic activities represent critical content

Extra Support

- Giving students a script or description of the dramatic activity in advance to allow them to prepare to participate

Extension

- Asking students to design and demonstrate their own dramatic activity and explain how it conveys critical content

Dramatic Instruction Handout

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unit: _____

Dramatic Activity: _____

Today the teacher asked the class to:

This activity taught us about:

During the activity, it was my job to:

My job demonstrated what we're learning by showing:

This activity helped me to understand:

Providing Advance Organizers to Cue Critical Content

The teacher designs advance organizers that identify and preview critical content for students. Advance organizers can be anything from a simple verbal cue to a classroom chart to a descriptive metaphor for the content. The purpose of an advance organizer is to provide students with a clear identification of upcoming critical information and how that information fits into the larger unit or content area.

Teacher Actions

- Designing an advance organizer that clearly identifies upcoming critical information and situates it in relation to what students are learning
- Monitoring whether the advance organizer helps students identify and understand critical content

Desired Student Responses

- Identifying what content is critical from an advance organizer
- Explaining how critical content relates to previously learned content

Extra Support

- Revisiting previous content and explaining to students how that content was cued by the advance organizer
- Asking students what may be unclear about the advance organizer or what changes would make it more understandable

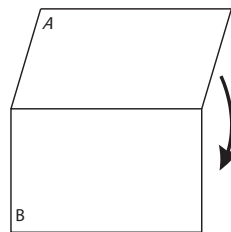
Extension

- Asking students to design their own advance organizers for critical content

Advance Organizer

To create a simple advance organizer using a blank sheet of paper, follow these steps.

1. Fold the paper in half.

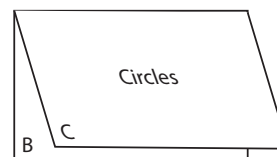


2. On the inside top half of the organizer (section A), draw a picture that represents the critical content.

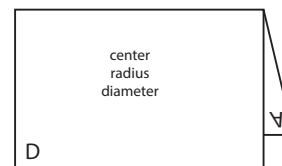


3. On the inside bottom half of the organizer (section B), write a short description of the critical content. Be sure to use key terms and concepts from the content.

4. On the front of the organizer (section C), write a short word or phrase to label the critical content.



5. On the back of the organizer (section D), list a few key terms or phrases that are important to remember from the critical content.



Fill out a similar organizer for each chunk of critical content within a unit, then display them in order somewhere visible to students. As you move through the unit, open and close the organizers as appropriate so that students are always aware of the critical content they are currently learning and how it relates to other content within the unit.

Using What Students Already Know to Cue Critical Content

The teacher uses what students already know to identify and explain critical content. As students learn new information, they situate it within and connect it to their understanding of previous content. The teacher should first assess students' current understanding of basic vocabulary and facts as well as their proficiency in key skills or processes. The teacher can then identify and highlight ways in which information students already possess relates to upcoming critical content.

Teacher Actions

- Assessing student's knowledge of basic vocabulary, facts, skills, and processes
- Highlighting relationships between information to identify and explain critical content

Desired Student Responses

- Explaining what they already know about a topic
- Explaining the relationships between the critical content and what they already know

Extra Support

- Designing a graphic organizer and helping students to fill in the information they already know so they can see how their current knowledge relates to the critical information

Extension

- Asking students to design their own graphic organizer to show relationships between critical content

Relationship Card Activity

This relationship card activity can help students identify relationships between information they already know and critical content.

