Understanding Text Structure

READHistory Summer Institute

Week 1

Bill Lewis

The Essential Question

- How does instruction in text structure help students to comprehend written text, and what strategies are effective for understanding narrative text?

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard _____

  Students will _____

  1. using _____
  2. understanding _____
  3. integrating _____
  4. self-monitoring_____
  5. analyzing and evaluating_____

Please note these important words or phrases:

- Fieldmice
- Nuts and wheat
- Winter
- Napping
- Old stone wall
- Cold and hungry
- Sunrays and warmth
- Colors of the flowers
- Painted in the mind
- Poet

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard 2

  Students will construct, examine, and extend the meaning of literary, informative, and technical texts through listening, reading and viewing.

  1. using effective decoding and other word recognition strategies;
  2. understanding vocabulary, including literary devices;
  3. integrating prior knowledge with information from the text (written or oral);
  4. self-monitoring comprehension;
  5. analyzing and evaluating critically

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard 4
  - 2. respond to literary text and media using interpretive, critical, and evaluative processes by
  - a. making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, and author's purpose; c. interpreting the impact of authors' decisions such as word choice, style, content, and literary elements;

Understanding Text Structure

- "Students who are taught to identify the structure of expository and narrative text have been found to have better comprehension than students who have not received such instruction."

  Taylor, 1992

Why Teach It?

How it Helps:

1. Connects incoming information with what students already know.
2. Increases reading speed.
3. Helps students retain information for application.

Narrative Text Structure

- "A key to comprehending narrative is a sense of plot, theme, characters, and events, and how they relate….Teaching students to attend to the organization of a well-formed story…improves not only comprehension but also the quality and creativity of stories the students compose."

  Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1983

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard 4: Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
  1. connect their own **experience** to those of literary characters by
  - a. explaining the reasons for a character's actions;
  - d. identifying with characters based on a clear understanding of motivation and situation;

Teaching Narrative Text Structure: Five Suggestions for Working with The Story Grammar

1. Have students identify key aspects of setting.

   -Encourage students to find words and phrases that signal the time and place a story occurs.

   -Read the beginnings of stories aloud noting the clues for time and place but also point out where authors may deliberately obscure the story's setting.

2. Have students identify characters.

- Stop and list main and minor characters, noting physical and personality traits.
- Help students to understand how authors reveal personality traits through character thoughts, behavior or language.
- Encourage students to identify the main characters' goals and how these goals guide the story.

3. Help students to identify the obstacles in the way of character goals.

- List obstacles, and guide students in conversations about the possible ways of overcoming obstacles. This allows for better understanding of a story and for the literature to become a “moral laboratory” for students to experiment with their own decision making.

4. Give students an understanding of plot.

- Make sure to encourage students to look for the information included in the introduction or exposition of a story: Time, place, circumstances, main characters.
- Encourage them to look for the series of incidents where main characters go about achieving goals.
- Call attention to how the goals are achieved or not achieved in the conclusion, and the high point of the action.
- For students who have trouble, encourage them to make time lines of the narrative structure.

The Big Idea….

- Make sure to monitor comprehension by pausing and asking key questions to help students reflect on all parts of the story grammar.
  - Setting
  - Characters/Goals
  - Attempts and Consequences
  - Character and student responses to consequences

How to Reveal Story Grammar to Students

- Key Questions
- Story Maps
- Story Grammar Graphic Organizers
- Probable Passages/ Story Impressions
- “Save the Last Word for Me”

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard 4: Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.

  4. apply knowledge gained from literature as a basis for understanding self and society by

  a. using literature as a resource for shaping decisions;
  b. using literature as a resource for understanding social and political issues.

WARNING: STATE STANDARDS AHEAD!

- English Language Arts Standard 4: Students will use literary knowledge accessed through print and visual media to connect self to society and culture.
  3. demonstrate an appreciation for a broad range of culturally diverse literary texts and media created by historical, modern, and contemporary authors through
     a. responding to literary texts and media representing the diversity of American cultural heritage inclusive of ages, genders, nationalities, races, religions, and disabilities;

Expository Text Structure

Why Teach It?

- Students must have knowledge of how information is organized and presented through different expository text structure. Understanding text structures provides a way of identifying which information is most important and which presents supporting details. (vanDijk and Kintsch, 1983)

Why Teach It?

- Students gain more information from expository text than from other media when the text is assigned as a primary source of information and the teacher provides instruction in how to comprehend it.

(Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin, 1990)

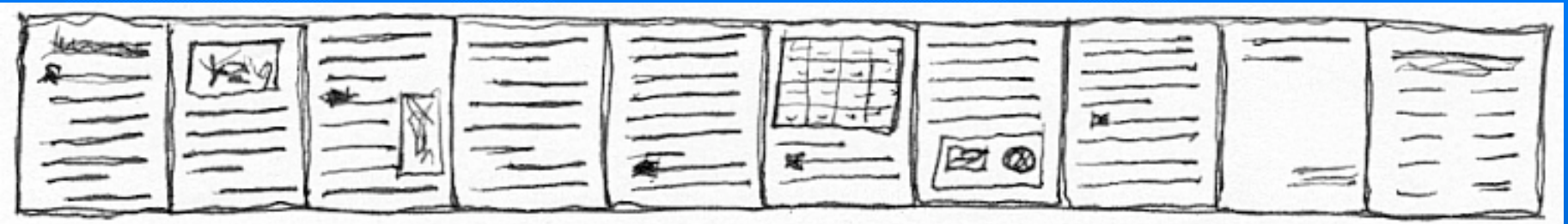
"(S)tudies in the 1980s and 1990s have suggested that there is little reading comprehension instruction in schools.... We desperately need to understand why many teachers do not focus directly on comprehension strategies and routines, and we need to learn more about how to help teachers provide good comprehension instruction."

"The early work documented the significance of attention to text structure, pointing out that students who are…more knowledgeable about text structure recall more textual information than those less knowledgeable.... It also suggested that knowledge is not enough; students must actually follow the text's structure in building their recall in order for the effect to be realized; not surprisingly, more good than poor readers are inclined to do so."

(Duke, Nell and Pearson)

Textmapping

Turns this…….



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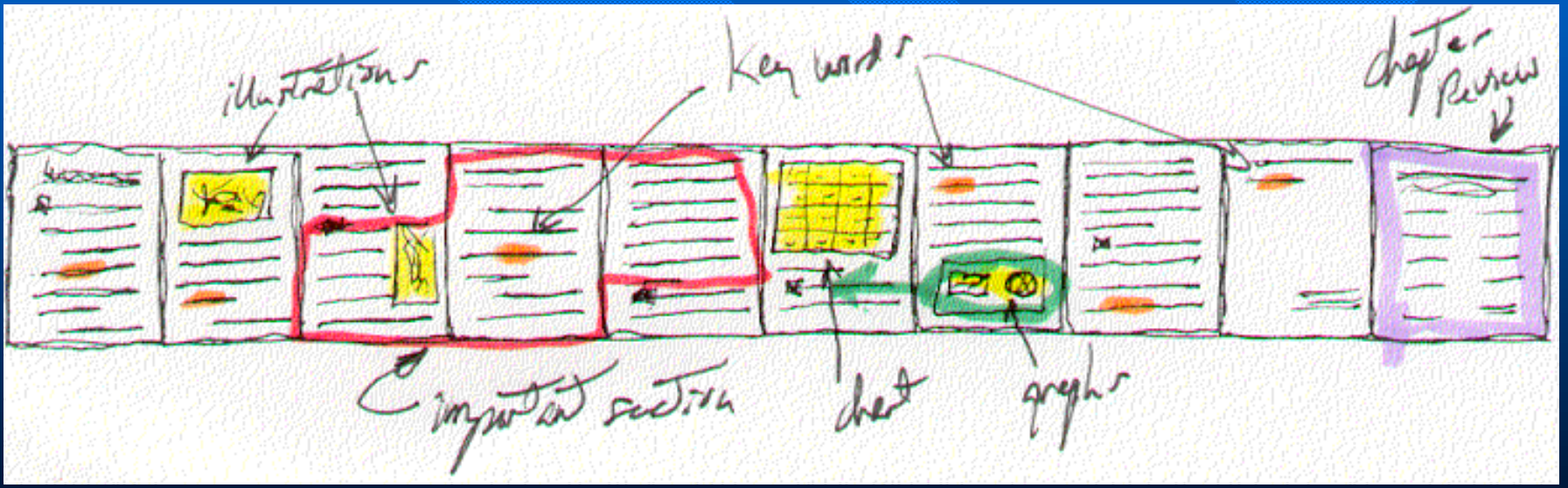

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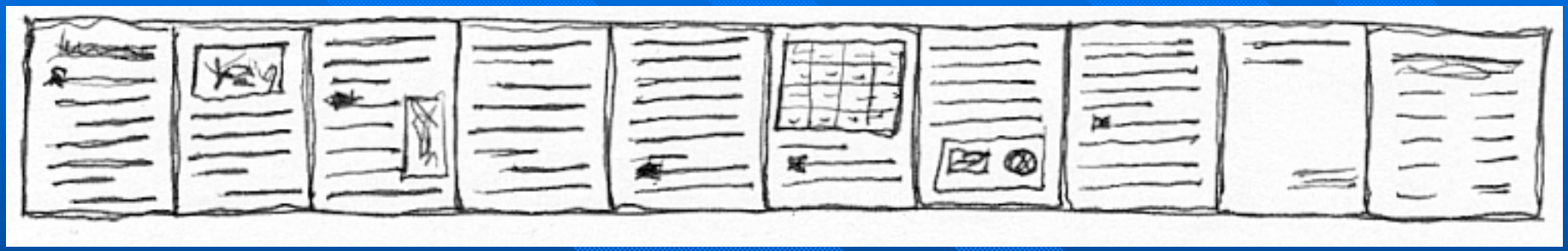
The Process

- First…..make your scrolls.



