BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ON AN ACCELERATED SCHEDULE

Block Scheduling

Hello and welcome to this recorded session providing an overview of the Best Practices for Teaching on an Accelerated Schedule.
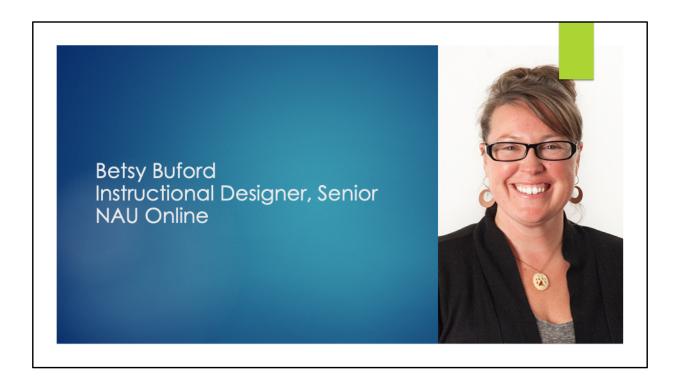
UNIVERSAL DESIGN/ACCESSIBILITY NOTES:
- The images of the slides themselves are not accessible in this document format. However, all text from each slide is included in the notes area following each slide in order to ensure usability.
- Also, this means that the links in each slide are not clickable, so they've also been added to the notes area for easy access for all users.

SELF-ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR THIS RECORDED VIDEO EXPERIENCE:
1. Print out or open this document in your preferred app for annotating PDF documents.
2. Make notes about specific ideas you find helpful
3. Make notes with questions and then reach out to an instructional designer for customized support and answers to your questions.
4. Pause the video as-needed to brainstorm if you hear something that inspires you or that you want to consider using in your classes
5. Pause the video when you want to learn more about a key term or study

referenced in the video. It's OK to dig deeper into a specific topic before listening to the next video segment. Just set yourself a reminder to come back and continue when you've completed your query.

6. Keep your notes somewhere you'll be able to find them later, and where you might see them and remind yourself of the strategies you spent the time reviewing these materials.

My name is Betsy Buford, and I'm an Instructional Designer with NAU Online. If you would like to schedule an appointment with myself or one of the other instructional designers on our team, please contact LMS-Faculty-Help@nau.edu LMS-Faculty-Help@nau.edu or contact me directly at Betsy.Buford@nau.edu

We'll also be hearing today from three members of the NAU Faculty representing several colleges and campuses, and formats.

Sara Abercrombie, PhD

Associate Professor

Educational Psychology

Allie Stender, MpH

Lecturer

Health Sciences

Jim Latham

Assistant Clinical Professor

Department of Business and Administration

Sara, Allie, and Jim all have experience teaching shorter courses in multiple formats and lengths – both online and in-person, and they represent both Tenure-Track and Non-Tenure Track roles.

Allie also has extensive experience teaching part-time before she joined us full-time as a Lecturer on the Mountain Campus. And Jim is based out of NAU-Yuma, which, like many of our statewide campuses, offers a high number of programs operating on a block schedule.

I'm so grateful for the expertise they were all willing to share with me
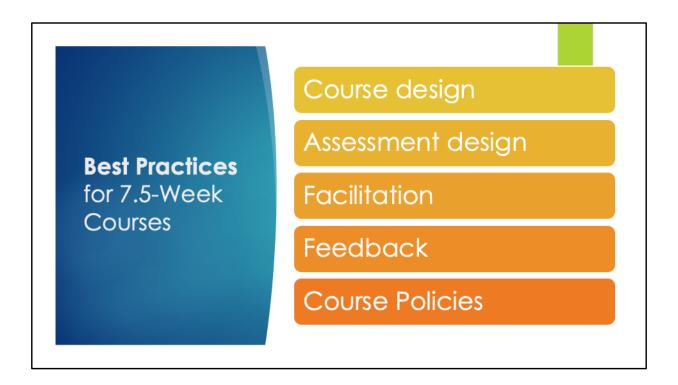
Quick Overview of Block Scheduling @NAU

- 15% of NAU courses are already offered in 7.5-week blocks in Fall/Spring/Summer
- The transition is a department/program-level choice
- Could be used to prepare for a smoother transition/pivot to fully online if we must revert to ERT

Here are a few quick pieces of information to provide a little context about Block Scheduling at NAU.

