



# HOLISTIC INSTRUCTION

## STRONG LEARNING EXPERIENCES

### Holistic Instruction

This eBook discusses the importance of designing and delivering learning experiences in a way to maximize learning.



**Holistic  
Instruction  
Overview**

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**Knowledge and  
Information**

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**Review**

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**Walk Through The  
Day**

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**Connect to Online  
Instruction**

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### CONSULT 4 KIDS

7850 White Lane  
Suite E-150  
Bakersfield, CA 93309  
(661) 665-8720

[www.consultfourkids.com](http://www.consultfourkids.com)

## Holistic Instruction

### Key Points

Holistic instruction is a way to look at the way we work with others to ensure that learning happens. Holistic instruction looks at instruction from beginning to end, taking care to focus on the recipient of the instruction—the learner. Holistic instruction refers to both youth and adults and is a strategy used to organize information so it can be learned.



### Terms/Glossary

**Holistic Instruction:** This term refers to looking at learning in a holistic way from start to finish, be that an individual lesson, the program day as a whole, or staff development and training.

**Lesson design:** C4K believes that the most effective lesson design has three parts, an opening, the content, and the closing. Each of these parts has a unique purpose and function.

**3 R's of After-School:** The 3 R's of after-school are relationships, relevance, and rigor.

**Objective:** This is a statement of what you want to accomplish in the lesson, a statement of your desired end result.

**Activity:** A single lesson that is self-contained and complete in a single lesson.

**Kit:** A series of lessons that are focused on a single topic but contain a variety of ways to reinforce the learning over multiple lessons.

**Unit:** A series of lessons that are designed around a theme or broader learning objective. There are generally 10-20 lessons in a unit. Each lesson builds on the lesson prior and generally leads to a culminating event or display.

### Prior Knowledge



Think back to when you were in school. Can you remember a teacher who made a real connection with you? How did they organize the lessons they taught? Did you know what they wanted you to learn? Did they check in to be sure you understood the lesson? Did they recap and review the lesson at the end? If they did, they were implementing the strategies that make instruction effective.

## Brain Power

Teaching and learning are reciprocal actions. If no one learned anything, then you didn't teach. You may have presented the information in an interesting way, but if learning did not occur, that's as far as it goes. Teaching can be formal or informal, through a lecture style or hands-on activities, by using the Socratic Method, or having youth work in pairs, small groups or teams.

Whatever helps youth learn can be considered teaching. We want learning experiences to be as positive as possible and that is more likely to happen if we engage youth and adults as active partners in learning. Remember, even when you are designated as the teacher, you are also a learner because your students will be teaching you while you are teaching them.

## Introduction

Holistic instruction is looking at learning through a broad lens. It considers the structures that need to be in place to implement the strategy of the gradual release of responsibility. If you think about it, all learning happens through gradual release. Sometimes the release is quick and takes little time to pass it off. Other times it takes a long time. Think of holistic instruction like you would the baton passing lane in a relay. First one person has the baton, then the two of them share responsibility for the baton, and then the second person takes off. This is a perfect metaphor for teaching and learning.

## Debrief

What do you already know about holistic instruction? How do you normally apply what you know about instruction when you are working with youth? What are you going to consider that was new information?





## Knowledge and Information

In after-school we focus on the 3 R's. These R's are not the traditional R's of reading 'riting and 'rithmetic, but rather relationships, relevance, and rigor. In all of our lessons and activities, we are working on these three R's. After-school is student-centric. We measure our success by the changes made in student attitude, performance, behavior, and interactions with others. In order to promote learning, we recognize that learning can be instructional (focused on gaining knowledge and comprehension) or investigation (focused on analysis, application, synthesis, and evaluation). In order to facilitate student learning C4K recommends that you take a look at instruction holistically and proposes this lesson design to move the learning forward.

### Lesson Design

In holistic instruction we believe that generally there are 3 components to a lesson: Opening, Content, and Closing. Each of these components has key segments that need to be included. Let's look at each of these three lesson components one at a time.