"What's the use of having a midget if he isn't going to do chores?!" –Henry Fonda in *On Golden Pond.*

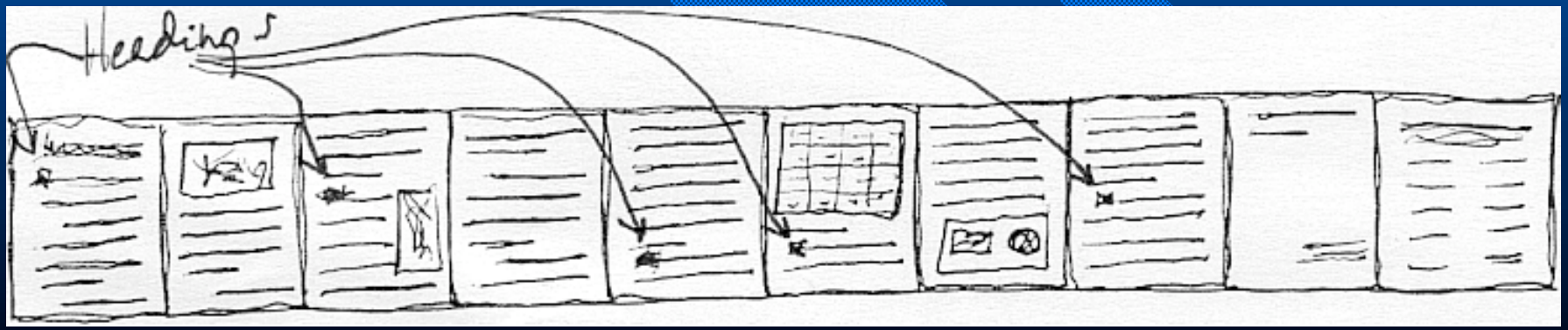
Utilize students to perform the one "heavy lifting" aspect of this strategy.

Process

- Second….determine your goal for reading.
  - Intro. and preview new content.
  - Model reading and study strategies.
  - Review content previously covered.
  - Test your students' knowledge of what they read.

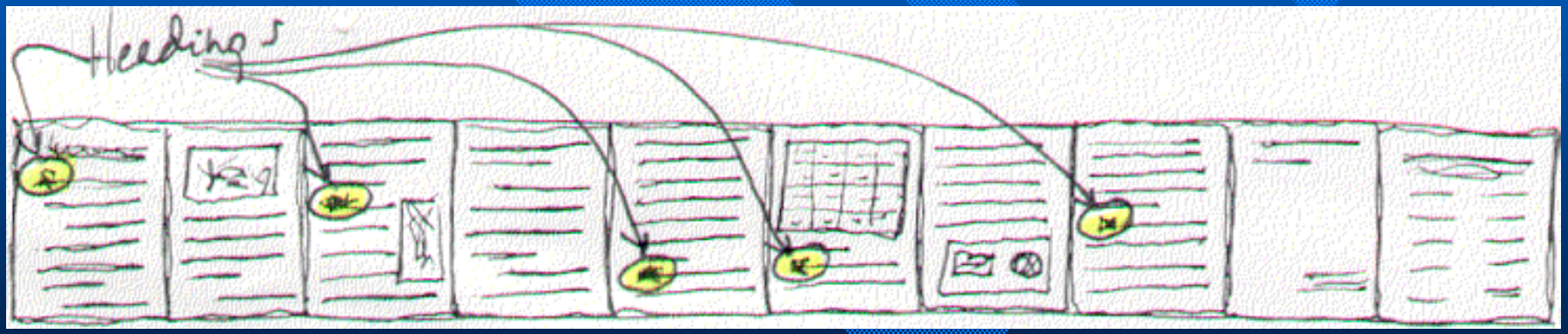
Process

– Next, identify text features that are important to your reading goal. These features are:
-Headings and Subheadings
-Illustrations
-Graphs
-Bold faced areas



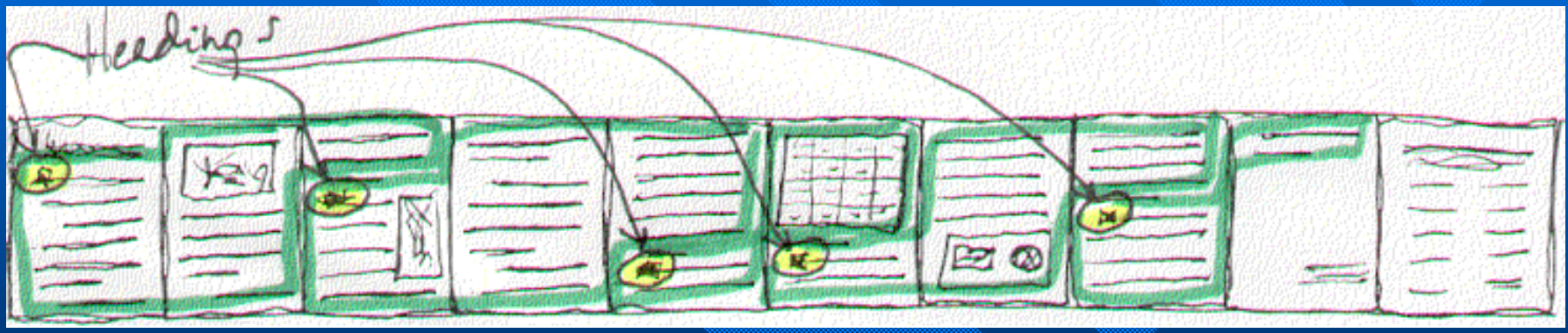
Process

- Mark these features- Particularly the headings and subheadings.