- 15% of NAU courses are already offered in 7.5-week blocks in Fall/Spring/Summer
- The transition is a department/program-level choice
- Could be used to prepare for a smoother transition/pivot to fully online if we must revert to ERT

Keeping all of these things in mind, let's take a look at the topics we'll be covering in this recorded session.

We'll really be focused on some of the best practices for teaching shorter-format courses including…
Course design
Assessment design
Facilitation
Feedback
Course Policies

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:
1. This isn't a class! This recorded video and associated materials are here for you to use in any way that's most effective and impactful for you. We invite you to scrub/fast-forward through the video to identify the topics you most want to learn more about, and focus on those.
   - You could review the slides to find out if there's a particular topic of interest and skip ahead to that part of the video
   - Make a list of headings in your notes before we get started in order to remind yourself that you wanted to learn more about that particular topic. Kind of like making goals for yourself.
2. Pause the video after each section and write down whatever's on your mind.

Questions, ideas, etc.

3. Provide a similar "notes" document to students with prompts for note-taking in each slide or sub-section of slides.

Course Design: Considerations, process, Components, And tools
In 7.5 week courses

Let's jump right into Course Design with a two-minute clip from my conversation with Allie Stender from health sciences.

After we hear from Allie, we'll also hear from Sara from Ed Psych in COE.

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
1. How can I build student engagement into my course design?
2. What am I already doing to design engaging experiences in my classes?
3. What do I need to learn so I can keep the engagement using new tools that work with NAUFlex and block-scheduled classes?
4. Write down questions you'd like to find answers for in this session and then fill in responses as you identify solutions.
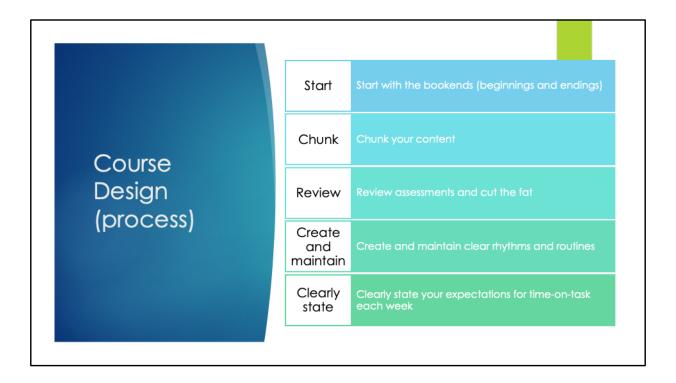
Allie Stender
02:11 – 04:08

VIDEO 1: Allie Stender
02:11 – 04:08

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
- What about her/his teaching context is similar to/completely different from MY teaching context?
- What is she/he doing that interests me?

Sara Abercrombie
08:51 – 10:22
Multiple Touchpoints

VIDEO 2: Sara Abercrombie
08:51 – 10:22
Multiple Touchpoints

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
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Course Design (process)

Start	Start with the bookends (beginnings and endings)
Chunk	Chunk your content
Review	Review assessments and cut the fat
Create and maintain	Create and maintain clear rhythms and routines
Clearly state	Clearly state your expectations for time-on-task each week

I do want to mention that Sara, Allie, and Jim all talked about the workload and the deep critical thinking that's required to balance the shortened course length with the rigorous requirements of college classes.

With that in mind, I think we can start looking at some strategies for critically analyzing your materials for the conversion process.

- Start with the bookends – Course Intro & Finals
    - Decide how much time you need to get students launched successfully before jumping into content AND how much time students will need toward the end of the course to be focused solely on the final assessment
- Chunk your content – one week per chunk (minimum)
    - Consider how you might organize the course to fit into a new rhythm.
    - Sara will have more to say about this in a moment
- Review assessments and cut the fat – Sara will have some insights into this on the next slide
- Create and maintain clear rhythms and routines – doesn't have to be weekly, can be more cyclical
- Include your expectations for time-on-task each week/each assessment. This

supports students in their time management. Also, if you end up getting feedback that the time it took for students to complete assignments was longer/shorter than you had anticipated, that can help with future course updates, as Allie mentioned in that first clip.