#### Opening

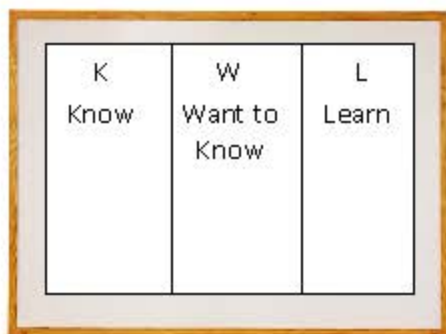
The opening of a lesson has three parts. The first is to state the objective. Tell youth what you want them to learn. This sets clear expectations and will also let young people know what "success" will look like to you. Objectives should be simply stated. For example, an objective might read like this:

Today we are going to learn about three different types of sentences, simple, compound, and complex. We are going to do this in a sentence relay game.



That's it. State the objective and let them know what you are trying to accomplish and what you hope they will learn. As an analogy, if you go clothes shopping you generally know what you are looking for whether that be formal work, business casual, recreation, or around the house. Knowing this helps you to narrow your focus and keeps you from going to Home Depot in hopes of finding business casual clothing.

The second part of the opening is checking for prior knowledge. People, even youth, are not blank slates.



They know things. It is important we tap into what people already know. This will help the new learning "stick" because they are activating parts of the brain which will be eager to receive new information. You can activate prior knowledge in a variety of ways. One way you can do this is to have people visualize a past experience. Ask them to close their eyes and think back to a particular situation. The more descriptive you can be in helping them visualize the more ready the brain will be to accept new information. Another way you can activate prior knowledge is to

create a K-W-L Chart. The “K” stands for “know”, the “W” for “what you want to know”, and the “L” is for “what you’ve learned.” When you are activating prior knowledge you are going to focus on the “K” (at the end of the lesson you can complete the “L”), and as you move along you can get input on what youth or staff want to learn.

Activating prior knowledge will also make misconceptions apparent. This is very helpful and lets you know you will have to “undo” some previously held beliefs and what those beliefs are. When you find this out, it is not about “correcting people who are wrong,” it is about clarifying information and digging deeper to determine why the connection was made in the way it was. Haven’t you had the experience that you thought you understood something, and then after a little time with someone else you realize you really had a misconception about how things were connected? This is what happens for youth as well—the more they experience, the clearer the understanding.

The third part of opening is building background knowledge. Perhaps you are looking at some key vocabulary and experiencing the difference between rough and smooth or rubbing your hands together to help understand friction and the heat it produces. You might be sharing a video or pictures, hosting a presenter, or going on a walk around campus to help prepare youth for the learning experiences of the lesson. Building background knowledge helps to prepare the brain for the new learning. Building this knowledge is done in concrete ways when at all possible (actually experiencing it) or in a representational way (videos, pictures, stories, etc.)



The bottom line is this, during the lesson opening identifies clearly what you want the youth to learn and then activate their prior knowledge so you know where to begin building. Building background knowledge allows you to expand on the prior knowledge and get the “mind ready” for the learning experience.

## **Content**

The content section of holistic instruction is sharing information with the youth or adults in a way they can learn. There is a learning theory of gradual release of responsibility which means that the person who knows the most starts out. We call this the “I do” section. This is when you explain, teach, instruct, model, demonstrate, show, and so on. The second part of the gradual release theory has the teacher and the learner working in concert together, sharing the teaching and learning. We call this the “We do” section of the content. In this piece you invite youth or adults to come up and show what they understand about the learning. There is a lot of interaction between the instructor and the learner and many questions, clarifications, and demonstrations as you work through what is to be learned.

Finally in the gradual release theory, the learner accepts the responsibility for the move forward. In our lessons we call this the “You do” section. This is when the learner works with other learners to grapple with the concepts.



Certainly during the content, even in the “You do” section, the instructor is actively engaged. The instructor circulates, checking for understanding, asking questions to deepen understanding, and calling for a time out when there is a teaching moment. A teaching moment occurs organically when a learner has an insight that needs to be shared with the other learners. A teaching moment is not planned, but it is captured. It is at that moment the learning can transform. It becomes relevant to the learner in this moment. It is important to be aware of every possible teaching moment to ensure that the focus remains on the learner.

Another way to look at this section is through the 5 E’s: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and



Evaluate. The most challenging piece is to engage the youth in learning and then let them explore what is happening and they are experiencing. Activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge are certainly opportunities to engage youth in learning. You might also include a brief experiment or hands-on activity which requires youth to work together in a team and really tackle a problem without hearing your explanation first. Engaging youth in this way and making a space for them

to explore the phenomena, piques youth’s interest and creates the desire to learn. You can then explain, demonstrate, or model, and then have youth continue with a learning experience.

## Closing

At the end, the lesson must be closed. People need to know in advance how the lesson will end. Will it end because the time period has ended, because a contest has been won, an activity completed, a project finished? You can let them know when you begin. It is essential that you schedule time for the closing to occur. Also, through the lesson keep track of the time and let people know how much time is left before the closing. In the beginning allocate about 10 minutes for the closing. You may be able to shorten this time as youth learn how the activity will close and what is expected of them, but in the beginning it will take longer than you might think. There are three sections of the close: review, reflect, and debrief. Each of these sections has a particular function. Remember the research they did regarding Sesame Street and the importance of debriefing the activity, so be sure you have time for all three sections of the close.

During the review section youth will recount what has happened. There is no editorializing at this point, thinking about what was liked or disliked, but just a simple recounting of what was done today. For example, today we worked on making a stomach out of plastic baggies. We labeled each baggie so we could easily identify which stomach had “acid,” which was massaged, and which was to be left alone. We placed the “food” into the stomach and then followed through with the experiments and also left them at rest until tomorrow.

After the review, the next phase is to reflect on what was done. This is the time that youth should reflect on how the learning has affected them, how it fits into other things they learned already, and what to do with any learning that was unexpected and new. We refer to this section as Confirm, Tweak, and Aha! In the Confirmation section, youth will recount what they learned that confirmed for them things that they already

knew. This is an important part of the process. It is confidence building to know that you already knew things and you are building on what you have already known. The “Tweak” refers to things that you’ve known in the past that you are now adjusting, either by seeing a new way that the information connects, or by adding an additional piece of information to content you’ve already mastered, or understanding that certain aspects of your learning/knowledge always work together while other pieces are more situational and only come into play under specific conditions. Reflection allows the learner to make sense of what was learned in light of their own understanding and experience.

The third part of the closing is the debrief. In the debrief section the learner decides what he/she will do with the new learning. How will this information be applied to life personally and professionally? (Remember, for youth, professionally applies to their “work” as a student). It is also important that they make a commitment to use the confirmed, tweaked or Aha learning within the next 72 hours. This is important so that they will begin to develop confidence in the ability to use the new learning to move forward.



### Activities, Kits, and Units

Another thing to consider in holistic instruction is whether you are preparing an activity, kit or a unit. An activity is a one and done experience. It is a self-contained lesson that when finished, is complete. An activity will certainly add to what a person knows, but it is easy to manage because the objective is met in this one lesson. An example of an activity would be to make a water color painting of a flower. Once the lesson is complete and the flower is done, the information can be moved forward but it is moved on as a solo rather than part of a concert. A kit of lessons all support a single concept that will be approached in a variety of ways to ensure understanding. For example, if you are working on synonyms and antonyms, you can have a kit of lessons and activities that include a variety of games, exercises, and hands-on learning experiences to teach the concept. The lessons in a kit build upon each other and drive the learning of a discreet concept. A unit of lessons will be more thematic in nature. There will be 10-20 lessons that build upon each other, exploring a number of concepts more holistically. When you are planning a unit of lessons it is important to know what you want to accomplish at the very beginning and then plan everything to make that happen.

### Bullet Points

- After-school programs are focused on the 3 R's: relationships, relevance, and rigor.
- Holistic Instruction utilizes a lesson format of opening, content, and closing.
- The opening of a lesson has two parts: stating the objective and tapping into prior knowledge.
- The content section of the lesson plan presents the information and provides opportunities for youth to experience learning.
- The closing section of the lesson wraps up the lesson through 3 components: review, reflect, and debrief.

- Teaching moments are organic moments in which the learning becomes relevant and easy for the learner to grasp and is shared with everyone.
- The Gradual Release of Responsibility is a learning theory that releases the responsibility of learning from the guide to the learner. We do this in an “I do,” “We do,” “You do” format.
- Reviews require the learner to identify what was done during the lesson
- Reflection is thinking about how the learning applies to the person.
- The debrief answers the question of how the learning will be applied in the move forward.
- Lessons should be designed in activities (single lessons), kits (multiple activities about one topic), and units (multiple lessons that cover a wide array of topics centered on a theme.)

