

THE 15-DAY CHALLENGE

Simplify and Energize Your PLC at Work® Process



M A R I A N N I E L S E N
FOREWORD BY HEATHER FRIZIELLIE

Solution Tree | Press



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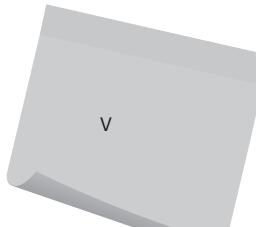
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About the Author



Maria Nielsen is an educational speaker and author who specializes in supporting teachers and administrators in the areas of professional learning communities (PLCs), response to intervention (RTI), school culture, curriculum design, the highly engaged classroom, and assessment systems. She works with state departments, colleges, districts, schools, and teacher teams across the United States. She has also presented internationally at the Shanghai PLC at Work® Institute in Shanghai, China. Her passion is helping schools build successful systems to ensure high levels of student learning.

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Foreword

Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.

—Brené Brown

By Heather Friziellie

In my experience, the work to become a professional learning community (PLC) is crystal clear. There are three big ideas and four critical questions a system—big or small—strives to answer in an ongoing way to improve learning for students through the learning and actions of adults in that system. However, this is by no means to say the work is simple. When we ask adults to focus on learning, collaborate, and focus on results, we are asking for a scary thing . . . change!

Most systems can get behind the key concepts of a PLC and even speak to their importance, but actually doing the work becomes a challenge. Lots of places are unsure where or how to start the work, how to determine what is “loose” and what is “tight,” and what artifacts are the most essential for teams to focus upon and use their precious time to create. Educators are united on at least one front—they are generally overwhelmed and don’t feel that there is ever enough time to do all that is expected. In some cases, this is even more exacerbated when the expectations change by administrative direction, state mandates, or even federal guidelines and funding. Put simply, it is just hard to know where to start the work, even when you truly believe in it. As importantly, resistors can easily use a lack of clarity to delay making any changes in practice and, rightly so. When the phrase, “This too shall pass,” has been said in schools, it has historically been proven to be true.

That’s why I’m so very glad and so excited for you, dear reader, to have this powerful book in your hands. In *The 15-Day Challenge*, author Maria Nielsen shares with you the key to getting started—to just doing the work, getting quick wins, and propelling yourself, your team, your school, your district, and even your system to higher levels of learning for all. There has been no other time in history where we have been so strongly called to make sure more kids learn at even higher levels.

The 15-Day Challenge is your key to doing the work, to getting started, and to starting a movement that will forever positively change what learning for all looks like in your context. This makes it all clear, which is kind to all our beloved colleagues.

How do I know? When I came to my amazing district in 2017 and had the chance to talk with my staff, I learned very quickly that, while they believed in the ideas of PLC, they had not yet put into practice the actions to bring our PLC fully to life. Evidence of this included the following.

- When I asked about the essential standards students are expected to learn or demonstrate (PLC question 1), my staff handed me the entire Common Core standards documents.
- My staff reported that they had “PLC time” each Wednesday and they had an agenda they had to complete each time. No team or teacher could articulate the *why* of the agenda or, more importantly, the expected artifacts of their collaboration.
- While one building had a “flex block” in place, no data were used to drive the decision making about who got what support when, other than end-of-year standardized assessment data.

I could go on, but I am fairly certain you get the idea. In fact, these conditions are true in many well intended teams, schools, districts, and systems. Put simply, they believe but just aren’t sure where to start the work.

The 15-Day Challenge changed the game for us. By putting the framework into place, our district was able to bring the work of our PLC to life. Our student data rapidly improved, we became much clearer in our practices, and the momentum of learning into action became part of our culture. While there are few recipes for the work of professional learning communities, I can assure you that, if you opt to deeply learn about and truly implement the 15-Day Challenge structure, you, too, will see the needle move positively for learning and will find the momentum your system has likely been craving to actually bring all you know and believe about PLCs to life.

I’m so excited for you to begin this journey and am so grateful to Maria Nielsen for writing a book to help us all get better at our practices. This structure remains a key piece of our success story and one that has become a part of how we do business because it works. Like us, I’m guessing you’ll be absolutely thrilled with the results you see should you choose to implement the 15-Day Challenge. So, lean in, read on, put it to work, and see what happens. You will be amazed by the results for all learners in your system!



