Collaborative Planning Practices

Within the collaborative planning structure, there are three practices: unit internalization, lesson preparation, and student work analysis. Below, you'll find key leader actions to support each. Whether you're implementing these practices from scratch or looking to improve what you've already started, this document will help ensure that you and your team—and ultimately students—get the most out of collaborative planning.

*If you've landed here without taking a look at the current state of the conditions for your collaborative planning structure, we **highly recommend** using these resources to understand your strengths and areas for improvement. It's tempting to focus solely on the practices, but without the right conditions in place, they'll fall flat, and you won't see their full benefit for teacher practice or student outcomes.*

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Jump to a practice:

1. **Unit internalization**
2. **Lesson preparation**
3. **Student work analysis**

Unit Internalization

Definition of the practice

Unit internalization is the process by which teachers study a curriculum unit to deeply understand what students are expected to learn (the "big ideas"), how students will be assessed, and the arc of learning over the course of the unit. To address unfinished learning, teachers make adjustments to the timing of the unit and intentionally use pedagogical strategies to provide targeted support to specific students.

Key leader actions

The key actions below are designed to help strengthen schools' unit internalization practice. Completing the **Unit Internalization Rubric** before you dig into the key actions can be an effective way to gather baseline data about your strengths and areas for growth and help monitor your progress as you improve the practice.

1. Review the curricular materials for each content area

- For each grade level and content area that will be engaging in unit internalization, familiarize yourself with the units of the respective curricular materials.
- Consider the aspects of the units' structures that feel most valuable to explore together as a community.
- Review the unit internalization materials provided in your curriculum.

2. Adopt and refine unit internalization protocol

- Center unfinished learning in the finalized protocol by considering priority content and pedagogical strategies (see the **Addressing Unfinished Learning Toolkit** for additional guidance).
- Consider schoolwide instructional improvement needs, teacher needs, the structure of your materials, and time constraints to determine the aspects of unit internalization that teachers will do collaboratively vs. independently.
  - **Sample ELA module/unit internalization protocol**
  - **Sample math module/unit internalization protocol**
  - **Sample math unit internalization meeting agenda**

3. Provide clarity around pre-work expectations

- Determine what pre-work is reasonable based on your team's capacity and its support needs.
- Discuss and agree on concrete deadlines for pre-work so that all teachers and facilitators can meaningfully engage when meeting; revisit those proposed timelines with teachers as needed.

- Based on decisions made around what work will be done collaboratively vs. independently, provide clear expectations for what teachers/facilitators should complete in advance of unit internalization meetings (e.g., read the text[s], complete end-of-unit assessments).
- Provide a completed example of the quality and depth that you are expecting from the pre-work to ensure that teachers and facilitators are clear on expectations (e.g,. **completed ELA unit internalization, pp. 6–10**).

4. Model being a lead learner

- Complete the same pre-work and unit internalization process as participants and facilitators for all meetings you attend.
- Participate actively in the collaborative discussion to model vulnerability and risk taking.

5. Monitor effectiveness

- Review artifacts (e.g., examples of teachers' unit internalization annotations/materials).
- Monitor impact on instruction by observing classrooms.
- Monitor impact on student performance by analyzing student-level data within your materials (see the **student work analysis section of this document** for additional guidance).
- Continue to monitor the conditions for the collaborative planning structure (e.g., **Collaborative Planning: Teacher Survey**; **Collaborative Planning: Facilitator Survey**); respond to data and feedback by making ongoing adjustments to the process as appropriate.
- Monitor progress toward intended outcomes for unit internalization (e.g., **Unit Internalization Rubric**).

Contextual considerations

The above actions will help schools strengthen their unit internalization practice; however, we know that there isn't a one-size-fits-all way to approach improving the practice. When planning how best to take the key actions above, it's useful to consider the particular context of your school. The guiding questions below can help you think through how you might adjust actions to meet your team's specific needs:

- What is the culture of affirming relationships (see the affirmation table in the collaborative planning action plan)? Are there ways you can build that into your protocols and practices more clearly?
- What is the team's familiarity with unit internalization as a practice? Has it been successful or challenging in the past? How will that impact your current work?
- What is the team's knowledge of grade-level standards? Is there more you need to support to ensure that unit internalization builds content knowledge for teachers and leaders?
- What is the team's knowledge of the curriculum? Is there any foundational training you need to add to the plan?
- What are the key moments where you want to gather input and investment? What data do you want to collect to support these processes?