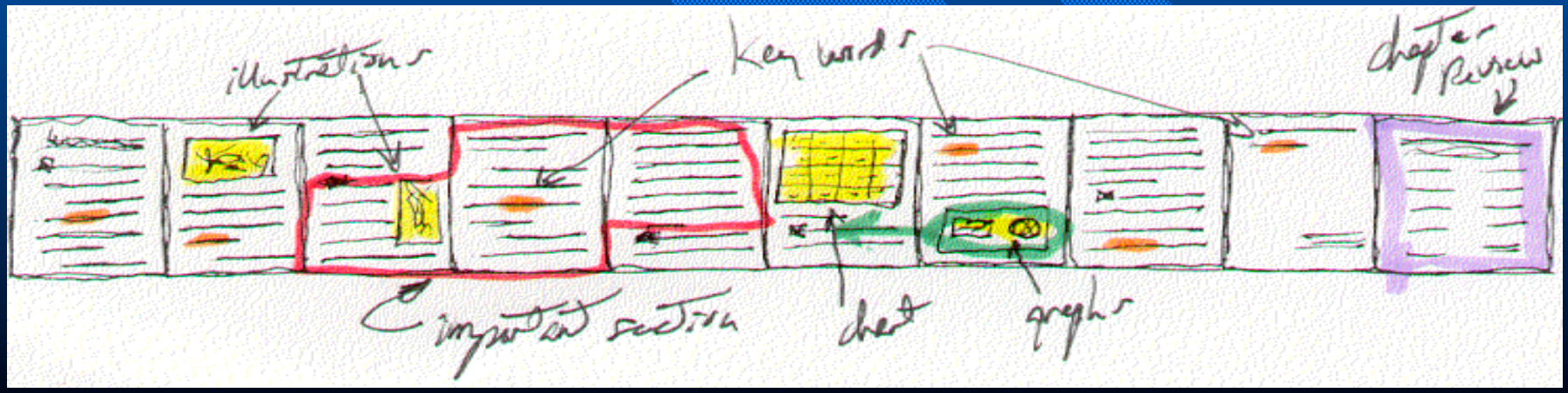


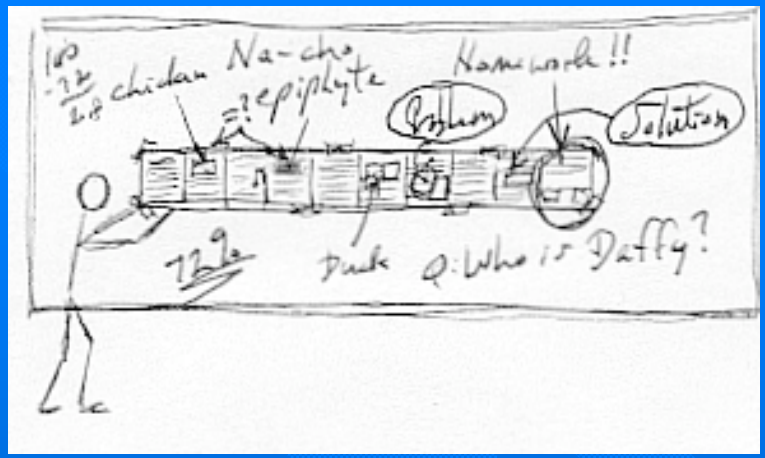
Process

- Mark the “areal boundaries” of each of these text sections.



- Then have students mark other sections of the text
  - Identify what parts of written text are related to graphs, illustrations, photos etc.
  - Write questions,circle key words and ideas,
  - Have students express delight by marking ideas that are interesting…i.e. : “Wow!”
  - Mark transition words- Thus, consequently, however, etc.





- After mapping, have students compare/contrast with other groups or individuals.
- Discuss the individual textmaps as a whole group with a "master" map on the board. Create graphic organizer based on the information.

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The Benefits of Text Mapping

- It is explicit-allowing teachers to model comprehension strategies to kids.
- Teaches students to be strategic readers-gives them a view of the whole text and the relationships between structure, organization, and meaning.
- Encourages active reading.
- A textmap is a visual record of an individual's thought process.
- Accommodates a wide range of learning styles and effective for students with LD or ADD

Review of the Activity

- Create and hand out the scrolls.
- Identify the text features.
- Mark headings and subheadings.
- Mark areal boundaries.
- Mark rest of text and how the elements relate.
- Review as a class.