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:

1. Would this approach work for me in re-designing my class?
    - Here are a few more process documents that can help guide a re-design for multiple purposes, including Block Scheduling, NAUFlex, and more:
        - https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2016.1222575
        - New NAUFlex planning document links coming soon!
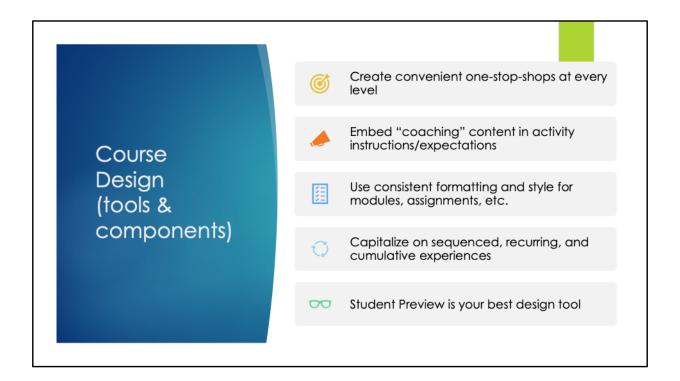   - Are these documents useful? How could you adapt them for your own purposes?

Sara Abercrombie
05:39 – 08:15
Pacing and Chunking
Assignments

VIDEO: Sara Abercrombie
05:39 – 08:15
Pacing and Chunking Assignments

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
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Most of the strategies listed here are strategies you might have heard about already via Faculty Professional Development, the instructional design team on campus, and various teaching-related trainings and articles. However, these strategies can have a particularly positive impact in instructional settings with limited time.

- Create convenient one-stop-shops at every level
    - The goal here is for students to spend the most possible time on task and engaged with course materials, Rather than navigating to find materials.
- Embed "coaching" content in activity instructions/expectations
    - With a shorter semester, it can help to pre-emptively answer questions before they come up, so that students can self-serve their support up to a point.
- Use consistent formatting and style for modules, assignments, etc.
    - This is helpful when students know to expect that they'll get informative and regular communications.
    - Surprisingly, most faculty who have used this strategy find that they end up fielding fewer emails asking for additional information
- Capitalize on sequenced, recurring, and cumulative experiences
    - Similar to the point about consistent formatting, when students are able to develop transferable skills for completing coursework, they can focus more

on the critical thinking and less on the logistics, instructions, etc.
- Student Preview is your best design tool
    - Whenever you build something in BbLearn, take a peek at it in Student Preview in order to ensure that it's working the way you'd hoped. Some of the tools in BbLearn look a bit different in the student and edit mode views.

UP next, we'll be talking about individual assessment and assignment design. To set us up, we'll first hear another clip from my conversation with Sara Abercrombie.

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:
1. Which of these strategies do you already use?
2. Which of them would you like to explore in more detail or for a new purpose in your course?
3. Which areas of your course might be worth reviewing in Student Preview mode?

Assignment/Assessment Design
Strategies and Tools

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS:
1. Which of your current assessments are working beautifully? Can they remain intact, or will they need to be adjusted for use with a Block/NAUFlex approach?
2. Which of your assessments are in need of a tune-up, regardless of course length/format? Which strategies are you interested in for re-conceiving your assessments that might be able to work in any of your teaching contexts? If you plan to conduct a re-design for Block/NAUFlex, let's not waste your effort. Make note of any strategies that would work across all of your current and potential future teaching contexts?
3. What are some of the major criteria you need to consider related to assessments in your unique teaching context?
    *   Universal Design?
    *   Accessibility and multi-media?
    *   Inclusivity?
    *   Transparency in grading criteria?
    *   Flexible format – students can take it whether at home, in-person, with

limited access to internet/computers?
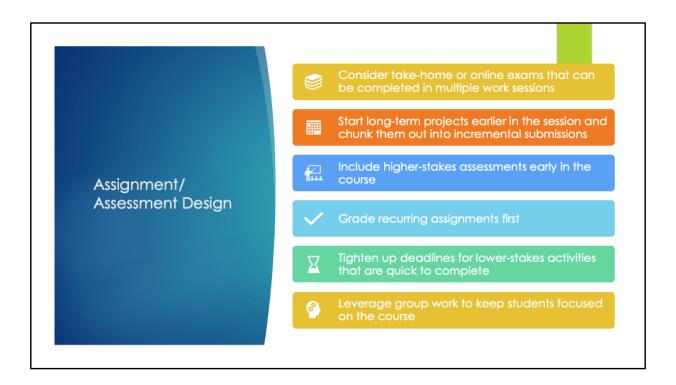
Sara Abercrombie
01:47 – 03:48
Don't waste week 1

