

# THE LEARNING WALL

BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING... BRICK BY BRICK.



The Positive Engagement Project

ΠΡΟ ΘΕΣΙΠΛΑΓ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΜΩΣ ΕΠΙΟΙΕΣ

Making a difference...not a dollar.

declarative

A woman with dark hair looking forward with her right hand raised, palm facing forward.

verb

A man in a white and blue athletic suit running.

fiction

A human skull.

non fiction

A human skull.

alliteration

A woman holding several banknotes.

m

A classical stone statue of a seated figure.

iom

A slice of pie.

fact

Two hands shaking in a firm grip.

illustrator

A row of colorful crayons.

plural noun

Two small black and white kittens.

proper noun

A red bow tie.

narrator

A black handheld microphone.

# THE LEARNING WALL

## Concept Learning Bricks

“We Learn . . .

10% of what we read

20% of what we hear

30% of what we see

50% of what we see and hear

70% of what we discuss

80% of what we experience

95% of what we teach others.”

**William Glasser**

### **Introduction:**

The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks are ways in which one can teach and learn foundational concepts by seeing, saying, hearing, and doing in a truly engaging fashion. Some kids can hear a teacher explain something and get it the first time; those students are few and far between. The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks allow students to strengthen their knowledge of key academic terms and provide opportunities for repetition and practice as they play with the content. As you will see, The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks make William Glasser’s “We Learn...” quote come to life.

The Positive Engagement Project has assembled a set of common standards Concept Learning Bricks in English Language Arts for the upper elementary grades (3 – 5). Concept Learning Bricks are intended to introduce and lay the foundation for major English Language Arts standards and academic vocabulary for our students. Each Concept Learning Brick is organized with a question, answer, physical gesture movement, concept examples, and picture to represent the academic term. The image on the card, associated memory gesture, and vocabulary definition allow students to see, hear, say, and do so much more with these crucial terms in a way that is fun and engaging. Since this is a Third through Fifth grade booklet and can be used from state to state, standards have not been assigned, but nearly every upper elementary grade teacher mentions some or all of these concepts throughout an academic year.

The Concept Learning Bricks in this packet are the foundation of what students need to know and we encourage you to set up Learning Walls and incorporate them into your classroom daily (we have listed a number of possible ways to play with the Concept Learning Bricks with your students in this packet).

## **Different Paths – Same Destination:**

We will use the following example to help you understand the importance of incorporating multiple modalities when teaching concepts with your students.

Let's say Joe walks home from school everyday by himself. His parents only showed him one path to get from school to home. Joe does not know any other way to get home other than the path his parents have shared with him. One day, the route Joe knows is closed due to road construction. Poor Joe doesn't know what to do or how to get home because the only path he knows has been obstructed. If Joe knew different routes to get home, he would have been able to return home safely and confidently when the first path was blocked. Let's say Joe's parents showed him a few different ways to get home and he knew that he could bypass the street with the road construction and walk up and around to the next street. That would have saved him some mental anguish and given him an additional opportunity to get to his destination. Even though Joe likes the first route his parents showed him the best, having the other options gives him more paths to get to the same destination.

How does this relate to teaching? Teaching by lecture is the most common model currently employed by teachers today. For the kids who learn through auditory means this is fine, but this is

likely a small percentage of your class. If you have kids who don't learn through a lecture based system, they, like Joe, can get lost. In our classrooms we have students who learn through different modalities; therefore we must present information in multiple ways. The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks allow for multiple paths to the same destination.

First there is the visual path in which students learn by looking at an image representing a concept. A second path is verbal, in which students teach the definition of the concept verbally to themselves, classmates, or classroom objects. Yet another route can be an auditory path that allows students to hear the definition of the concept as their classmate teaches them. A final path is kinesthetic, in which students learn by performing the memory gesture associated with the concept.

As students get more comfortable with Concept Learning Bricks, they move from simply restating the information in their teacher's words to paraphrasing and putting it into their own words and taking ownership of their learning. As William Glasser pointed out, we learn 95% of what we can teach to others. The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks give our students the opportunity to do just that.

## What Are Concept Learning Bricks?

Concept Learning Bricks are a combination of words, images, and movements, all used in conjunction to introduce and teach common state standards and academic vocabulary. Below is an example of the suffix card. State standards require our students to be able to apply their knowledge of the concepts in many forms. Before that can happen, our students must first understand what the concepts are in order to apply, analyze, and evaluate the concepts in a deeper context.

### Front of Concept Learning Brick

Front of the Concept Learning Brick

Visual: Image associated with the concept.

Key academic vocabulary in standard.

Red border identifies Language Arts



# Back of Concept Learning Brick

Concept Learning Brick  
Reference Title

**Suffix**

Small visual of the Concept  
Learning Brick



Question: Concept formed as a  
question.