Introduction

Sit down and lean in—this book is going to change your life!

This book will provide you with the structure, tools, and confidence to simplify and energize your collaborative team through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work® process. It answers the questions, What do we do now that our school is a PLC? How do we collaborate? What do we collaborate about? This is the “how to put it all together” book. *The 15-Day Challenge* builds on the collaborative PLC process of the three big ideas and collectively answers the four critical questions of a PLC at Work. Your team will be taught a simple and effective seven-step process to collaboratively design engaging units of study. Each unit will also address the need for additional time and support when students struggle, and extension to stretch students’ thinking when they excel. This process will level the playing field for your students and allow them equal access to learning. The 15-Day Challenge will give you the gift of time, less stress, and increased joy in teaching. This process grants you and your team the permission and power to get back to the art and craft of teaching by sharing your best ideas and strategies on essential state standards.

When was the last time you got really excited to collaborate with your team, share best practices, and focus on results? When was the last time you just couldn’t wait to teach your students and engage them in high levels of learning on standards-based school content?

Take a moment and visualize an island. The “island” is the ultimate student destination, and it represents mastery of essential standards. In traditional schools, teachers are generally in their own “boats” heading toward their own islands. So, what would it look like if team members burned their individual boats? Yes, burned their dinghies, and rather than teaching in isolation, teachers built a boat together with the sole purpose of getting *all* students in that grade level or course to the island—the *island of mastery of essential standards*. There may be “reefs and waves” (or obstacles) along the way, but everyone makes it to the island. To survive and thrive, your team is in the same boat rowing together in the same direction, taking collective ownership of all students along the way.

Here are some questions to ponder.

- What would happen if we focused on standards mastery during the unit-planning stage and collectively set the coordinates to the island of mastery before we ever set sail?
- What would it look like if we fortified ourselves with daily checks for understanding (engagement strategies) and common formative assessments throughout the unit to keep students on track?
- What would it look like if we gave struggling students extra support to master essential standards, so they didn't fall out of the boat?
- What would it look like if we stopped dropping off students with disability labels at various islands along the way to the big island?
- What if we ripped off disability labels and believed *all* students are capable of learning at high levels?
- What would it look like if students who have mastered the standards were given rigor and extension for a deeper, richer understanding of the essential standards?
- What would it look like if we created interactive learning for students throughout each unit?
- And, what if it was fun and energizing for both students and teachers?

The purpose of this book is to help your team understand the PLC process of teachers working in collaborative teams to ensure all students master grade-level standards. After all, this is the very reason we exist as teachers. You will learn not only *how* to collaborate but also *what* to collaborate about. In this book, you will learn how to collectively create exciting standards-driven units of study designed with simple, but powerful steps.

The 15-Day Challenge brings the three big ideas and four critical questions of a PLC to life unit by unit (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2016).

The three big ideas guide our work.

1. Focus on learning (learning together)
2. Collaborative culture
3. Results orientation

Under the structure of the three big ideas, the four critical questions become the framework for each unit of study. Within this framework, your team will experience quick wins, increased student mastery of standards, and the collective efficacy to move forward together. Master teachers have always asked the four critical questions:

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know when they have learned it?
3. What will we do when they haven't learned it?
4. What will we do when they already know it? (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251)

Evidence from hundreds of schools shows that the 15-Day Challenge will breathe new life into your teamwork and student learning. This book details the process, provides tools, and offers examples of real-life applications.

How It All Began

As a new principal in 2005, I had attended the conferences, read the books, and fully bought into the PLC process. Yet, I struggled with how we would ever make it a reality on our campus. Implementing or sustaining the process seemed daunting, and I had seen other schools, districts, and sites make attempts to implement the process, but fall short. Well-meaning principals often gave their teachers tasks to accomplish during the collaboration time (such as filling out complicated agendas, requiring book studies, or completing district improvement plans) that pulled them from the right work, and time after time, the process would get sidetracked. When that happened, teachers got frustrated and often felt like they could better use their time retreating to their classroom to prepare for the next week's lessons.