VIDEO: Sara Abercrombie
01:47 – 03:48
Don't waste week 1

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:
1. How could your student-onboarding activities be streamlined for time, without losing student-to-student interaction?
2. What strategies could you use to get students engaged more quickly as Sara suggests here?
3. What is one new insight I gained from this video?
4. What about her/his teaching context is similar to/completely different from MY teaching context?
5. What is she/he doing that interests me?

Assignment/Assessment Design

- Consider take-home or online exams that can be completed in multiple work sessions
- Start long-term projects earlier in the session and chunk them out into incremental submissions
- Include higher-stakes assessments early in the course
- Grade recurring assignments first
- Tighten up deadlines for lower-stakes activities that are quick to complete
- Leverage group work to keep students focused on the course

We've just heard from Sara Abercrombie on her ideas about not wasting Week 1. With that in mind, let's take a look at a few more strategies for designing individual assessments.

- Consider take-home or online exams that can be completed in multiple work sessions –
    - Jim will have some thoughts to share on this in our next clip. I'll let him talk about how he prioritizes the use of his in-class time with students.
- Start long-term projects earlier in the session and chunk them out into incremental submissions
    - This just reinforces what Sara mentioned about chunking out submissions and distributed practice
- Include higher-stakes assessments early in the course
    - This also helps to front-load feedback, which we'll discuss in more detail in a moment
- Grade recurring assignments first
    - If you want students to be responsive to feedback you've provided, they must receive it in time to be able to incorporate that feedback.
- Tighten up deadlines for lower-stakes activities that are quick to complete

- Leverage group work to keep students focused on the course
  - One way to maintain rigor and content coverage in a short-format course is to leverage group work. Students can work either synchronously or asynchronously using some of the Groups-based tools in BbLearn. e.g., group discussion boards and collaborate ultra rooms for groups

Up next, we'll hear from James Latham about the importance of peer-to-peer connection in his discipline and in his classes – he has a slightly different take than Sara on how to best use that first week of instruction, but I think both approaches have merit and demonstrate the role of teaching style in how we make some of these decisions.

Facilitation

PRACTICES TO SUPPORT STUDENT SELF-REGULATION

Design happens (ideally) well before the start of a course. Facilitation begins at your first point of contact with students. Up next, we'll be looking at effective facilitation/teaching once the course activities have begun!
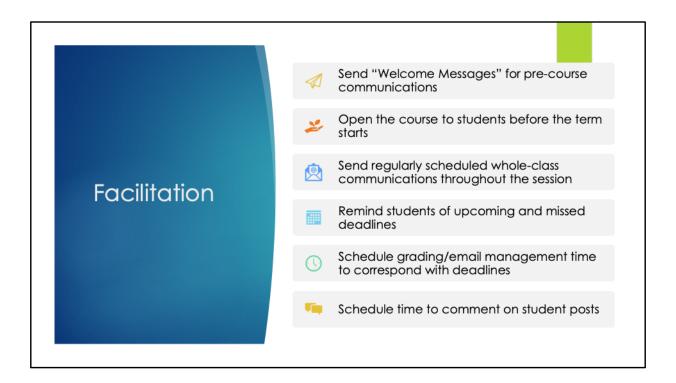
FACILITATION:
Practices to Support Student Self-Regulation