**Question:** What is a suffix?

Answer: Verbal answer to the  
question...notice the question is  
part of the answer.

**Answer:** A suffix follows the base-word to which it is added, as *-ly* in *kindly*.

Gesture: Kinesthetic  
representation of the concept.

**Gesture:** Give a small golf clap (clapping very quietly). \*The crowd always applauds after the golf shot, not before or during.

Examples to use with your kids to  
check for understanding or as a  
preview of the concept.

**Examples:** -er (doer) (teacher), -able (able to) (believable), -ous (full of) (dangerous)  
-ful (full of) (helpful), -ly (like) (gently), -ment (state of ) (government)

**We highly recommend that you buy clear (matte finish if possible) sheet protectors for each Concept Learning Brick. You can put both the front of the Concept Learning Brick and the reference information in the sheet protector, so when you hold up the visual to the class you can read the all of the information for yourself on the back.**

## **What Are Some Ways To Use The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks In The Classroom?**

To use The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks, the teacher must understand that simply showing the picture, performing the gesture, and saying the definition once or twice by the teacher is not going to get it done. It is imperative that we give our students the opportunity to teach and discuss with other students. If all we give our students is lecture (input to the students), the information will not stick. The key is for the kids to verbalize (output for the students) what they need to know in their own words and use the image and gestures

By having students work in small groups of two or three, we are encouraging them to take risks they would never take if they had to speak in a whole group setting. Also, ELL research tells us that the best way to learn a new language is to speak it; that holds entirely true for all students. The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks allow all of our students a safe environment to speak, discuss, and teach using academic language. Even the shyest of students is more likely to discuss a concept if only one other person is going to hear. Notice Glasser's quote didn't specify how many people we teach...just that we teach others!



The following are ways to use The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks in your classroom for both you and your students.













**Cue or Anticipatory Set for a lesson:** Let's use the suffix Concept Learning Brick for this example. Show your class the Concept Learning Brick and ask the question, "What is a suffix?" Let them try to make a connection between the picture, question, and concept. Next, teach them the answer to the question, "What is a suffix?" Finally, show the class the memory gesture that connects directly to the image, question, and answer of the Concept Learning Brick. Allow your students to "*Turn and Learn*" with the question, answer, and gesture for the Concept Learning Brick multiple times. Once you feel like your kids have a good understanding of the concept, you can place it on a designated Learning Wall. You can have a section of your classroom designated for Math Concept Learning Bricks and a separate section designated for Language Arts to keep the concepts focused according to curriculum discipline.

**The Learning Wall:** Once you're students know the Concept Learning Brick and all of its components, place it on an assigned classroom Learning Wall. Anytime you like, you can use The Learning Wall for a review any or all of the material covered so far in the school year. It doesn't matter if you introduced the concept 2 days, 2 weeks, or 2 months ago; your students can review the question, answer, gesture, picture, and examples.

The Learning Wall becomes the foundation that your instruction is based on. How can our students truly examine content and standards if they don't know their meaning and functions? The Learning Wall is a road map of critical concepts that have been taught in the classroom. Reuse portions of gestures as much as possible for different Concept Learning Bricks to reinforce the connection between the concepts. Your Learning Wall essentially becomes a visual representation

of concepts you have taught thus far in class. When administrators ask questions about if you've taught this standard or that standard, you can simply refer to your Learning Wall show them.

After gridding off a section of your classroom for ELA, Math, and Science, place your Concept Learning Bricks on the wall (*see example below*).

Language Arts	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					

**Review:** Once you have you have laid some Concept Learning Bricks on The Learning Wall, you can have your kids review the concepts any time you wish. These concepts are the foundation for what our kids need to know and it is important they get many opportunities to review, repeat, and rehearse the questions, answers, and gestures to allow them acquire optimal retention. There are many ways to have kids review The Learning Wall, here are some of our favorites:

**Whole Group Sponge Activities Using The Learning Wall:** Done with the entire class.

Make a gesture and have the kids, in chorus, name the Concept Learning Brick.

Point at a Concept Learning Brick and have the kids make the gesture.

Point at a Concept Learning Brick and have the kids, in chorus, name the concept.

Name a Concept Learning Brick and have the kids make the gesture.

Name the coordinates on the wall, C3, and have the kids make the gesture.

Name the coordinates on the wall, C3, and have the kids, in chorus, name the concept.

**Cover-Up Review (right before state testing):** As state testing nears, begin covering up or flipping Concept Learning Bricks over on The Learning Wall so they can no longer be seen and have the students name the concept and location as you go. The idea is that even though the entire Learning Wall will be covered up for state testing, your students still know where the Learning Concept Bricks are. It's a fun way to review core concepts and the kids enjoy trying to remember where each Concept Learning Brick is placed on The Learning Wall.

