

## Structures: Designing Time for Student and Adult Learning

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### Overview

In Expeditionary Learning schools the schedule serves instructional and curricular priorities. While each schedule is unique to a school and its constraints, there are key features that all Expeditionary Learning school schedules have in common: blocks of class time, opportunities for integration of the disciplines, and common planning time for teachers. The schedule accommodates project work, fieldwork, service learning, and flexible groupings of students. Time is scheduled during the school year and summer for whole-school professional development and collaboration across grade levels and subject areas.

## BENCHMARK 1:

### DESIGNING TIME FOR STUDENT AND ADULT LEARNING

#### A. Designing the School Schedule

1. School leaders and staff identify the needs and goals of the school and build a schedule to address and meet them.
2. School leaders and staff approach scheduling comprehensively, taking into consideration before- and after-school programs as well as in-class time.
3. The schedule provides time for teachers and students to work collaboratively.
4. The schedule facilitates flexible groupings of students among classes as well as within classrooms and is not held hostage by tracked classes.
5. The schedule allows for fieldwork and service without disrupting other classes.

#### B. Making Best Use of the Schedule

1. Teachers create uninterrupted blocks of time that allow in-depth investigations.
2. Teachers make optimal use of block time through effective instructional practices (e.g., readers' and writers' workshops, science labs, and fieldwork), project work, product development, and service learning.
3. Tight lesson design and a focus on completing tasks and producing quality work result in a high level of student productivity and engagement throughout each class period.

#### C. Designing Time for Adult Learning

1. The school develops a calendar to guarantee time (e.g., early release days, days between terms) and meeting structures (e.g., whole staff, teaching teams, individual coaching) for on-site professional development.
2. The schedule provides uninterrupted time for individual teacher preparation and planning, team or grade-level planning, and meetings of the whole staff.
3. Teams of teachers who share students have common planning time each week.
4. Structures for productive use of common planning time include agendas, minutes, roles for facilitation and participation, and plans for follow-through.
5. Common planning time is used for designing expeditions and projects, improving instruction and assessment practices, and developing plans to meet the needs of individual students.
6. Resources are allocated to support a summer institute each year.