### **C4K Minute—Making It Real**

Planning a lesson is one of the most important things you can do. Look at one of your lesson plans and see which parts of the holistic instruction model is included in the lesson plan that you have. Ask yourself what you might do to include the different parts of the holistic instruction model—often times this is just a simple adjustment.

### **Debrief**

What is your key learning about holistic instruction? What will you do in the next 72 hours to implement your key learning?





## Review

### Tricks of the Trade

Begin your lesson plan with the end in mind. Ask yourself, at the end of this lesson what do I want youth to know? Then ask yourself how you will know if they have learned what you want them to learn? Once done, you are now ready to design the lesson to achieve those results.

### Gem of the Day

Teaching moments happen routinely during learning experiences. Taking advantage of them is easy as long as you are looking for them and take the time to have youth “teach to learn” and explain what they have just grasped.

### Important Take-Aways

Holistic instruction focuses on the experience of the learner. The lesson is designed to engage the learner from the very beginning. Involve the learner by asking questions and getting them to share what they already know.

### Troubleshooting

I don’t have time to plan. How can I possibly plan effectively?

First of all, don’t try to plan everything all at once. Select one area to begin your planning. Work on this one area and practice the planning so you will be proficient with planning as you branch into the next area. Secondly, see if you can work with a co-worker. Determine what you could plan together and then split the plans. This will move you forward more quickly. Third, create an internal format for the holistic instruction model and then plug in the different activities. For example, maybe you are going to have the youth play a game on the second, fourth and sixth days of a kit.

Once you have the internal structure you will be able to plug in a different game or activity without redoing the entire plan.



### Best Practices

- Develop lesson plans one to two weeks in advance so you have plenty of time to think it through.
- Plan lessons in kits and units to provide continuity.
- Work with a partner to lighten the load.

## FAQ's

How does holistic instruction apply to the program overall?

Holistic instruction design, opening, content, and closing, can fit the pattern of the after-school program as well as an individual lesson. The opening occurs when you set the tone for the day with all of the youth during those few minutes at the beginning of program. The Closing is the wrap up at the end of the day. Everything else in between, homework, healthy living, enrichment, and so on represents the content.

## Universal

We are all learners and gradual release of responsibility for learning applies to the way we learn best. Whether we are visual, kinesthetic, or auditory learners, the gradual release model describes how we learn.

## After school

Planning for youth is a critical part of your job as an after-school leader. Begin with one area and then branch out.

## Positional

Work as a team to create dynamite lesson plans and learning experiences for youth. Avoid activities that look like the school day. Plan things that have youth working with others. Have the topic be relevant and make the work just challenging enough to be interesting and easy enough to be accomplished successfully.



## Review

In your journal, write about the information you are taking away from this content. Highlight your key learnings

## Key Learning

Since you have reviewed the material, ask yourself how you can translate the information into a learning for you, and then how will you practice that learning by implementing it or executing on a specific action. Think in terms of your personal and professional life. For example:

**Personal:** I have learned that it is important for me to think about what I've learned every day and then apply that learning to my life on the following day.

**Professional:** I have learned that I work with others on my team to plan effective lessons.

**Journal Entry**

I did this well and celebrated by \_\_\_\_\_.

I did not do so well at \_\_\_\_\_, and I will strengthen my performance in the future by doing \_\_\_\_\_.

**Debrief**

What do you know about holistic instruction now that you didn't know before? How will you apply your new learning in the future?





## Walk Through the Day

**Pre-Pre-Opening:** On your way into work, review your day in your mind. Think through the lessons you will be conducting and the learning you hope will be achieved. Go through the checklist of materials and supplies you will need. Plan your time when you first arrive so you will be as effective as possible.

**Practical Application:** Make a list, mental or written, of the things to do when you first get to work to help make your reasons run smoothly. Review the questions you will ask as well.

**Pre-Opening:** Spend some time during pre-opening to get organized. You've already thought through your lessons, now just double check to be sure that everything is ready and organized. Share your plans with a colleague so he/she can offer suggestions or confirm your plan.