Lesson Preparation

Defining the practice

Lesson preparation is the process by which teachers study an upcoming lesson(s) to deeply understand what students are expected to learn and how students will be assessed. Teachers make adjustments to the lesson and use pedagogical content strategies to support the needs of specific students with a focus on unfinished learning.

Taking key actions

The key actions below are designed to help strengthen schools' lesson preparation practice. Completing the **Lesson Preparation Rubric** before you dig into the key actions can be an effective way to gather baseline data about your strengths and areas for growth and help monitor your progress as you improve the practice.

1. Review the curricular materials for each content area

- For each grade level and content area that will be engaging in lesson preparation, familiarize yourself with the lesson structure of the respective curricular materials.
- Consider the aspects of the lessons' structures that feel most valuable to explore together as a community.
- Review the lesson preparation materials provided in your curriculum.

2. Adopt and refine lesson preparation protocol

- Center unfinished learning in the finalized protocol by considering priority content and pedagogical strategies (see the **Addressing Unfinished Learning Toolkit** for additional guidance).
- Consider schoolwide instructional improvement needs, teacher needs, the structure of your materials, and time constraints to determine the aspects of lesson preparation that teachers will do collaboratively vs. independently (e.g., **sample ELA lesson preparation protocol**, **sample math lesson preparation protocol**).

3. Provide clarity around pre-work expectations

- Determine what pre-work is reasonable based on your team's capacity and its support needs.
- Discuss and agree on concrete deadlines for pre-work so that all teachers and facilitators can meaningfully engage when meeting; revisit those proposed timelines with teachers as needed.
- Based on decisions made around what work will be done collaboratively vs. independently, provide clear expectations for what teachers/facilitators should have done in advance of lesson preparation meetings (e.g., read the text[s], complete exit tickets).

- Provide a completed example of the quality and depth that you are expecting from the pre-work to ensure that teachers and facilitators are clear on expectations (e.g., **completed ELA lesson preparation, pp. 11–17**).

4. Model being a lead learner

- Complete the same pre-work and lesson preparation process as participants and facilitators for all meetings you attend.
- Participate actively in the collaborative discussion to model vulnerability and risk taking.

5. Monitor effectiveness

- Review artifacts (e.g., examples of teachers' lesson preparation annotations/materials).
- Monitor impact on instruction by observing classrooms.
- Monitor impact on student performance by analyzing student-level data (see the **student work analysis section of this document** for additional guidance).
- Continue to monitor the conditions for the collaborative planning structure (e.g., **Collaborative Planning: Teacher Survey**; **Collaborative Planning: Facilitator Survey**; respond to data and feedback by making ongoing adjustments to the process as appropriate.
- Monitor progress toward intended outcomes for lesson preparation (e.g., **Lesson Preparation Rubric**).

Contextual considerations

The above actions will help schools strengthen their lesson preparation practice; however, we know that there isn't a one-size-fits-all way to approach improving the practice. When planning how best to take the key actions above, it's useful to consider the particular context of your school. The guiding questions below can help you think through how you might adjust actions to meet your team's specific needs:

- What is the culture of affirming relationships (see the affirmation table in the collaborative planning action plan)? Are there ways you can build that into your protocols and practices more clearly?
- What is the team's familiarity with lesson preparation as a practice? Has it been successful or challenging in the past? How will that impact your current work?
- What is the team's knowledge of grade-level standards? Is there more you need to support to ensure that lesson preparation builds content knowledge for teachers and leaders?
- What is the team's knowledge of the curriculum? Is there any foundational training you need to add to the plan?
- What are the key moments where you want to gather input and investment? What data do you want to collect to support these processes?

Student Work Analysis

Defining the practice

Student work analysis is the process of analyzing student work for two purposes: 1) to determine if the task is aligned to grade-level standards and 2) to inform instructional next steps based on the depth of student learning. By examining the work itself, teachers gain insight about what students understand in order to build off their knowledge in future lessons. This asset-based approach is also valuable for school leaders because, unlike standardized test results that take weeks to months to receive, it provides an immediate, timely view into student learning that can help inform instructional priorities and school improvement efforts.