## What Are Some Partner Activities For The Learning Wall?

**Personal Records:** In this type of review, students get in pairs. One student is teaching as many Concept Learning Bricks as possible, while the other student is recording how many concepts their partner explained correctly in one minute (it can be any amount of time you choose). In this type of review game, students compete against themselves, not each other, which is the fairest competition possible. This type of competition has many advantages for the many differing abilities of your classroom. Your weaker students don't have to worry about beating the records set by faster kids, but only their own. Instead of feeling depressed about not being as fast as other kids, your slower students have an attainable goal each session of breaking their last effort. As for our gifted students, who always get finished early, complacency goes out the window when they are competing to best their record from the previous game. As you will experience, the weakest learners in a class can break their personal record as many times as the strongest.

**Partner Sponge Activity:** Instead of wasting those two minutes before the bell rings, have your kids review the "A" column or everything in the "2" row. This is a great time for students to take ownership of these concepts as they put them into their own words, while they combine the visual and kinesthetic movements with their explanations (different paths for the information to get to the brain).

**Backwards Review:** In pairs, one student faces the opposite direction of The Learning Wall while the other student is seated looking the Concept Learning Bricks. The student looking at the Concept Learning Bricks can make a gesture, say the definition, or give an example of a specific Concept Learning Brick. The partner student (back facing The Learning Wall) needs to name the Concept Learning Brick and location on the wall (E4) if possible. On teacher's prompt, students switch positions and roles.

**Comprehension skills with Language Lines Sentence Frames:** You can have your students respond to individual or multiple Learning Concept Bricks by using Language Lines Sentence Frames (available at [www.PEPnonprofit.org](http://www.PEPnonprofit.org)). Language Line sentence frames can be used to help give students a framework to express the following essential comprehension skills when discussing the Concept Learning Bricks: *classifying and comparison and contrast*.

**Classifying:** Students can work together to sort the Learning Concept Bricks into groups that have shared characteristics and establish criteria for a classification group. Classifying Concept Learning Bricks develops students' ability to identify common features, improves their ability to handle and interpret information and enables them to retrieve information from their long term memories more easily. Classifying also encourages students to critically examine information. They construct categories and then test them. Through this process they have the opportunity to develop their own concepts. This then allows the students to gain an insight into the principles and structures of the concepts for themselves. In groups of two or more, have students classify the Concept Learning Bricks on the wall using the Language Line Sentence Frames specific for classification. Not only will your students work on a very difficult comprehension skill, but the Language Lines will provide a solid foundation for speaking more elaborate sentences.

**Comparison and Contrast:** The ability to break a concept into its similar and dissimilar characteristics allows students to understand (and often solve) complex problems by analyzing them in a simpler way. Teachers can either directly present similarities and differences of the Learning Concept Bricks, accompanied by deep discussion and inquiry, or simply ask students to identify similarities and differences of the Learning Concept Bricks on their own. Students can work together to discuss the similarities and differences between Learning Concept Bricks across the curriculum. The teacher can identify two Learning Concept Bricks on The Learning Wall and have the students talk to each other using the Language Line Sentence Frames about the similarities they see between the two concepts.

## What are some other ways to use The Learning Wall and Concept Learning Bricks?

**Entering the Classroom:** When students come into class, you can have the immediately review the entire Learning Wall (depending on which subject they are about to begin) while the teacher takes care of housekeeping needs. You can have your kids do this every time they walk into the room. There will be no confusion of what to do upon entering the room and the teacher can easily see which students are on task. Students can review until the teacher gives them the appropriate signal.

**Cursive Practice:** Give students a printout of the statements for the cards on the wall and have them copy them for homework. This allows a newer skill to be practiced while providing an additional pathway for the information to find its way into long term memory.

**CLOZE Activities:** For classwork/homework, have statements typed out and randomly replace key words with a blank line and have kids fill in the blanks with the appropriate academic terms.

**Upcoming Attractions:** Have Concept Learning Bricks which have not been taught posted on an “Upcoming Attractions” wall. Use these Concept Learning Bricks as a way of frontloading concepts by directing them to that wall and asking which card seems to match a definition given. They must get “X” amount of cards correct before going to recess. This is a great way to utilize instructional minutes that are often wasted right before recess or leaving for the day. The frontloading will make the introduction of the new Concept Learning Bricks a much faster and smoother process.

**Redesign Time:** Have students “redesign” a Concept Learning Brick on a piece of paper. This activity allows students to put the concept into their own visual conception, thus helping solidify their understanding of Concept Learning Brick. You can also have students help develop the gestures for the concept. This demonstrates comprehension when they can tell you what gesture they think would be good and prove why it works for the Concept Learning Brick. The “prove it” portion is the key to understanding.

