Strategic Organization

Strategically organizing different steps within a list can alleviate working memory demands by reducing the amount of attention switching required, allowing for greater focus across related items. In the two examples below, notice the difference in the organization of report elements to facilitate student self-revisions for a history report.

BEFORE

Written Report Checklist

Report Elements	Included
Do I clearly introduce the topic or issue and distinguish between different claims or explanations?	
Do I provide evidence to support each claim presented from credible sources that are cited?	
Do I have an interesting introduction?	
Do I use clear reasoning?	
Do I use a formal style (language, grammar) of writing?	
Do I provide a conclusion that supports the argument presented?	
Are the ideas presented logically sequenced?	
Are there any typos or misspelled words?	
Do I cite at least 3 facts, definitions, or quotations to develop the topic or claims?	
Do I provide cohesive paragraph transitions?	
Is the paper at least 5 pages in length?	

AFTER

Written Report Checklist

Report Elements	Included
Across the paper:	
Are there any typos or misspelled words?	
Do I use a formal style (language, grammar) of writing?	
Is the paper at least 5 pages in length?	
Do I provide cohesive paragraph transitions?	
Within the text:	
Do I have an interesting introduction?	
Do I cite at least 3 facts, definitions, or quotations to develop the topic or claims?	
Do I provide evidence to support each claim presented from credible sources that are cited?	
Do I provide a conclusion that supports the argument presented?	
Overall Expression of ideas:	
Do I clearly introduce the topic or issue and distinguish between the different claims or explanations?	
Are the ideas presented logically sequenced?	
Do I use clear reasoning?	