Think about how to use this strategy with other comprehension strategies

- KWL's
- DRTA's
- SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review)

SQ3R

- Survey what you are about to read…

  -Think about the title

  -Glance at the headings and skim first sentences

  -Look at illustrations

  -Read the first paragraph

  -Read the last paragraph

SQ3R

- Question.

  -Turn the title into a question, the purpose for reading (essential question for lesson).

  -Write down questions.

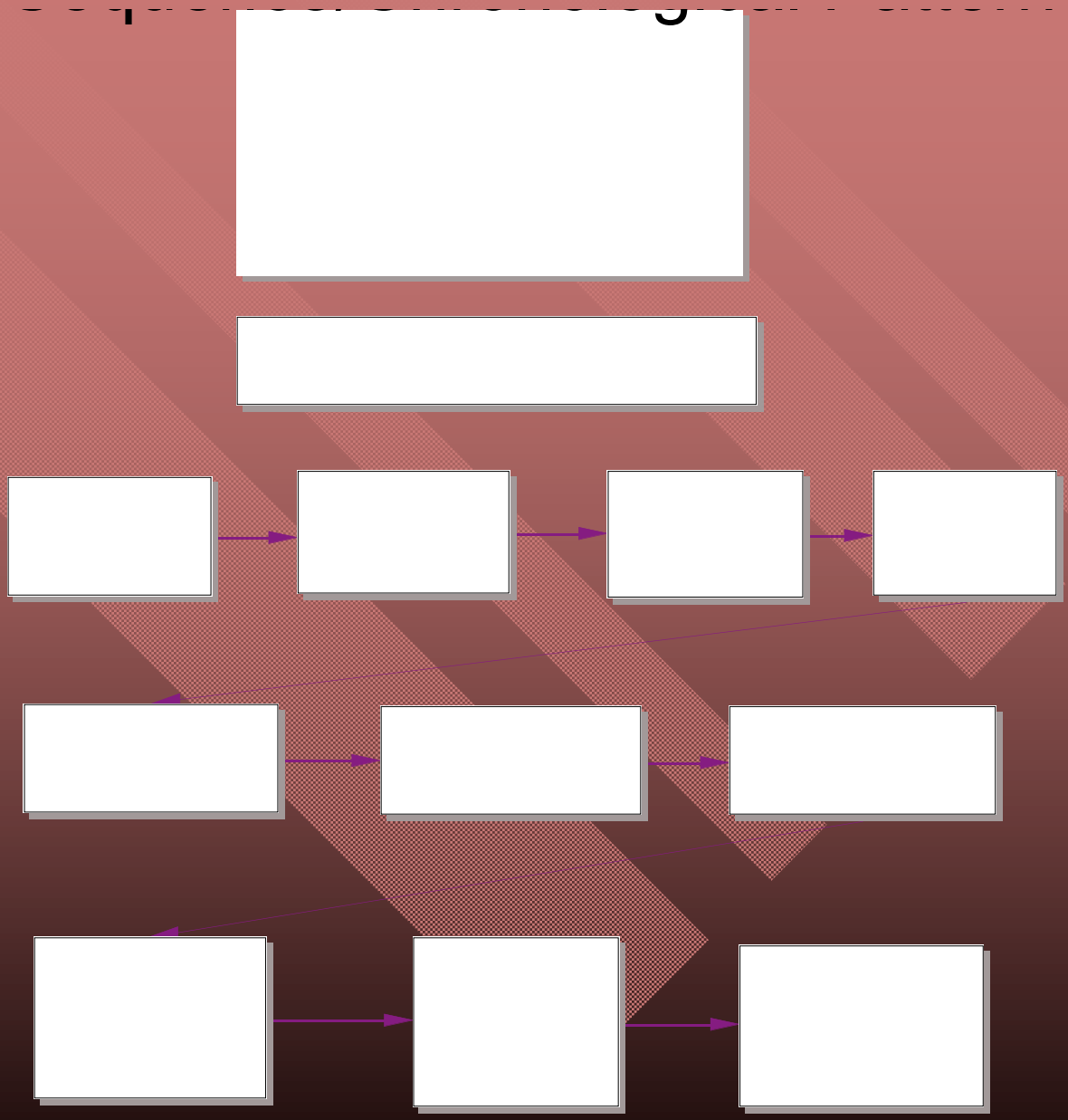
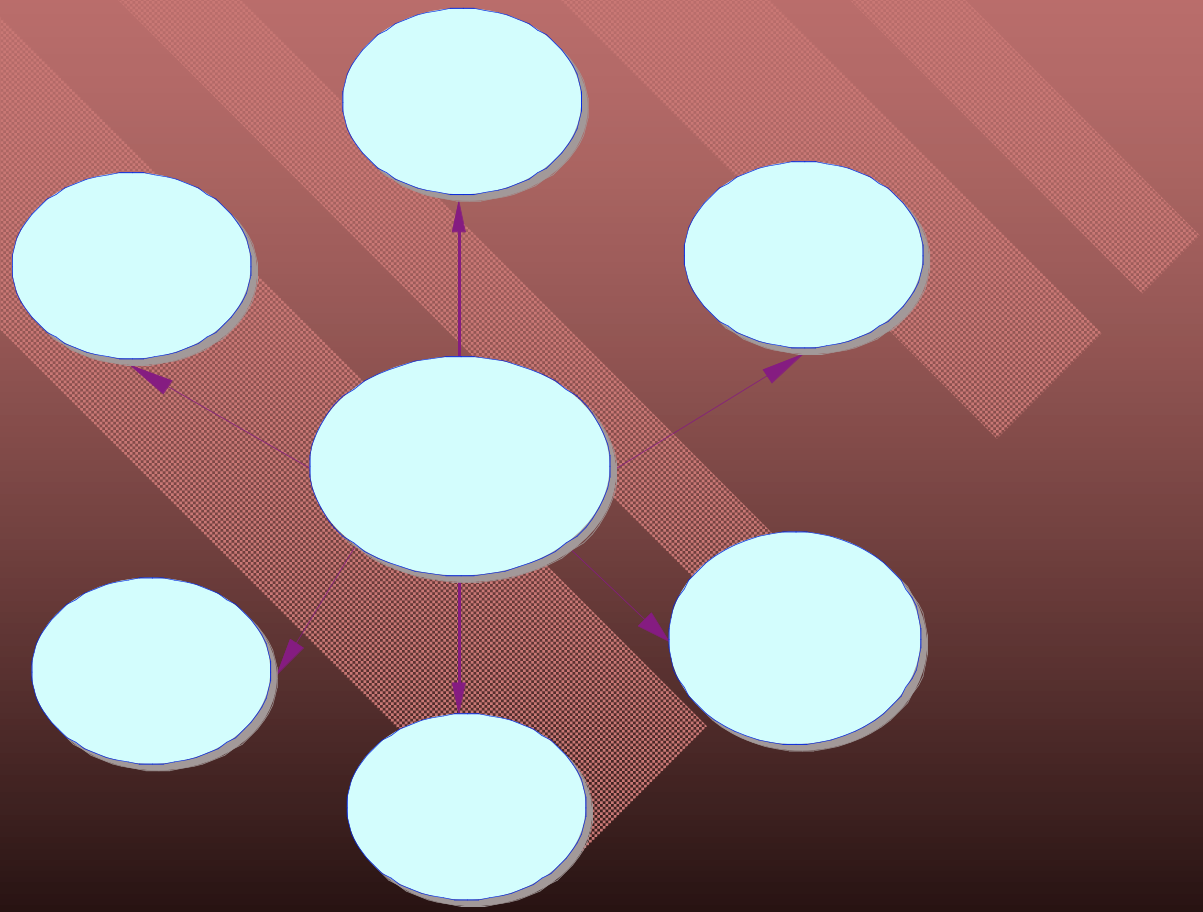
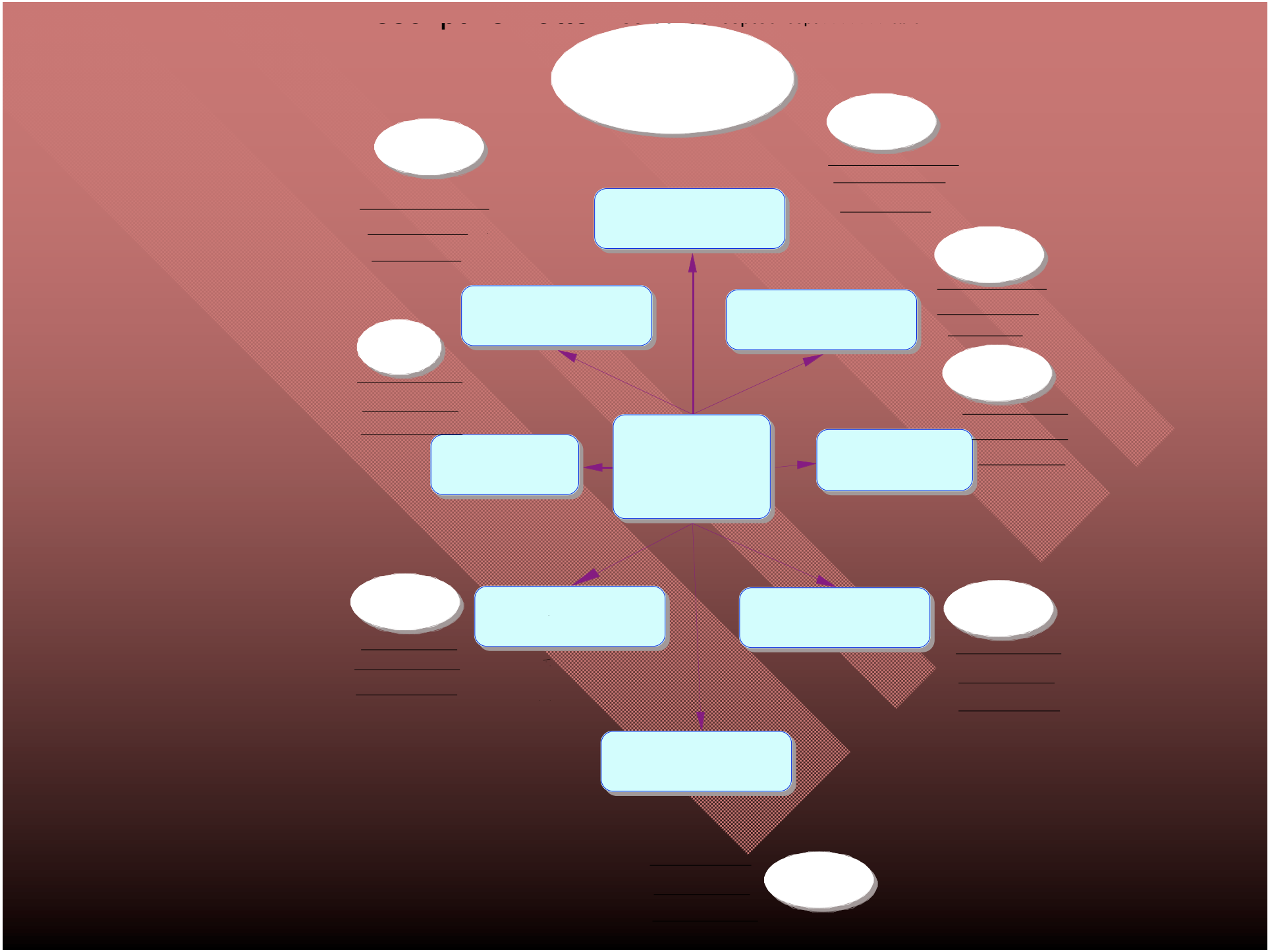
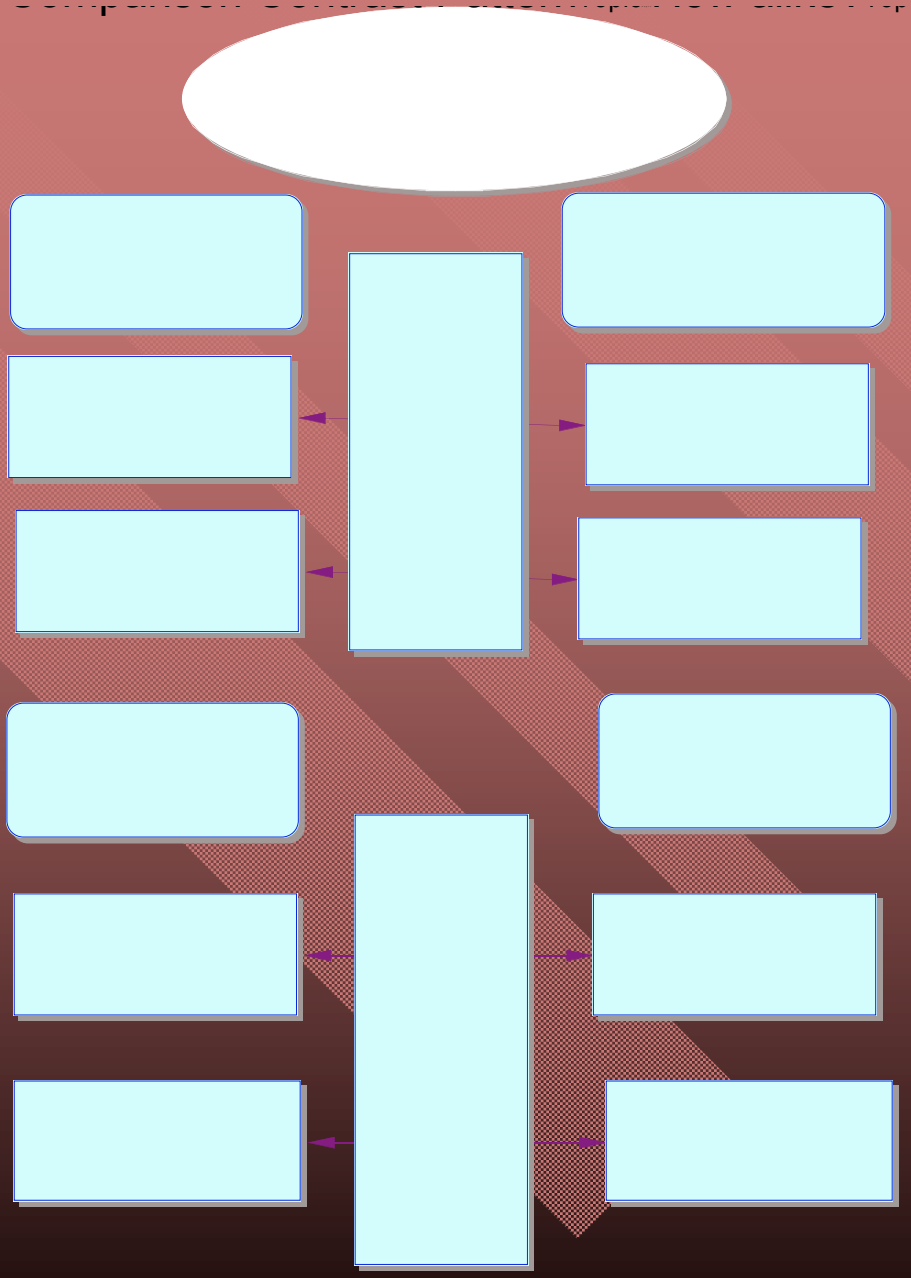
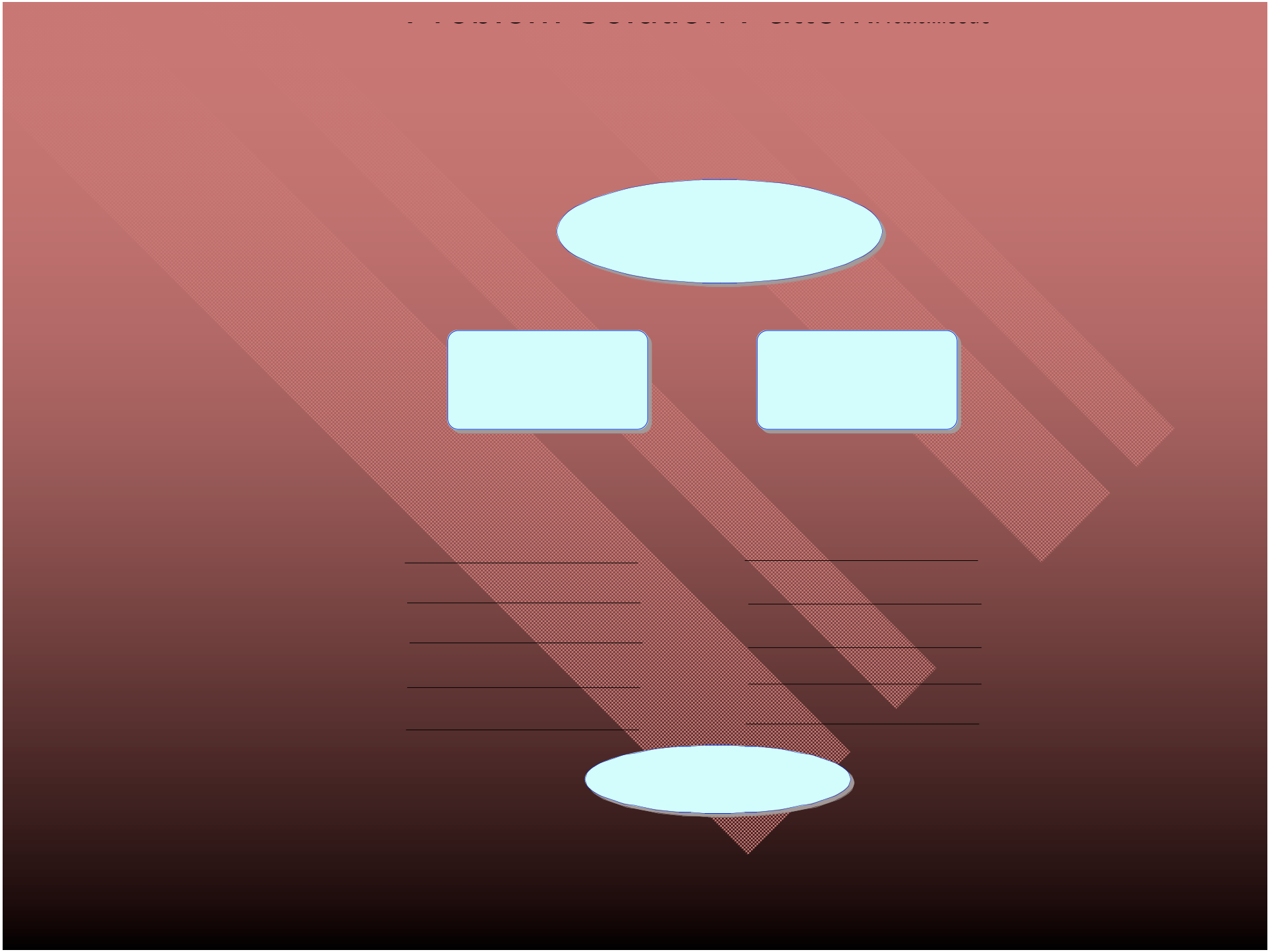
  -Turn headings into questions.

  -Turn subheadings, illustrations, graphics into questions.

  -Write down unfamiliar vocabulary.

SQ3R

- Read actively- Searching for answers to questions, reacting to passages, etc.
- Recite- Look away from the answers and the book to recall what was read, recite answers to questions, reread for questions not answered.
- Review- Answer the purpose question, organize information, summarize with a graphic organizer, discussion, writing

Think about how to address text structure of information text

- Sequence Pattern
- Listing Pattern
- Descriptive Pattern
- Comparison-Contrast Pattern
- Cause-Effect Pattern
- Problem-Solution Pattern