

Rooted in Relationships: Master Schedule Analysis

PURPOSE

This tool provides a process for reviewing the current state of student relationship structures within your school or classroom schedule. Through this process, educators will learn to identify three different types of relationship structures and reflect on opportunities to improve and integrate these structures throughout the school day.

DIRECTIONS:

Use the three-step process below to analyze and reflect on your current master schedule. This process involves annotating a current schedule and a set of prompts for reflection and action.

Why master scheduling?

Relationship structures reflect the intentional structuring of time and space, embedded from the classroom to the district level, to ensure that relationships among students and with adults can flourish. The science of learning and development tells us that strong relationships and supportive developmental experiences are what cultivate potential. Analyzing how relationship structures show up in our current scheduling can help us “match our minutes to our mission”¹ by designing learning settings with relationships at the core. Let’s get started.

STEP 1: Gather Materials

Grab a copy of your schedule. It will be most helpful to have one that reflects a student experience of the day (rather than a scheduling of teachers).

Are you a **school leader**? Choose:

- A grade-level schedule (elementary) or
- An individual student schedule (secondary).

Are you a **teacher**? Choose:

- A weekly or daily schedule (elementary) or
- An individual student schedule (secondary).

¹ Laufenberg, D. (2016, October 24). Why a school's master schedule is a powerful enabler of change [Interview transcript]. KQED. Retrieved December 10, 2021, from <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/46456/why-a-schools-master-schedule-is-a-powerful-enabler-of-change>

STEP 2: Look for Relational Structures

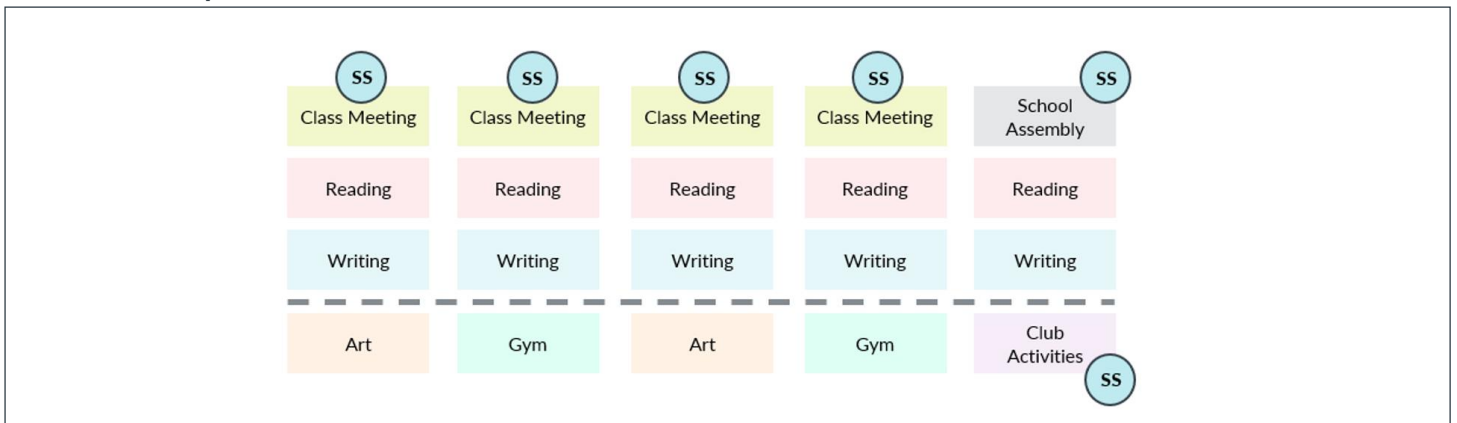
Let's look for three types of student relationship structures within your schedule. We'll walk you through how to find and annotate each kind. *Note: You can make all three annotations on one schedule or you may choose to dig into each type on separate copies of your schedule.*

Here's the first type:

- SS** **Standalone Structures:** These are easy to spot because they are often individual blocks/periods and their primary purpose is relational. Some examples include: *class meeting/advisory, peer mentoring, restorative structures, affinity groups, extracurricular clubs/activities, expanded learning opportunities, school assembly, etc.*

Now, take a look at your schedule. Use the "SS" annotation to mark these structures.

Here's an example:



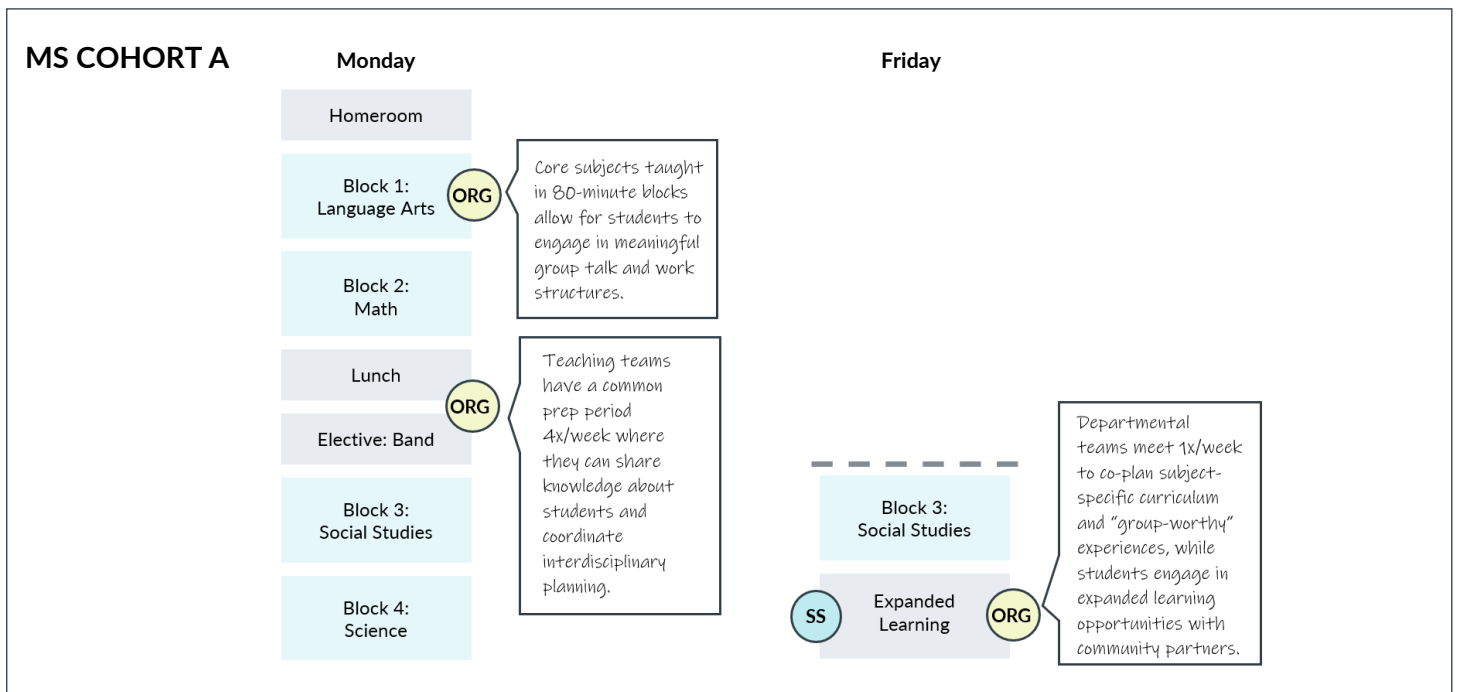
Now, let's push our thinking by looking at two types of structures that are not always apparent in scheduling, at first glance. It might help you to take the perspective of a student as you walk through these prompts.



□ **Organizational Structures:** These structures can be overlooked because they are built into the design of the school, but they are important drivers of relational experiences. Their primary purpose is to create close-knit learning communities, where students are well known and can engage in more sustained, coherent, and collaborative school experiences with a core group. These structures allow adults to plan and work differently together: developing and sharing deeper knowledge of students, planning collaboratively, and implementing inquiry-driven, collaborative, and “group-worthy” activities. Examples include: *student cohorts, looping classes with the same teacher, interdisciplinary teaming, block scheduling, longer grade spans, structuring for small learning communities, etc.*

Now, take a look at your schedule. Use the “**ORG**” annotation to mark these structures.

Here's an example:



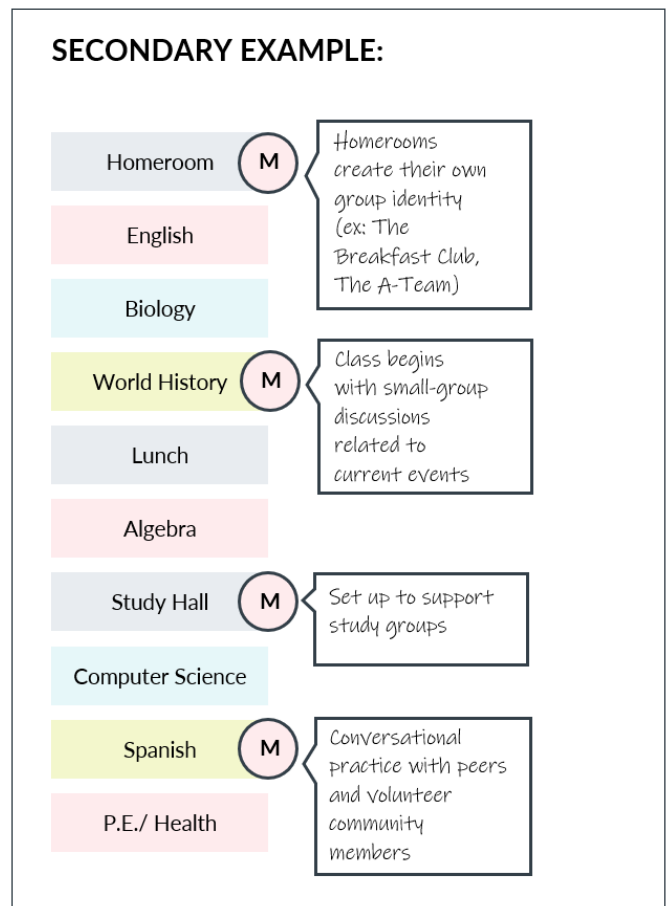
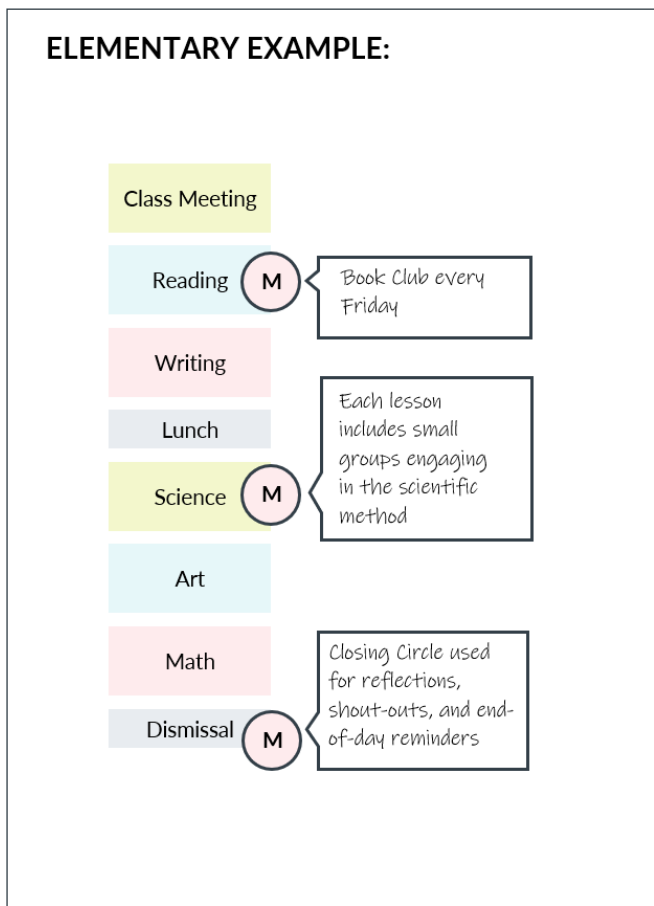


□ **Microstructures:** These relational structures are often built into larger structures and take place in smaller pockets throughout the day. Examples include: *group talk processes, group work structures, a relational launch and close of class periods, celebrations/appreciations, transitions, relationally based warm-ups or team builders, etc.*)

Note: Teachers are most aware of where these microstructures show up in their own classrooms. Leaders can develop their understanding of these microstructures through conversations and classroom visits.

Now, take a look at your schedule. Use the “M” annotation to mark these structures.

Here are some examples:



STEP 3: Reflect on the Activity

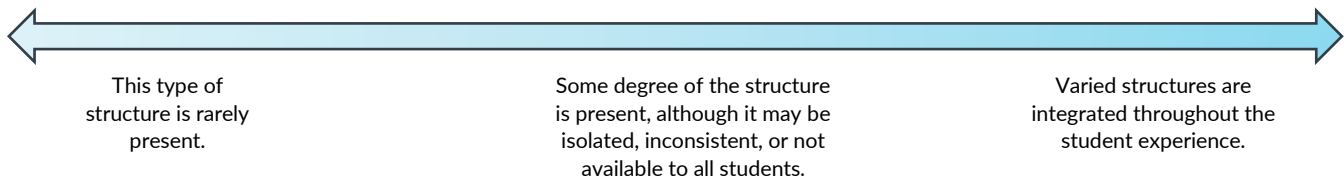
Now that you have identified the three types of student relationship structures in your current schedule, it's time to reflect. Here are a few questions to prompt your thinking:

Prompt A: In what ways is your current schedule rooted in relationships? In what ways would you like to improve?

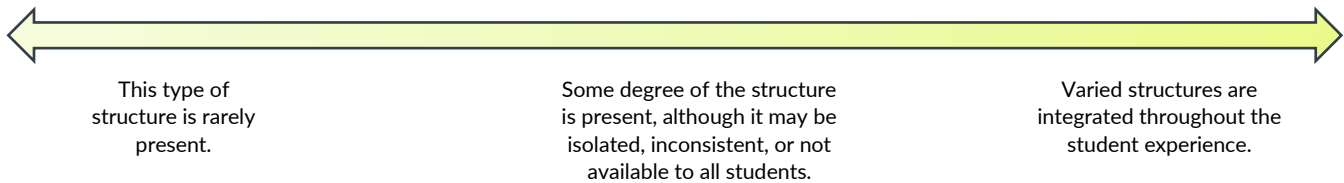
Prompt B: Are there any large gaps in relational opportunities for students throughout the day? Why do you think this is? What impact might this be having on students?

Prompt C: Let's use a scaling strategy to prompt incremental progress. Where would you rate your current schedule on the following scale? What is one action that would move your rating a small step to the right?

Standalone Relationship Structures:



Organizational Relationship Structures:



Relational Microstructures:

