

Tool 1: Teacher and Student Collaboration Design and Planning Grades K-12

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TOOL 1:

Teacher and Student Collaboration Design and Planning Grades K-12

How can I design and plan high-quality and equitable collaborative opportunities?

How can I compose balanced, effective groups?

How can I use roles to best organize groups?

How do I plan for equity?



Why

This tool helps in the planning process. As the year progresses, you may choose to work with students on collaborative skills in steps. The BEST [Collaboration Rubric](#) identifies focus areas: “Reflecting on My Role in a Group,” “Equitably Sharing Ideas,” “Working Through Group Differences or Personal Challenges,” “Individual and Group Effort,” and “Evaluating Group Processes.” The Teacher Planning Tool for Collaboration Resources helps identify the tools that map to the focus areas you elect to focus on with students.

When?



Use the Teacher Design and Planning Tool for Collaboration Resources throughout the year as you progress through the collaboration skill focus areas.

Who?



The Teacher Planning Tool for Collaboration is ideal for teachers who are choosing a path for their students in developing collaboration skills. The tools align with the collaboration rubric focus area questions, the collaboration rubric dimension proficiency descriptors, and the student preparation and evidence collection tools.

How?



First, select a collaboration focus identified in the collaboration rubric. Using the focus area's color coding, find the match from the Collaboration Skills rubric listed in the second row of the table. For example, if you select “Reflecting on My Role in a Group” (color-coded blue) from the Collaboration Focus list, then the corresponding skill (rubric “proficient” level descriptor) is “work with my group to set group goals, analyze possible approaches to accomplish tasks, and assign individual roles that maximize group potential (grades 6-8).”

Once you've selected your focus and skills, you can shift to the additional resources available to guide your planning. You will find a crosswalk of the student preparation resources and the BEST Collaboration rubric dimensions in [Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#).



Tool 1.1A: Teacher Planning Tool for Collaboration (Grades 6–8)

Collaboration Focus Area

Noted on the BEST Collaboration Rubric

[Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#)



Reflecting on My Role in a Group

Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Dimension



Equitably Sharing Ideas

Communication Dimension



Working Through Group Differences or Personal Challenges

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Dimension



Individual and Group Effort

Contributing and Supporting Dimension



Evaluating Group Processes

Monitoring and Adapting

Collaboration Skills

Identified on the [BEST Collaboration Rubric \(Grades 6–8\)](#)



Work with my group to set group goals, analyze possible approaches to accomplish tasks, and assign individual roles that maximize group potential.



Work with my group to pose questions, seek feedback, and analyze different perspectives in order to modify a position or idea.



Work with my group to build consensus when determining tasks and roles needed to achieve group goals, based on each person's strengths or interests.



Support my group by working to complete individual and group tasks and evaluating the effectiveness of our approach or quality of our final product.



Work with my group to analyze challenges, identify the need for different strategies, and adjust our approach to meet individual or group needs.

TOOL 1.1A: TEACHER PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (GRADES 6-8)

**Scaffolds and
Resources to
Support High-Quality
Collaboration**
Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration

- [Tool 2.1: Collaboration Routines for Developing Collaborative Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.3: Debriefing Activities for Developing Collaborative Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Resources](#)

Tool 3: Supporting Student Groups During Collaboration

- [Tool 3.1: “Our Team Is Off—Track Now What?”](#)
- [Tool 3.2: Team Wellness Check-In Protocol](#)
- [Tool 3.3: The Learning with Others Student Experiences Survey](#)

Tool 4: Reflection and Assessment of Collaboration Skills for Teachers and Students

- [Tool 4.2: Collaboration Group Assessment Tool](#)

TEACHER NOTES



TOOL 1.1A: TEACHER PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (GRADES 6-8)

Evidence Collection Tools*Formative Assessment***[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3: Teacher Group Collaboration Assessment Tool](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)**Exit tickets****Conflict-Resolution Strategies**

[Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources](#) and the “[Tool 3.2: Team Wellness Check-in Protocol](#)” table include scenarios to practice conflict-resolution strategies and team wellness check-in.

**Summative/
Final/Cumulative
Reflection and
Assessment****[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3: Teacher Group Collaboration Assessment Tool](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Tool 1.1B: Teacher Planning Tool for Collaboration (3-5)

Collaboration Focus Area

Noted on the BEST Collaboration Rubric

[Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#)



Reflecting on My Role in a Group

Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Dimension



Equitably Sharing Ideas

Communication Dimension



Working Through Group Differences or Personal Challenges

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Dimension



Individual and Group Effort

Contributing and Supporting Dimension



Evaluating Group Processes

Monitoring and Adapting

Collaboration Skills

Identified on the [BEST Collaboration Rubric \(Grades 6-8\)](#)



Work with my group to set group goals, analyze possible approaches to accomplish tasks, and assign individual roles that maximize group potential.



Work with my group to pose questions, seek feedback, and analyze different perspectives in order to modify a position or idea.



Work with my group to build consensus when determining tasks and roles needed to achieve group goals, based on each person's strengths or interests.



Support my group by working to complete individual and group tasks and evaluating the effectiveness of our approach or quality of our final product.



Work with my group to analyze challenges, identify the need for different strategies, and adjust our approach to meet individual or group needs.