James Latham
13:36 – 14:42
Facilitating Peer Relationships

VIDEO: James Latham
13:36 – 14:42
Facilitating Peer Relationships

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
- What about her/his teaching context is similar to/completely different from MY teaching context?
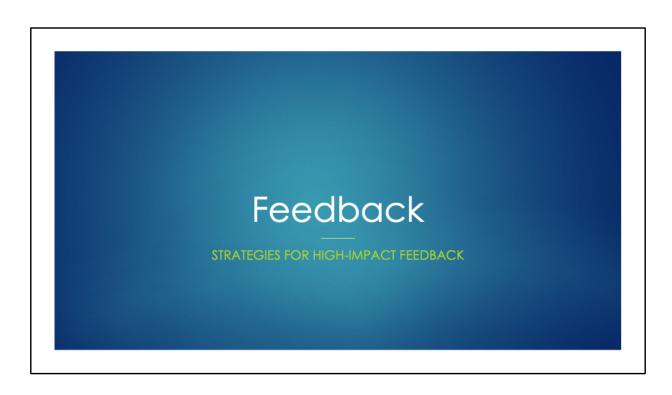- What is she/he doing that interests me?

- Send "Welcome Messages" for pre-course communications
  - Welcome messages can be created and sent using https://classlist.nau.edu
  - Info about electronic textbooks and accounts, so they can resolve issues before classes begin
  - Help students start thinking about how they might budget their time, fewer classes, but deeper focus on each every week
- Open the course to students before the term starts
  - Also helpful to test out and troubleshoot tech before class begins
  - NOTHING can be due before the first day, and it's still best to wait for the first deadline on day 2-3
- Send regularly scheduled whole-class communications throughout the session
  - Use consistent formatting and types of content
  - E.g., Weekly email on Mondays summarizing whole-class feedback from prior weeks' assessments, weekly email on Wednesday/Thursday summarizing FAQ's, tips for approaching assignments, and cues to participate where engagement might be lacking

Our next clip also comes from my conversation with Jim Latham. When we started recording our conversation, I asked him what his best hard-won lesson-learned or nugget of wisdom he wanted to share with faculty who might be making plans to

move to Block Scheduling formats, and this was how he responded. His comments really set us up to

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTION:
1. We can start to see some themes bubbling up throughout the faculty interview clips. Jot a few of them down here, and then consider the following questions to dig a little deeper:
    *   Which of these themes are you feeling resistant to or seems troubling from your perspective?
    *   Which are starting to inspire new thinking?
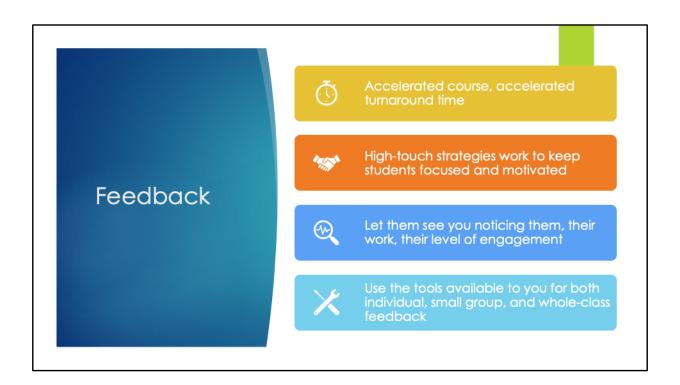   *   What questions do you have about any of these themes?

FEEDBACK: Strategies for High-Impact Feedback

VIDEO: James Latham
00:02 – 01:28
Timely Feedback

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS:
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
- What about her/his teaching context is similar to/completely different from MY teaching context?
- What is she/he doing that interests me?

Feedback

- Accelerated course, accelerated turnaround time
- High-touch strategies work to keep students focused and motivated
- Let them see you noticing them, their work, their level of engagement
- Use the tools available to you for both individual, small group, and whole-class feedback

- Accelerated course, accelerated turnaround time
- High-touch strategies work to keep students on schedule
- Let them see you noticing them, their work, their level of engagement
- Use the tools available to you for both individual, small group, and whole-class feedback
  - BbLearn Announcements, can also be sent to student Gmail accounts
  - F2S Messages and Referrals, alerts student academic support, allows academic advisors to reinforce messaging
  - Course Messages (if using)
  - Email, phone, texts, or texting apps

Sara Abercrombie
03:49 – 04:51
Feedback Turnaround Times

VIDEO: Sara Abercrombie
03:49 – 04:51
Feedback Turnaround Times

ENGAGEMENT PROMPT SUGGESTION:
- There has been a lot of focus on timely feedback in this session so far.
- What are your barriers to providing timely feedback?
- What would need to change in order to make this strategy realistic for you?
- How can you re-focus your instructional time to support feedback over other time-wasting tasks?
- What is one new insight I gained from this video?
- What about her/his teaching context is similar to/completely different from MY teaching context?
- What is she/he doing that interests me?

