Science Notebook Organization

Students use organizational elements to streamline access to the contents of their notebook over time to support their learning. As teachers consider what elements of a science notebook are most appropriate to meet their student learning goals in science, they will need to exercise their own professional judgment as to which organizational elements support those goals. Formats for each organizational element vary depending on grade level and purpose, but can include some of the following components:

Title Page or Notebook Cover
Recording this information enhances student understanding of common text features that support the development of literacy skills. Common elements on a title page or notebook cover may include:
- Student name
- School
- Teacher name
- Class

Table of Contents
A table of contents allows a student to easily retrieve work from previous lessons within the unit. Teachers can create a template for students to fill in (e.g. blank template or transparency, list of activities with place to enter page number and date). Alternatively students can create the table of contents themselves. Common elements of a table of contents may include:
- Teacher creates an empty template for students to fill in
- Completely created by student
- Done together with student input on chart paper or off transparency
- Done ahead by teacher and student just adds page numbers and date
- Teacher does whole thing

Organization of Individual Pages
These features allow students to organize their work and more efficiently access learning from prior activities or lessons. These features also assist the teachers in assessing student understanding. Common organizational features include:
- Number on each page
- Headings
- Focus questions
- Activity title
- Date each page
- Time (optional)
- Page division (due to specific content needs)
- Sections
- Pockets

Glossary
Vocabulary words acquired while engaged in a hands-on lesson contribute to the development of scientific literacy. A glossary is one approach to building understanding of scientific terminology, while also advancing learning of text features. Recording and highlighting new vocabulary as the words are encountered in the unit is an alternative to the use of a glossary. Some strategies for constructing glossaries include:
- Create and use a separate science glossary notebook
- Use a student created spelling or writing dictionary
- Teacher gives words, students adds own picture and definition
- Copied glossary words from teacher guide and students just highlight
- Students use real world dictionaries rather than make glossaries
- Teacher creates glossary based on input from children
- Create word wall as class, students add these words to word bank in their notebooks
- May include scientific terminology and/or words that are important to know within the context of a test question or activity (e.g. compare, contrast, formation)