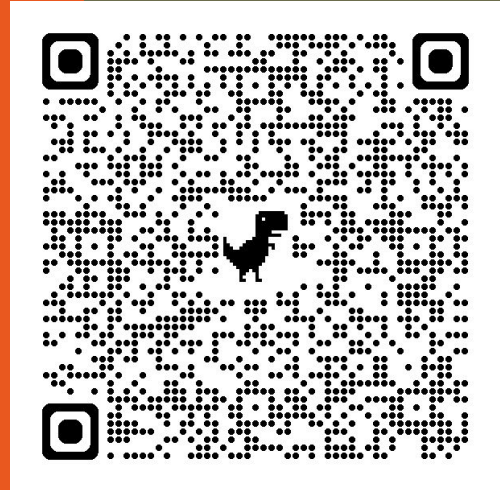


Adapting Building Thinking Classrooms to a Block Schedule

Maida Shivik · Laura Brown · Nova Katz

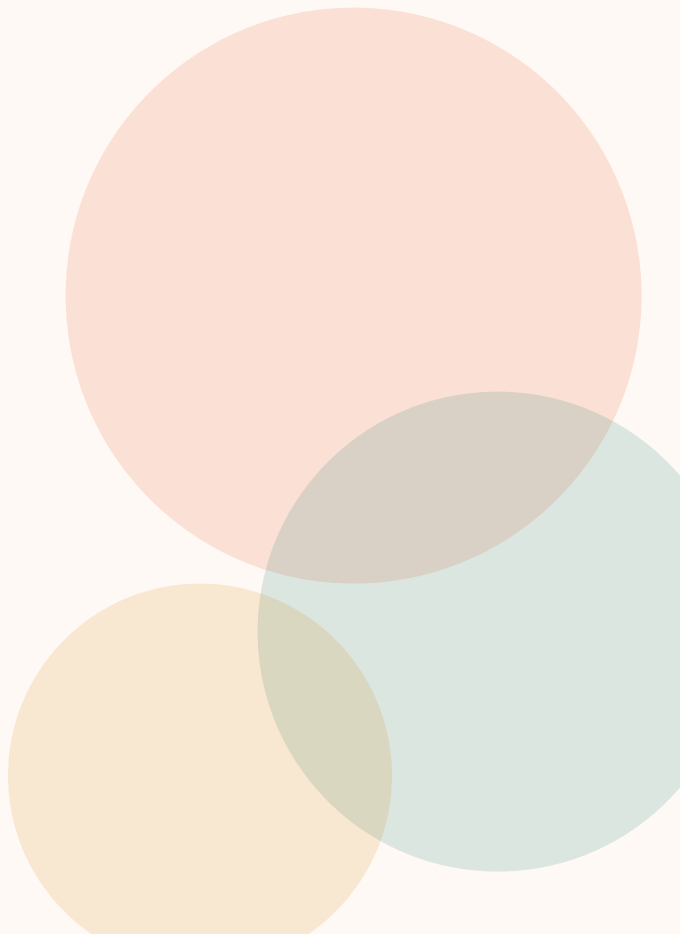
The American School in London

BTCC · New Haven, CT · June 30, 2026



Today

- Our Context
- Challenges of the Block
- What We've Learned
- Structures for Curricular Tasks & Thin Slicing Tasks
- Surviving the Block
- Takeaways
- Q & A



Our Context

- K–12 international school in London
- Small classes (11–20 students)
- Rotating 8-day block schedule
- 80-minute blocks, every other day



Challenges of the Block



Energy Dips



Task Fatigue



**Pacing Uncertainty and
Inconsistency**



Loss of Momentum



Keeping Everyone Thinking



Two-Lesson Compaction

What clicked quickly

Deeper thinking — multiple pathways

Time for productive struggle

Rich consolidation

Student-led discovery

Less cognitive switching

What took longer

Thin slicing across a whole block

When and how to consolidate

Not racing to the finish

Teacher stamina

Two Class Structure Models

Curricular Task(s)

One extended thinking task

Launch → Body → Explore

Compaction of two related curricular tasks that would otherwise happen across two periods