TOOL 1.1B: TEACHER PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (GRADES 3-5)

**Scaffolds and
Resources to
Support High-Quality
Collaboration**
Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration

- [Tool 2.1: Collaboration Routines for Developing Collaborative Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.3: Debriefing Activities for Developing Collaborative Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Resources](#)

Tool 3: Supporting Student Groups During Collaboration

- [Tool 3.1: “Our Team Is Off-Track—Now What?”](#)
- [Tool 3.2: Team Wellness Check-In Protocol](#)
- [Tool 3.3: The Learning with Others Student Experiences Survey](#)

Tool 4: Reflection and Assessment of Collaboration Skills for Teachers and Students

- [Tool 4.2: Collaboration Group Assessment Tool](#)

TEACHER NOTES

TOOL 1.1B: TEACHER PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (GRADES 3-5)

Evidence Collection Tools*Formative Assessment***[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3: Teacher Group Collaboration Assessment Tool](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1 Post Collaboration Activity Student Self-Assessment](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)**Exit tickets****Conflict-Resolution Strategies**

[Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources](#) and the “[Our Team Is Off-Track—Now What?](#)” table include scenarios to practice conflict resolution strategies and [Tool 3.1: Team Wellness. Check-in Protocol](#)

**Summative/
Final/Cumulative
Reflection and
Assessment****[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3 Teacher Group Collaboration](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1 Post Collaboration Activity Student Self-Assessment & Pre-Assessment](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Tool 1.1C: Planning Tool for Collaboration (9-12)

Collaboration Focus Area

Noted on the BEST Collaboration Rubric

[Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#)



Reflecting on My Role in a Group

Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Dimension



Equitably Sharing Ideas

Communication Dimension



Working Through Group Differences or Personal Challenges

Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Dimension



Individual and Group Effort

Contributing and Supporting Dimension



Evaluating Group Processes

Monitoring and Adapting

Collaboration Skills

Identified on the [BEST Collaboration Rubric \(Grades 9-12\)](#)



Work with my group to set group goals, analyze possible approaches to accomplish tasks, and assign individual roles that maximize group potential.



Work with my group to pose questions, seek feedback, and analyze different perspectives in order to modify a position or idea.



Work with my group to build consensus when determining tasks and roles needed to achieve group goals, based on each person's strengths or interests.



Support my group by working to complete individual and group tasks and evaluating the effectiveness of our approach or quality of our final product.



Work with my group to analyze challenges, identify the need for different strategies, and adjust our approach to meet individual or group needs.

TOOL 1.1C: PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (9-12)

**Scaffolds and
Resources to
Support High-Quality
Collaboration****[Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#)**

- [Tool 2.1: Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication](#)
- [Tool 2.3: Debriefing Activities for Developing Collaborative Decision-Making and Resources](#)

[Tool 3: Supporting Students During Collaboration](#)**[Tool 4: Reflection and Assessment of Collaboration Skills for Teachers Tool 4.2](#)**

TEACHER NOTES



TOOL 1.1C: PLANNING TOOL FOR COLLABORATION (9-12)

Evidence Collection Tools*Formative Assessment***[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3: Teacher Group Collaboration](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1: Pre assessment Collaboration Activity Student Self-Assessment](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment](#)**Exit tickets****Conflict-Resolution Strategies**

[Tool 2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Tool 2.2 Resources](#) and the “[Our Team Is Off-Track, Tool 3.1](#)” table include scenarios to practice conflict resolution strategies and [team wellness check-in](#).

**Summative/
Final/Cumulative
Reflection and
Assessment****[Tool 4.5: Teacher Observations](#)**

- Skills listed, student names listed, room for observations

Teacher: [Tool 4.3: Teacher Group Collaboration](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.1: Pre assessment Collaboration Activity Student Self-Assessment](#)**Student:** [Tool 4.4: Student Self-Assessment](#)

Tool 1.2: Planning for Equity

Collaborative groups are not necessarily equitable. Group composition, culture, level of teacher support, and the nature of collaborative activities can thwart efforts to enable full access for all students. For instance, the Learning with Others study exploring racial-ethnic differences in experiences and outcomes associated with collaboration found that “Students in the all-Black focus groups reported lower perceived relevance of collaborative activities, more frequent experiences of exclusion and stereotyping and marginalization, and lower perceived support from teachers.”³

To address these inequities, the study’s authors suggest, teachers should “lean in a bit more” to ensure that all students feel that they are being adequately supported during collaborative group work. In addition, they suggest that teachers “take extra steps to gather feedback directly from Black students to ensure that their collaborative and classroom experiences are positive and reflect desired elements.”

Tool 1.3: Accessing Funds of Knowledge

When students collaborate with one another, they have an opportunity to hear perspectives outside their own. Student collaboration allows for all voices to be heard and the varied life experiences of each learner to be honored. Creating opportunities for students to share their personal background knowledge values their identities. Techniques for enhancing collaboration include these:

- Interpretive listening as opposed to evaluative listening
- Focusing on many possible responses instead of a single right answer
- Referencing what students share to build on it, thus constructing knowledge together
- Allowing for students to reference their lived experiences when addressing topics

Tool 1.4: Forming Groups

We discovered in our research that the composition of the team is important.

According to Toth and Sousa, teams may consist of two to five students, with the ideal number being four.⁴ Teachers should choose the team members and create heterogeneous teams. The BEST teachers discovered that for teams to move from being a loosely connected group to a high-functioning team, the length of time students work together is a factor. Groups become teams when they have time to practice the group protocols that build trust and the collaborative culture. Assigning teams for longer periods of time provides the opportunity to solidify the group process and time to engage in the reflection process enhancing metacognition and deepening the skills of self-awareness and monitoring and adapting.

For additional resources on forming groups, go to PBLWorks.org.