Taking key actions

The key actions below are designed to help strengthen schools' student work analysis practice. Completing the **Student Work Analysis Rubric** before you dig into the key actions can be an effective way to gather baseline data about your strengths and areas for growth and help monitor your progress as you improve the practice.

1. Decide the student work you'll prioritize for analysis

- Consider data sources that are:
  - embedded in the curriculum;
  - common across grade levels or content areas;
  - centered on students who need the most support with unfinished learning;
  - most actionable for teachers, such as daily exit tickets that match the lesson and/or unit assessments; and
  - feasible to analyze within the time constraints of the collaborative planning time.
- Choose the type of student work that teams will, at least initially, analyze (see **Student Work Analysis: Sample Data Sources** for guidance that can help inform this decision).

2. Adopt and refine a student work analysis protocol

- Review the student work analysis materials provided by your curriculum.
- Check materials for bias and asset-based framing; adjust as needed (see **Asset-Based Student Work Analysis** for additional guidance).
- Name the intended purpose(s) of student work analysis (e.g., to inform instructional decisions, to determine alignment to standards); revisit your instructional vision to help determine the purpose of this practice.
- Decide how teachers will identify and prioritize focus students (i.e., students who need the greatest support to access the content being taught relative to their classmates).
- Consider schoolwide instructional improvement needs, teacher needs, and time constraints to determine the aspects of student work analysis that teachers will do collaboratively vs. independently.
- Adopt or refine a protocol (e.g., **Student Work Protocols**) that ensures:

- equitable data analysis (e.g., **6 Steps to Equitable Data Analysis**);
- meaningful teacher engagement in analysis within the constraints of the meeting time; and
- alignment with the stated intended outcome of this time.

3. Provide clarity around pre-work expectations

- Determine what pre-work is reasonable based on your team's capacity and its support needs.
- Discuss and agree on concrete deadlines for pre-work so that all teachers and facilitators can meaningfully engage when meeting; revisit those proposed timelines with teachers as needed.
- Based on decisions made around what work will be done collaboratively vs. independently, provide clear expectations for what teachers/facilitators should have done in advance of student work analysis meetings (e.g., graded exit tickets, identified initial trends in student work).
- Provide a completed example of the quality and depth you are expecting from the pre-work to ensure that teachers and facilitators are clear on expectations.

4. Model being a lead learner

- Complete the same pre-work and student work analysis process as participants and facilitators for all meetings you attend.
- Participate actively in the collaborative discussion to model vulnerability and risk taking.

5. Monitor effectiveness

- Review artifacts (e.g., teachers' pre-work, observations of analysis conversations).
- Monitor impact on instruction by observing classroom instruction.
- Continue to monitor the conditions for the collaborative planning structure (e.g., **Collaborative Planning: Teacher Survey**; **Collaborative Planning: Facilitator Survey**); respond to data and feedback by making ongoing adjustments to the process as appropriate.
- Monitor progress toward intended outcomes for student work analysis (e.g., **Student Work Analysis Rubric**).

Contextual considerations

The above actions will help schools strengthen their student work analysis practice; however, we know that there isn't a one-size-fits-all way to approach improving the practice. When planning how best to take the key actions above, it's useful to consider the particular context of your school. The guiding questions below can help you think through how you might adjust actions to meet your team's specific needs:

- What is the culture of affirming relationships (see the affirmation table in the collaborative planning action plan)? Are there ways you can build that into your protocols and practices more clearly?
- To what degree have you built a culture to ensure that all conversations are student-centered, productive, asset-based, and equitable? Are there ways you can build that into your protocols and practices more clearly?

- What is the culture of discussing learning and data in your school? How do teachers and leaders use data to inform decision making? How might that context impact student work analysis?
- What is the team's familiarity with student work analysis as a practice? Has it been successful or challenging in the past? How will that impact your current work?
- What is the team's knowledge of grade-level standards? Is there more you need to support to ensure that student work analysis builds content knowledge for teachers and leaders?
- What is the team's knowledge of the curriculum? Is there any foundational training you need to add to the plan?
- What are the key moments where you want to gather input and investment? What data do you want to collect to support these processes?