Thin-Slicing

Multiple shorter cycles

Thin-slice rounds → Notes/CYU

Curricular Task Lesson

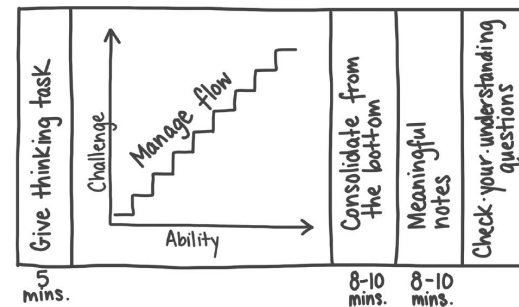
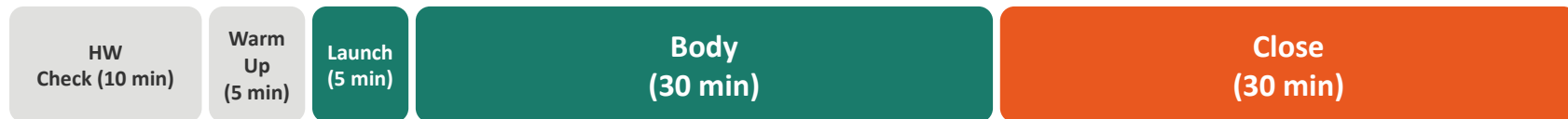


Figure 15.3 Typical lesson sequence.



2 Curricular Tasks Lesson



Curricular Task in Action: Linear Relationships (Launch)

INITIAL CHALLENGE



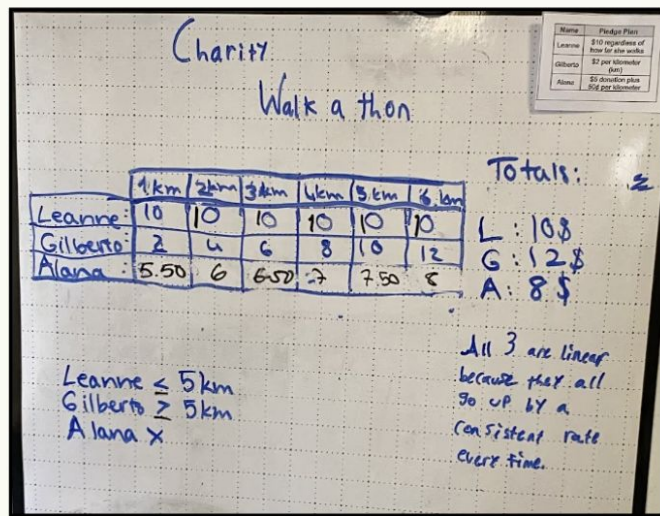
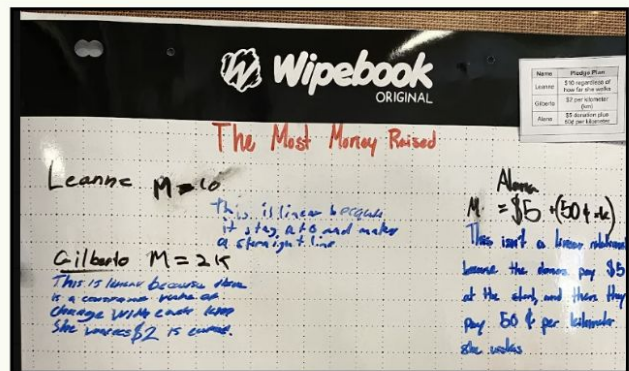
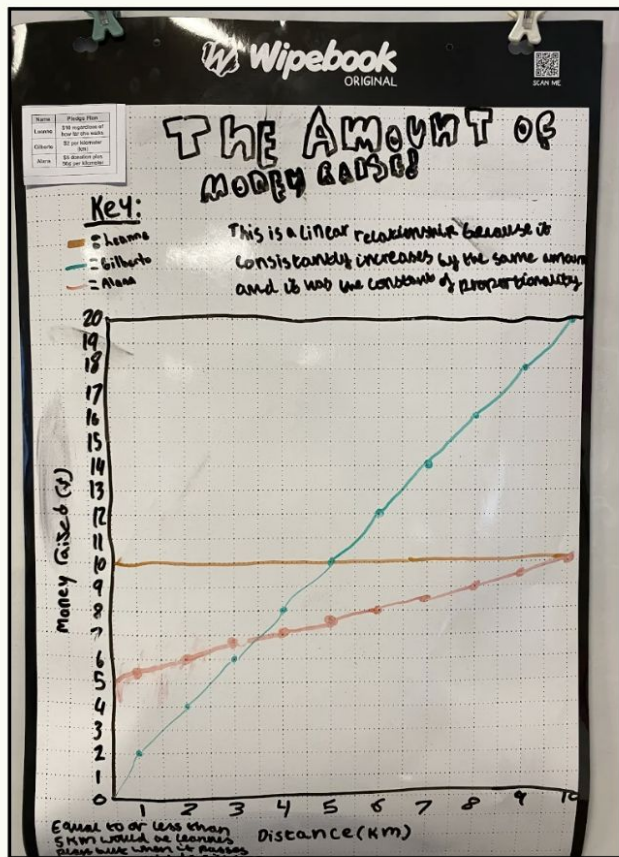
Each student found sponsors who pledge to donate money according to the following descriptions.

