Curriculum Planning with Cognitive Strategies

This grid layers cognitive strategies upon which teachers can focus instruction over cognitive processes that occur throughout the classroom environment. Use it to analyze a standard or instructional goal, outlining the specific processes students will engage in as they address components of the standard, and identifying cognitive strategies to model and support. Although you would not engage in this exercise for every standard, the process will help you focus on the importance of supporting the development of cognitive processes.

Take a standard and record it next to "State Standard or Curricular Goal" near the top of the Cognitive Strategies Grid. Then consider the cognitive processes down the left side that would be key in achieving this standard. Across the top are the various cognitive strategies that students learn in order to achieve at high levels. Cognitive strategies can be taught, and they build the students' cognitive processes.

Activity:

1. Identify a standard or curricular goal. Write it at the top of the grid. The left-hand column of the Cognitive Strategies Grid delineates several basic cognitive processes. Each of these is an intrinsic function of the brain. For example, *apperception*, the process of integrating new information into schemas through the lens of past experiences, occurs naturally in a range of contexts, as do *categorization* and *attention*. One instructional goal may have aspects that fall into many of these categories.

2. Consider the skills and concepts students will *acquire* within your identified learning goal. Make concise notes into the second column for *acquisition.* Continue down the second column, noting applications of each cognitive process to the selected goal. Note: You may have several rows that do not apply or apply too generally to identify in this format. You may leave those slots blank. The top row of the Cognitive Strategies Grid outlines beginning and advanced cognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies differ from cognitive processes in that these are distinct thinking skills that can be applied to strengthen the range of processes. Each of the strategies can be overtly taught, modeled, and supported within core content instruction. For example, *accessing cues* within content-area text is a vital skill necessary to comprehend text at higher reading levels. This skill can be supported not only within the realm of Language Arts, but also with the use of informational text in other academic areas. In strengthening this skill, students are able to cognitively process the content as they *perceive*, *categorize*, *intuit*, and so on. Basic cognitive strategies support advanced strategies, which are essential for college and career readiness.

3. Look at the first row, *acquisition*. Determine if each cognitive strategy supports the aspects of your learning goal that align with *acquisition*. If yes, place an X in the intersecting box. If no, leave the box blank. Complete the first row, then continue on to complete each row in the grid. For any portions of the second column that you left blank, consider whether the cognitive strategies connect to any foundational applications of the cognitive process and mark the row as appropriate.

Once completed, this grid will allow you to focus on particular cognitive strategies within instruction to ensure that you are building the cognitive skills students need as they engage in your content.

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Curriculum Planning: Cognitive Strategies

State Standard or Curricular Goal:

Basic Cognitive Processes	Role in Achieving Curricular Goal	Beginning Cognitive Strategies													Advanced Cognitive Strategies				
		Accessing Cues	Aids for Attention	Associations	Concept Mapping	Elaboration	Imagery	Memorization Aids	Mnemonics	Organization	Orienting	Rehearsal	Scanning	Transformation	Underlining	Problem Formation	Research	Interpretation	Communication	Precision and Accuracy
Acquisition																				
Apperception																				
Attention																				
Believing																				
Categorization																				
Discrimination																				
Intuition																				
Memorization																				
Perception																				
Representation																				

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Post-Analysis Guide
Once you have completed a Cognitive Strategies Grid for a particular standard or concept, use this reflection to inform the planning of instructional activities for the unit.

1. Are there any particular cognitive strategies (columns) that seem to be significant to your target standard? In other words, are there one or more columns with a larger quantity of X marks? Identify them below.

2. For each cognitive strategy you identified in Question #1, describe opportunities for students to learn/engage in the strategy as well as ways to assess student growth in applying the strategy.

Strategy	**How will students learn this strategy within instruction? How will you model the strategy?**	**How will you assess student application of the strategy?**
Example: Concept Mapping	*I will create a story map with the class on the board. I will also create concept maps for vocabulary terms within small reading groups.*	*I will have each student create a story map for a story of his/her choice. I will also have them select 3 vocabulary words for which to create concept maps to turn in.*

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Cognitive Strategies Facilitation Grid

The tool below can be used as a *facilitation grid* to note which strategies students are utilizing effectively in their studies. As students are working, teacher can facilitate and assess their level of mastery of the various cognitive strategies. This is a great way to provide observable, formative assessment data that can then be used to plan for future instruction.

Students	Beginning Cognitive Strategies														Advanced Cognitive Strategies				
	Accessing Cues	Aids for Attention	Associations	Concept Mapping	Elaboration	Imagery	Memorization Aids	Mnemonics	Organization	Orienting	Rehearsal	Scanning	Transformation	Underlining	Problem Formation	Research	Interpretation	Communication	Precision and Accuracy

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