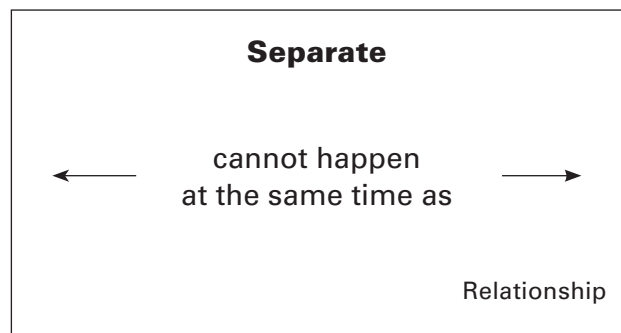
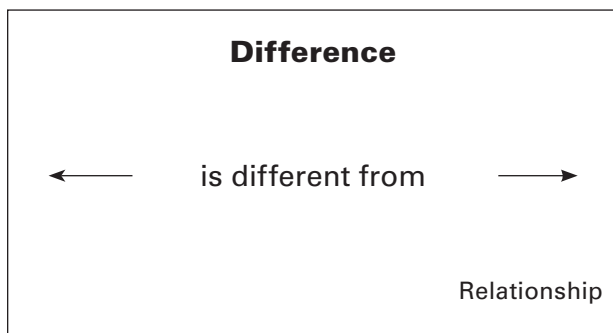
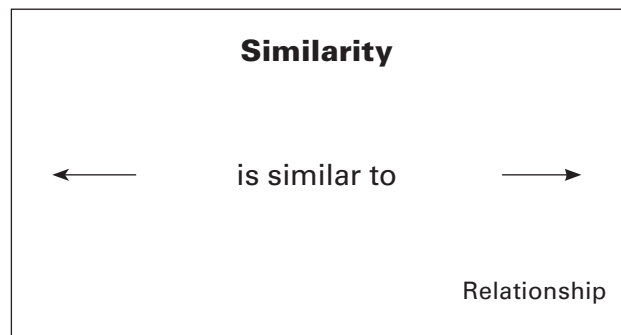
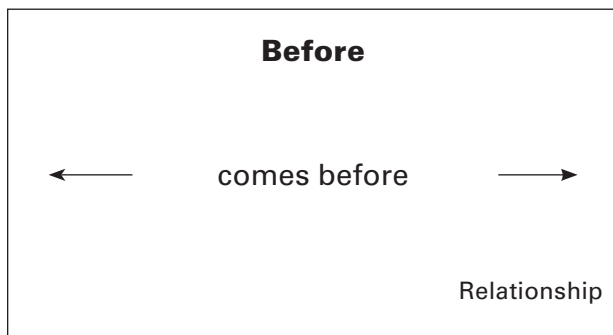
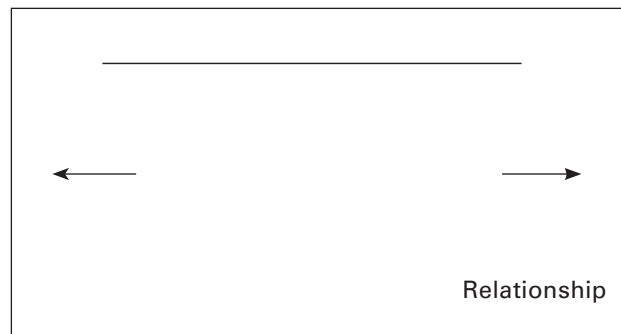
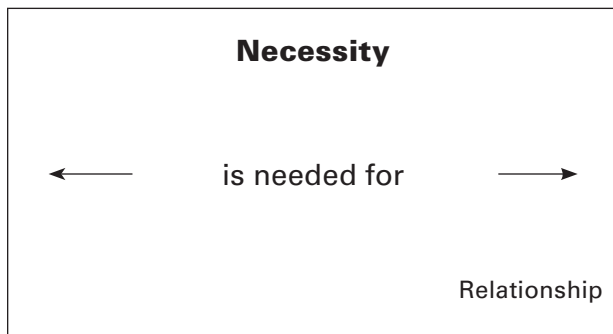
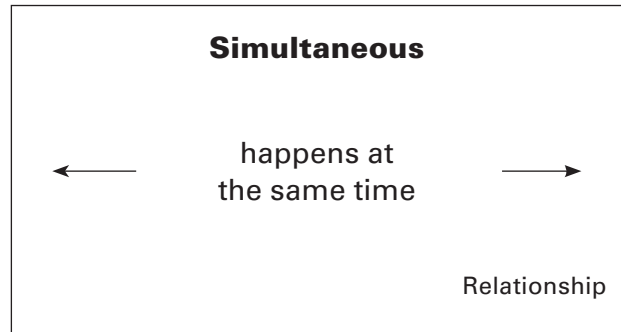
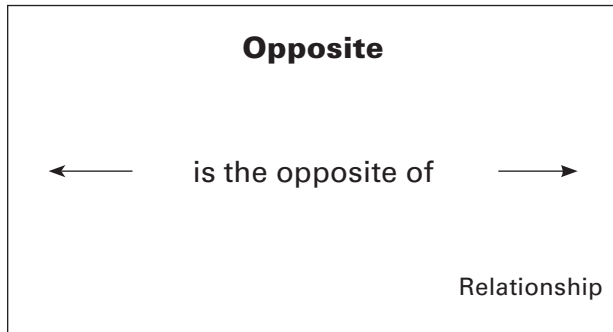
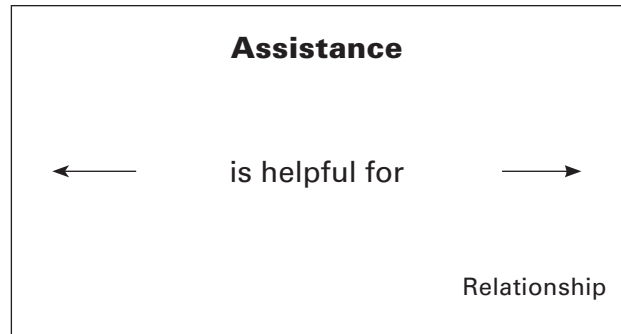
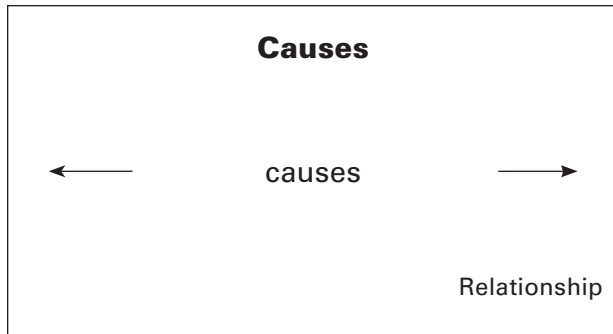
1. Fill out the content cards (term, fact, step in a process, and skill cards) with labels and descriptions for information that students already know as well as key pieces of critical content. Provide students with one copy of each card.
2. Provide students with several copies of each relationship card.
3. Start a timer and have students arrange their content cards in logical order with one relationship card between each one. For example, a fact card that describes the rotation of the moon around the earth might be followed by the “cause” relationship card, which in turn could be followed by a term card defining tidal motion.
4. After time is up, choose one or more students and have them read their cards in order. Record the order of the cards on the board where all students can see it. Then, reset the timer and have students see if they can come up with a different order for the cards.
5. Alternatively, you might print out a single set of cards and have the class collectively experiment with arranging them in different orders.