Student Pledge Plans

Name	Pledge Plan
Leanne	\$10 regardless of how far she walks
Gilberto	\$2 per kilometer
Alana	\$5 donation plus 50¢ per kilometer

- Who will raise the most money? Explain.
- Explain why the relationship between dollars and kilometers represents a linear relationship in each plan.

Curricular Task in Action: Pledge Plans (Explore)



Curricular Task in Action: Pledge Plans (Consolidate)

Gallery Walk

Use the work from your classmates' posters to answer these questions.



1. In Alana's plan, how is the fixed \$5 donation represented in a table?

A graph?

An equation?

2. For each plan, how is the rate of change shown in the table?

The graph?

The equation?

3. On which graph does the point $(12, 11)$ lie?

What information does this point represent?

4. On which table can you find the entry $(5, 10)$?

5. Which equation has the point $(4, 8)$ as a solution?

6. Suppose each student walks 8 kilometers in the walkathon. How much money does each sponsor donate? Explain how you found your answer.

7. Suppose each student raises \$10 from a sponsor. How many kilometers does each student walk? Explain.



Double Discount

Cyrus wanted to buy a book that costs £32. The bookstore was having a 25% off all books sale. Cyrus also had an additional voucher that got him an additional 25% off of the **sale price**. How much will Cyrus pay for the book? Show your thinking.

Write an expression that shows how much Cyrus will pay for the book.

Warmup

2 Curricular Tasks Model

Curricular Task 1

Three people take out £1000 loans
One person's bank charges 12% APR
One person's bank charges 24% APR
One person's loan shark charges 30.6% APR

If they make no payments at over the course of the year
How many years until each person's amount doubles?

Percentage Growth

$$f(x) = y\text{-intercept}(1 + \text{percentage growth rate})^x$$

Consolidation

Curricular Task 2

2 Curricular Tasks Model

Taline drank a soda that had 130 mg of caffeine when she walked into advisory at 8am. The amount of caffeine in her bloodstream decreases at a rate of 12% per hour.

How much caffeine will be in her body by the end of the school day?

How much caffeine will be in her body by the time she goes to bed at 10pm?

Percentage Decay

$$f(x) = y\text{-intercept}(1 - \text{percentage decay rate})^x$$

Consolidation

2 Curricular Tasks Model

Percentage growth is when a percentage of an amount is _____ to the amount each year.

Percentage _____ is when a percentage of an amount is subtracted from the amount each year.

Both percentage growth and decay are examples of _____

The growth factor in a _____ equation is $1 +$ the decimal equivalent of the percent

The decay factor in a _____ equation is $1 -$ the _____

Example:
Percentage Decay
A certain medicine has a 30% decay rate per hour in your bloodstream. If you start with 1,000 mg of the medicine in your bloodstream, calculate how much medicine remains each hour.

hours	Mg of medicine
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	

Equation:

Example:
Percentage Growth:
Suppose you receive a loan of £500 with an interest rate of 15%, compounded annually. If you make no other purchases or payments, calculate the amount you would owe after each year:

Years	Amount Owed
0	
1	
2	
3	
4	

Equation:

Things I want to remember:

- Translate each of the following into an equation.
- Make a table (in Desmos) with any 5 points using the equation
- Check whether your points are correct by typing the equation into Desmos.

- A rare stamp collection is worth £500 pounds the year you get it, and it grows in value at a rate of 5% a year
- You invest £50 and earn interest on your investment at a rate of 12% per year
- Your grandmother deposits 200 in your bank account. Your bank account pays you 2.3% interest per year
- With the cost-of-living crisis, cars are now depreciating at a rate of 12% each year. (The car costs £20,000)
- A bird population is losing 3% of its total each year due to habitat encroachment. Its starting population is 250,000
- You have a bag of candy and want to eat only 25% of it each day. There are 222 pieces to start.

Thin-Sliced Lesson

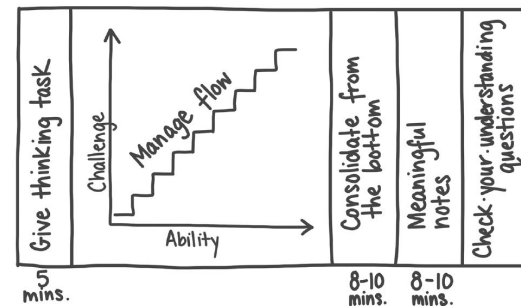


Figure 15.3 Typical lesson sequence.

HW
Check
(10 min)

Launch
(5 min)

Thin-Slice Rounds with check ins built in
(45 min)

Closing
(20 min)

Combining Thin-Sliced Lessons

???