**Practical Application:** Run down the list you made (mental or written) and be sure that everything is in place. Check out your classroom space if possible to be sure that things are set up. If you can't get to your space, then be sure that your cart is organized.

**Opening:** The opening is an essential part of the program. If you look at the day holistically, the opening of the program is like the opening of the lesson plan. You are stating the objective of the day and checking in with youth to determine where they are (this is like checking for prior knowledge).

**Practical Application:** Set the tone for the day by identifying to all of the youth in the program what your goal is for the day. If you are looking to having transitions run more smoothly, let them know, this way they understand the objective of the day.

**Rotations:** It is during the rotations that you will use your holistic planning. In reference to the entire day, the rotations are like the content. It is the crux of what you are doing. Consider the holistic approach in everything you do. You will be building buy-in and ownership among the youth.

**Practical Application:** Write an agenda on the board listing the things that you will do today. Briefly review the agenda with the youth and tell them what you want to accomplish. Check in to see if they have any questions or pressing concerns that might take precedence over your plan. (Sometimes things will happen that disrupt the school day environment, if that occurs, having them share and work through any residual issues can be helpful).

**Closing:** Just like in the holistic plan for each lesson, the closing is an important part of the day. The opening and the closing are the bookends of your program. Take time at the end of each day to review, reflect, and debrief the day's activities with both youth and fellow staff.

**Practical Application:** Create a Plus and Delta Chart. Have people write or draw the things they liked and the things they think could be improved on the chart. The Plus side of the chart will have the praises, and the Delta side will have the opportunities to strengthen program. Review these as part of your closing routine.

## Connect to Online Instruction

C4K has a service called Lesson Plans made easy. These are plans written in the holistic instruction format and are specific to program components as well as age groups of youth. These plans are for grades Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Check them out on the C4K website.



## Program Leader

### Academic Support

#### ➤ KEY INDICATOR: Academic Support

Mini #5	Checking for Understanding
Mini #20	Teaching Moments
Mini #27	Planning
Mini #57	Establishing Routines
Mini #58	Basics of Lesson Design
Mini #61	Task and To Do Lists
Mini #102	Facts About Literacy—Importance of Books
Mini #120	Practice, Practice, Practice, Afterschool Style
Mini #132	Planning To Be Flexible
Mini #133	Identifying A Teaching Moment
Mini #134	Morning Meetings (How They Work in Afterschool)
Module #2	Delivery
Module #3	Transitions
Lesson #5	Lesson Design
Lesson #6	Lesson Delivery
Lesson #8	Delivery
Lesson #12	Middle School Approach
Lesson #13	Successful Rotations
Lesson #14	Middle School Approach
Lesson #15	Middle School Academic Clubs
Class #18	Schedules
Class #19	Implementing Quality Lessons

➤ **KEY INDICATOR: English Language Arts**

Mini #11	Reading Aloud
Mini #81	Academic Vocabulary
Mini #104	Using School Day Materials
Mini #105	What Is Phonemic Awareness?
Mini #121	Using Homework to Create Games
Module #7	California Standards
Module #15	Middle School Power 1/2 Hour
Module #16	Middle School Academics
Module #22	Building Fluency
Module #27	Supporting Learning Conversations
Lesson #16	Supporting Language Arts
Lesson #22	Meeting Students Academic Needs
Lesson #23	Marzano Strategies

➤ **KEY INDICATOR: English Language Arts, Continued**

Lesson #18	Reciprocal Teaching Strategies
Class #17	Activities to Promote Literacy
Class #29	Phonemic Awareness
Class #30	Basics of Phonics

➤ **KEY INDICATOR: Mathematics**

Mini #103	Practicing Math Facts
Mini #106	Practicing Math Strategies
Module #7	California Standards
Module #15	Middle School Power 1/2 Hour
Module #23	Focusing on Grade Level Standards in Math
Class #12	Math Activities

➤ **KEY INDICATOR: STEM Education**

Mini #107	What is STEM?
Mini #108	Engineering Fun in ASP
Lesson #19	Science Activities



➤ **KEY INDICATOR: History / Social Studies**

Mini #78	Service Projects
Mini #124	Developing Volunteers
Mini #125	Working with Volunteers
Class # 16	Reaching Out to the Community
Class #21	Service Learning