Re-Framing your thinking about Course Policies for short-format courses:

In my interviews with Sara, Jim, and Allie, each of them mentioned that there are a number of policies, Academic Integrity, for example, that don't change.

However, each did mention that they use different strategies for implementing policies or that their policies change slightly between the shorter and longer formats, especially for late work and communications.
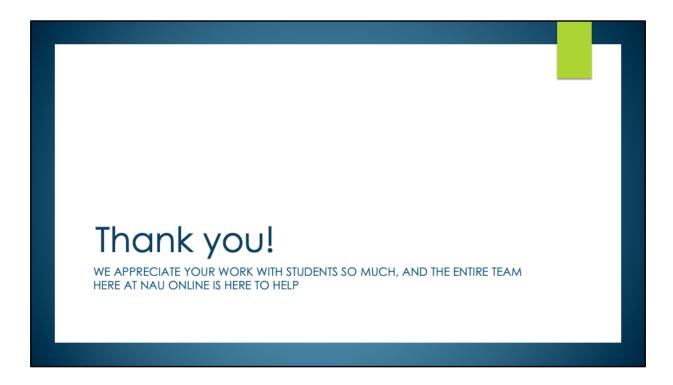
- Many policies won't need to be adjusted at all
  - Academic Integrity
  - Respectful behavior/Safe Space/Conduct
  - Professionalism
- Flexible and student-directed
- Remove yourself as a gatekeeper
- Clear statement about late work and make-up exams/quizzes
- If your shorter course relies more on technology than the longer version, those policies may need to be updated

ENGAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS:
1. Which of your current course policies are working beautifully? Can they remain intact, or will they need to be adjusted for use with a Block/NAUFlex approach?
2. Which of your current course policies are in need of a re-fresh, regardless of course length/format? If you plan to conduct a re-design for Block/NAUFlex, let's not waste your effort. Make note of any strategies that would work across all of your current and potential future teaching contexts?
3. What are some of the major criteria you need to consider related to your course policies in your unique teaching context?

- Universal Design?
- Inclusivity?
- New technologies that require new policies?
- Flexible format – students can take it whether at home, in-person, with limited access to internet/computers?

Thank you!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR WORK WITH STUDENTS SO MUCH, AND THE ENTIRE TEAM
HERE AT NAU ONLINE IS HERE TO HELP

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:

1. What information in this session has sparked some new thinking for you?
    Desicribe.
2. How do you plan to implement the information you found most helpful?
3. What action items are would you like to complete in the next week? Month?
    Before classes begin?

Recommended Reading

1. The Dynamics of Accelerated Learning (peer reviewed journal article)
   - http://www.theibfr2.com/RePEc/ibf/beaccr/bea-v4n1-2012/BEA-V4N1-2012-9.pdf
   - **From the abstract**: This paper examines the reasons for the continuing growth of accelerated programs in higher education, reviews the main concerns as well as the main advantages of intensive course formats, and presents some important prerequisites and considerations for successful teaching in these courses.
2. Best Practices in Course Scheduling - Hanover Research (consultant whitepaper)
   https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/se/Documents/Hanover%20Research%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Course%20Scheduling.pdf
3. The Long and Short of Online Courses (trade news publication)
   - https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/01/30/institutions-experiment-shorter-online-courses-audience

The links in the slide above aren't clickable in this document, but the numbered links below correspond to those on the slide.

1. http://www.theibfr2.com/RePEc/ibf/beaccr/bea-v4n1-2012/BEA-V4N1-2012-9.pdf
2. https://www.cmich.edu/colleges/se/Documents/Hanover%20Research%20-%20Best%20Practices%20in%20Course%20Scheduling.pdf
3. https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/01/30/institutions-experiment-shorter-online-courses-audienc

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES:
1. Select one article from those listed above to learn more about block scheduling, and make some notes about the key points.

   1. These documents are generally focused on the institutional-level decisions about whether or not adopting Block Scheduling/Accelerated course models will be effective in a larger-scale setting. However, they are valuable in the process of determining with your department whether or not your courses are a good fit for this transition