**Reorder/Regroup:** Occasionally reorder or regroup the Concept Learning Bricks on the Learning Wall to keep them grouped properly. This helps keep the Learning Wall “fresh” and continually allows the students to review, not only the Concept Learning Bricks, but why they were regrouped and the rules that accompany the reasoning. It is suggest to not do this within two or three months of testing. You want the students to know the Learning Wall and where the bricks are located when it is covered.

**Conclusion:**

Concept Learning Bricks are foundational vocabulary terms and concepts that our students need to master before they can apply the actual concepts to other areas. They can (and should) be used in a variety of ways mentioned above, because the more exposure and contact with academic language and state content terms, the stronger the foundation our students will have. The Learning Wall takes the idea of a focus wall to a much different place. Teachers and students alike can use their classroom walls to create a timeline of concepts taught and learned though out the entire academic year.

The 3 – 5 ELA Concept Learning Bricks packet is organized alphabetically, with each concept explanation (concept, question, answer, gesture, and examples) and the Concept Learning Brick visual right behind the explanation.

## Aa

adjective, adverb, almanac, alliteration, antonyms, apostrophe, appendix, appositive, atlas, author, author's purpose, autobiography

## Bb

base word, bibliography, biography, body of a letter

## Cc

capitalized words, cause and effect, characters, chapter heading, chronological order, closing of a letter, colon, comma in a series, comparative adjective, comparison, complex sentence, compound sentence, compound word, conclusion, conflict, conjunction, contraction, contrast

## Dd

date of a letter, declarative, dependent clause, derivation, descriptive, dictionary, drama

## Ee

encyclopedia, exclamatory, expression

## Ff

fable, fact, fairy tale, fantasy, fiction, figurative language, first word of a sentence, five parts of a letter, folktale, foreshadowing, future tense

## Gg

genre, geographical name rule, glossary, greeting of a letter

## Hh

holiday name rule, homographs, homonyms, homophones, hyperbole,

## Ii

idiom, illustrator, imagery, imperative, independent clause, index, inference, interrogative



Jj

Kk

Ll

lay – lie, legend, literal meaning

Mm

metaphor, month rule, myth

Nn

names of people rule, narrator,  
non-fiction, noun

Oo

onomatopoeia, opinion

Pp

paragraph, participial, passage,  
past tense, personification,  
phrase, plot, plural noun, plural  
possessive noun poetry,  
possessive noun, predicate,  
prediction, prefix, prefix bi-,  
prefix mis-, prefix pre-, prefix re-,  
prefix un-, preposition,  
prepositional phrase, present  
tense, pronoun, propaganda,  
proper noun, proposition

Qq

quotation marks

Rr

raise/rise, reference books,  
resolution, riddle, rise/raise

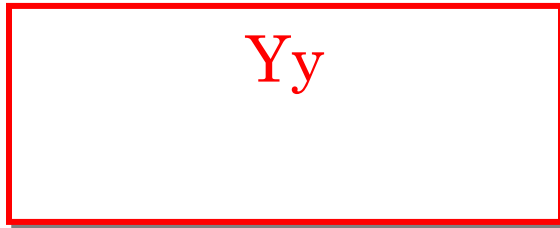
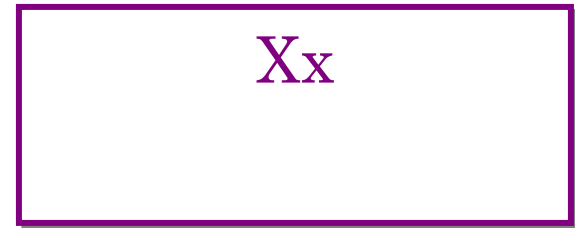
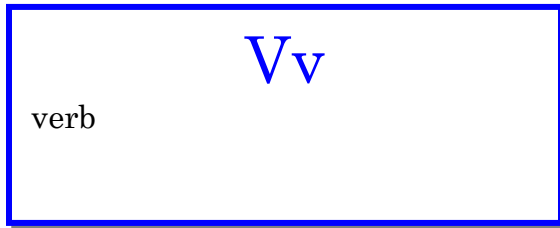
Ss

set/sit, signature, simile, simple  
sentence, sit/set, stanza, subject,  
suffix, summarize, superlative  
adjective, syllabication,  
symbolism, synonyms,

Tt

table of contents, tall tale, their, there,  
thesaurus, they're, topic sentence

Uu



The rest of the packet is divided into smaller sections to make it easier to download ([www.PEPnonprofit.org](http://www.PEPnonprofit.org)). Each section contains a grouped set of academic terms in alphabetical order of the Concept Learning Brick backs and fronts.