

FILTERS for COHERENCE

The *Filters for Coherence* are considerations schools use when they plan the sequence of domains to be taught by specific grade-levels at specific times during the year. It is highly recommended that the filters be considered when developing or refining the school's *Curriculum Plan*. Using the filters up front will do much to inform the intent and integrity of curricular coherence. The filters (below), in conjunction with the rubric for *Curriculum Plans*, can be used as a guide in continuous improvement of implementation. (*Note: The filters are also a lens to apply when generating units and lessons.*)

- **Pre-requisite knowledge/vocabulary**- A key consideration for coherence is whether or not students have the pre-requisite knowledge and vocabulary to understand a domain. If not, we teach the foundational content first. *For example, we might:*
 - ✓ *introduce Kings and Queens and Native Americans before the voyage of Columbus so students have a foundational understanding of those who supported his trip and those he encountered along the way.*
 - ✓ *Introduce the domain of chemistry before the domain of electricity to set a foundational understanding of what causes electrical phenomena to occur.*
- **Chronological order**- Chronological order is the arrangement of events following one after another in time. This order helps students see the connection between cause and effect. *For example, we might:*
 - ✓ *teach the earliest civilizations before ones that came later in time.*
 - ✓ *study the domain of "American Revolution" before that of "Making a Constitutional Government," which came as a result.*
- **Familiar concepts first**- To teach more complex concepts, it frequently helps to begin with the familiar first so students can apply their background knowledge to the topic. *For example, we might:*
 - ✓ *teach pre-school students about the familiar parts of the visible body before they learn about the parts inside the body.*
 - ✓ *build first on a related domain from last year before introducing a new one (e.g. the human body)*
- **Macro-to-micro or Micro-to-macro**- As we sequence domains, we may move from general to specific or from specific to general. Likewise, we might move from big picture to little or vice-versa. Either possibility is valid if it progresses in a logical fashion. *For example, we might:*
 - ✓ *move micro-to-macro by studying cells first and progressing to the larger context of the human body (or vice-versa).*
 - ✓ *Likewise, we might move macro-to-micro by studying the larger universe, then zeroing in specifically on the earth (or vice-versa).*
- **Integration of Content into Relevant Domains**- Integration of content supports understanding and retention. It is also a means of achieving efficiency in a packed curriculum. For example, if we integrate geography and geographic maps with the events that occur in those areas; integrate *Science Biographies* with the science concepts; and integrate *Sayings and Phrases* where they have a context or relevance in literature or non-fiction text, then we support learning and simultaneously save time. *For example, we might:*
 - ✓ *teach the biography of Michael Faraday in conjunction with the domain of electricity, his focus of his lifelong work.*
 - ✓ *examine the geography of Japan as we teach the domain of Feudal Japan.*
 - ✓ *introduce the saying "as the crow flies" as it appears in the book Pollyana.*
 - ✓ *teach the art and music of the Renaissance when we teach the history of the Renaissance.*
 - ✓ *integrate Greek myths with our study of ancient Greece.*

Scheduling considerations:

When trying to look at a yearlong calendar and accommodate the coherence of domains, teams may also need to consider the following factors:

- **Sufficient Time** – This consideration is really about assessing whether you have allocated a sufficient amount of time to teach each domain (e.g. 2-4 weeks; typically 6 weeks max). This does not mean to say we need to teach everything about a domain since most are taught through spiral instruction over time. We just need to consider if there is sufficient time to teach the objectives allocated to our grade level. (Sufficient time should not be misinterpreted to be excessive time or students will never get the benefit of each domain planned for the grade level.)
- **Rounding Up**- When estimating unit time, we round days up to full week(s) to plan for review and assessment time.
- **Continuity of Units**- We consider calendar holidays so as not to interrupt the continuity of units. (This is not to interpreted as letting the calendar or holidays dictate the sequence of content; e.g. keep the study of Martin Luther King in the units on Civil Rights (gr. 8) and Fighting for a Cause (gr. 2) vs. just studying about him in February because it's Black History Month. This stays true to two of our 4-C characteristics of curriculum: teaching topics in a content-rich and context-specific way.)