Term: _____

Skill: _____

Fact: _____

Step in a Process: _____



REPRODUCIBLES

Teachers can use the following reproducibles to monitor their implementation of this element. The reproducible titled Tracking Progress Over Time helps teachers set goals related to their proficiency with this element and track their progress toward these goals over the course of a unit, semester, or year. Tracking Teacher Actions and Tracking Student Responses allow observers in classrooms to monitor specific teacher and student behavior related to this element. Teachers themselves can also use the Tracking Student Responses reproducible to document instances of student behaviors during class. The Strategy Reflection Log provides teachers a space to write down their thoughts and reflect on the implementation process for specific strategies related to this element. Finally, this section provides both a student survey and a teacher survey, the results of which provide feedback about teachers' proficiency with this element.

Tracking Progress Over Time

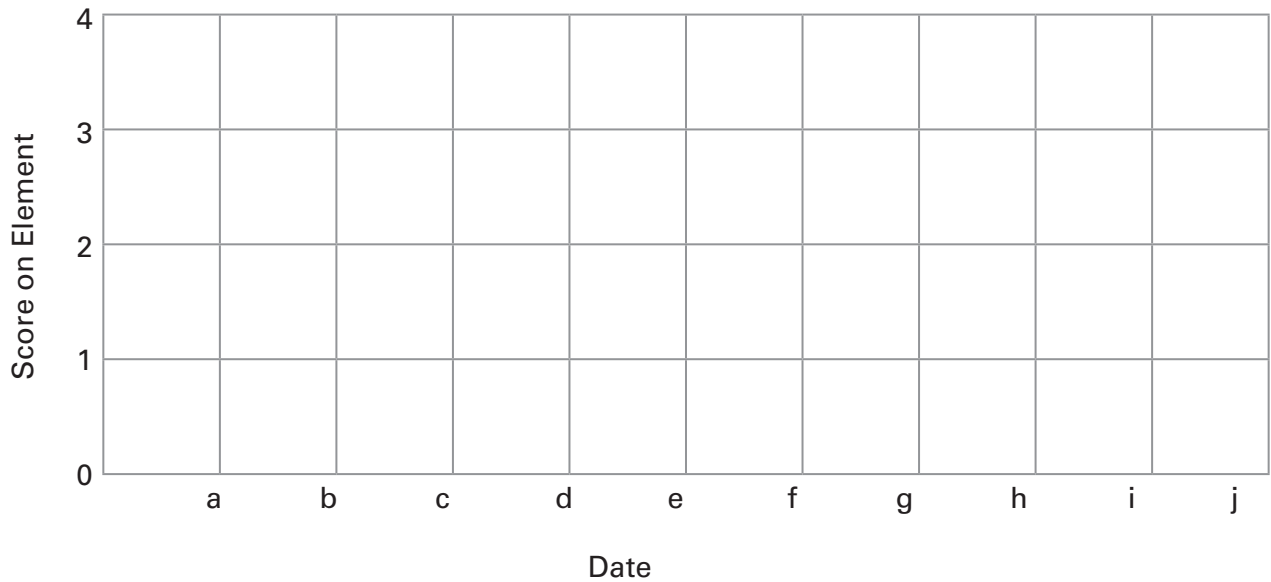
Use this worksheet to set a goal for your use of this element, make a plan for increasing your mastery, and chart your progress toward your goal.

Element: _____

Initial Score: _____

Goal Score: _____ by _____ (date)

Specific things I am going to do to improve: _____



a. _____

f. _____

b. _____

g. _____

c. _____

h. _____

d. _____

i. _____

e. _____

j. _____

Tracking Teacher Actions

During an observation, the observer can use this form to record the teacher's usage of strategies related to the element of highlighting critical information.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Check Strategies You Intend to Use	Strategies	Description of What Was Observed
	Repeating the Most Important Content	
	Questions That Focus on Critical Content	
	Visual Activities	
	Narrative Activities	
	Tone of Voice, Gestures, and Body Position	
	Pause Time	
	Identifying Critical-Input Experiences	

	Using Explicit Instruction to Convey Critical Content	
	Using Dramatic Instruction to Convey Critical Content	
	Providing Advance Organizers to Cue Critical Content	
	Using What Students Already Know to Cue Critical Content	
	Other:	
	Other:	

Tracking Student Responses

A teacher or observer can use this worksheet to record instances of student behavior to inform planning and implementation of strategies associated with highlighting critical information. Any item followed by an asterisk is an example of undesirable behavior related to the element; the teacher should look for a decrease in the number of instances of these items.

Observation Date and Time: _____ Length of Observation: _____

Behavior	Number of Instances
Recalling critical information without error	
Recognizing questions that link back to important content	
Answering questions that link back to important content accurately	
Explaining critical information as cued by storyboards, graphic organizers, or pictures	
Explaining critical information as cued by teacher stories	
Visibly adjusting level of engagement in response to teachers' nonverbal communication	
Visibly adjusting level of engagement in response to pause time	
Visibly adjusting level of engagement during critical-input experiences	
Other:	
Other:	

Strategy Reflection Log

Use this worksheet to select a strategy, set a goal, and reflect on your use of that strategy.

Element: _____

Strategy: _____

Goal: _____

Date	How did it go?

Student Survey for Highlighting Critical Information

1. My teacher tells me what information is most important.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

2. I understand the vocabulary used in our classroom lessons.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

3. My teacher tells me what information is most important for each learning goal.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

4. When my teacher is talking about important information, he or she looks and sounds excited.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

5. I can explain why certain information is the most important.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

6. When my teacher presents important information, I feel excited and ready to learn.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree
Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

Teacher Survey for Highlighting Critical Information

1. I begin lessons by explaining why upcoming content is important.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

2. I tell students to get ready for important information.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

3. I cue the importance of upcoming information using nonlinguistic cues (tone of voice, body position, level of excitement).

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

4. When I ask them, students can describe the level of importance of the information addressed in class.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

5. When I ask them, students can explain why the content is important to pay attention to.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know

6. When I highlight critical information, students visibly adjust their level of engagement.

Often Sometimes Rarely Never I don't know