Thin-Sliced Lesson

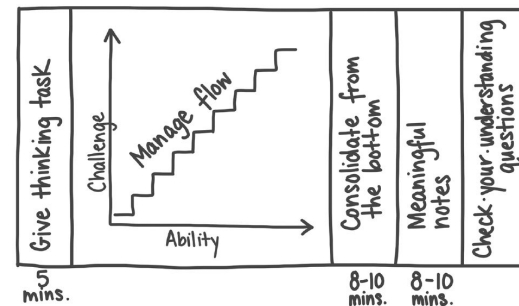


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Combining Thin-Sliced Lessons

HW
Check
(10 min)

Launch
(5 min)

Thin-Slice Rounds with check ins built in
(45 min)

Closing
(20 min)

Thin slicing lesson: Grade 7 Rational Number Operations

Round 1 Expectations

There are 4 number sentences to a fact family.

If there's a variable in your fact family, solve for it.

Complete the
fact family

$$4 \times 5 = 20$$

Card 1.1



Thin slicing lesson: Cards and rounds

Round 2 Debrief

Group A

$$12 \div 3 = n$$

$$15 \div 5 = n$$

$$30 \div 6 = n$$

Group B

$$12 \div (-3) = n$$

$$-15 \div 5 = n$$

$$30 \div (-6) = n$$

Group C

$$-12 \div (-3) = n$$

$$-15 \div (-5) = n$$

$$-30 \div (-6) = n$$

1. What do the equations have in common?
2. Predict the sign of the quotient.
3. Find the value of n .

Card 2.1

Thin slicing lesson: Check for Understanding

Debrief Sheet

Glue this sheet into your notebook and complete at your seat.

You can work with your group and use your whiteboard work to help.

Fact Family Example

$$-\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{3} = -\frac{1}{6}$$

Division Example

$$-42 \div 6 =$$

Things to remember about integer division:

Division Example

$$\frac{28}{-7} = n$$

Division Example

$$n \div -5 = 6$$

Thin slicing lesson: Grade 8 Algebra

	x	2
x	x^2	$2x$
3	$3x$	6

**Write a
standard form
and a factored
form expression
based on this
area model**

Thin slicing lesson: Grade 8 Algebra

Let's try it...

- $x^2 + 3x$
- $2x^2 + 5x$
- $x^2 + 6x + 8$
- $x^2 + 22x + 40$
- $x^2 - 6x + 5$
- $x^2 - 8x + 7$
- $x^2 + 5x - 14$
- $x^2 - x - 6$
- $x^2 - 9$

Check Your Understanding - Formative

5. Convert this expression to Factored Form. Show your work on the board.

$$x^2 + 13x + 12$$

Type a response

 Show your work

TOTALS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%
100%							
100%							

Surviving the Block



Purposeful Movement



Strategic Synthesis



Dynamic Transitions



Flexible Grouping

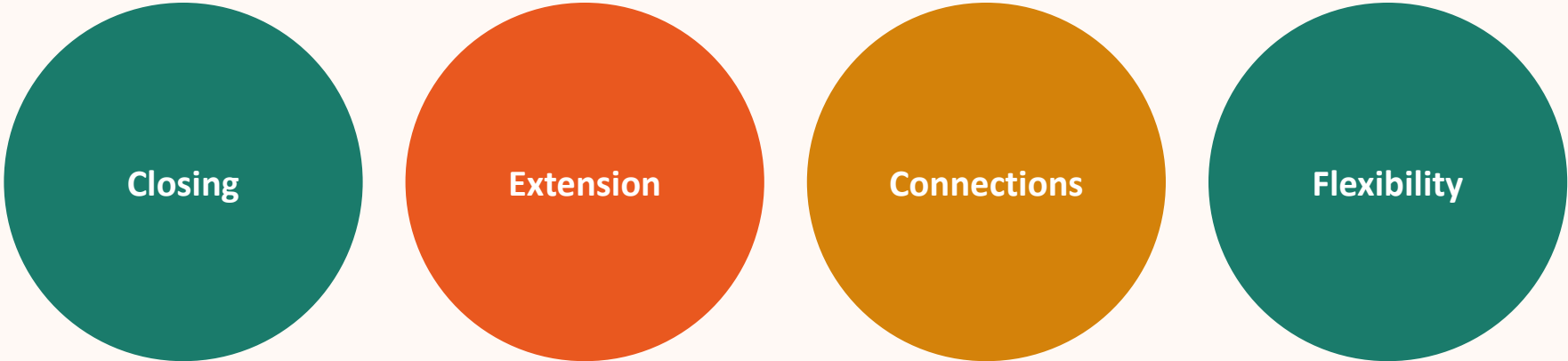


**Celebrate Persistence
and Active Learning**



Adaptive Pacing

Takeaways



Closing

Extension

Connections

Flexibility

*Use the extra time.
Let thinking breathe.*