To make matters worse, each person I spoke to said it would take us three to five years to get off the ground, but we didn't have that much time. I knew if our school was going to implement this process successfully, our teachers would need to win big, win quickly, and win often; otherwise, the PLC process would turn into another failed initiative rather than the right work of collaborative teams. In the middle of the night, I wondered, "What if my teachers worked together as professionals and shared their best ideas and strategies for one unit of study? Just one unit of study! Would they be able to see that their combined efforts were more powerful than their individual ideas? What if the outcomes were so clear that students could see the target and hit it? What if teams could create a product so efficient that the various learners in their classroom could master the identified essential standards at grade level or higher? What if the students labeled as having a learning disability also learned at grade level or higher? What if collaborative teams had a collective focus on results?" A quick win was what we needed! And thus, the 15-Day Challenge was born.

To generate excitement, I created the visual metaphor of getting all our students to the island of student mastery of essential standards.

The *challenge* part of the 15-Day Challenge is not creating a unit of study! The challenge is ensuring *all* students master the identified essential standards. You will notice I didn't say *all* state standards in the unit. All state standards do not have equal weight or importance. We guarantee the *essential standards*—the standards critical for student success (such as reading and comprehending on grade level at the elementary level or citing textual evidence at the secondary level).

Would you agree that we often try to teach too much and find ourselves racing to the island of student mastery with our "hair on fire," losing students in our frenzied wake? Would you also agree there is power that comes from intelligent and talented teachers working together, and that together we can create a better product than individuals working in isolation? Working together creates a huge win for teachers and serious momentum to do the required work to implement the PLC process on your campus. In other words, if you and your team built a solid unit together and quickly "caught" students who didn't understand along the way, metaphorically you could get *all* your students to the island!

About the 15-Day Challenge

In a nutshell, the 15-Day Challenge is a step-by-step unit-design process that builds on the three big ideas and four critical questions of a PLC. I created it to pull the pieces of a PLC together and make the process doable for teachers—rather than one more thing on a never-ending list of things to do.

My school staff were about to “dangle their toes into the water” of action research, and I wanted all the teams in the school to start and end their units of study on the same days so we could have conversations about how things were going and where students were struggling. I had to consider when the challenge would begin and end; ten days sounded too short, twenty days sounded too long, and fifteen days sounded *just right*.

Note: not every unit you create takes fifteen days. We just started with a fifteen-day unit so we could begin and end together and have conversations about the process, what was going well, where were we struggling, areas for needed support, and more. In the end, your team will decide together how long the unit will be based on the unique qualities of the standards you select and needs of your students.

Each team had three weeks to prepare its unit of study, using the Friday collaboration time to plan together. In our district, students attend school a little longer Monday through Thursday and leave early on Friday, so teachers have an hour and fifteen minutes to collaborate. At the elementary level, the teachers decided the content area (such as reading, mathematics, science, or social studies) and the unit to teach. At the secondary level, teachers decided the unit by course.

About the Outcome

You won’t be surprised to learn the team members who rolled up their sleeves and established clear learning outcomes, shared best practices, embedded common assessments throughout the unit, and intervened when students didn’t understand the first time were the ones who achieved awesome results. Not only did more students reach the island of student mastery of essential standards but also the teachers who worked together as a team found the process more satisfying and rewarding than working in isolation. On the other hand, the team members who threw some stuff together saying, “This too shall pass!” didn’t get particularly good results and found the entire process frustrating. During the whole process, I continually checked in with each team. After completing the first unit of study, we identified the practices that felt sluggish, celebrated the wins, tweaked our approach, and then engaged in another cycle.

As a result of this cyclical approach, our process has continually evolved and become more refined. Yours will too! Don’t give up after only creating one unit together. It may seem time-consuming or frustrating the first time you develop a unit together, but trust me, it gets easier (like riding a bike), and you will become more efficient together. Together, we are better!

Who Should Read This Book

This book is for anyone who wants to understand and simplify the PLC at Work process. It is for elementary, middle, and high school teams that feel like they need a more streamlined system for

structuring their collaborative teams and building standards-based units of study. It is intended for teams of teachers, singletons, specialists, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals. Collegiate preservice teachers will better understand the work they will be engaging in their career as a classroom teacher. Administrators and instructional coaches will benefit from having a framework to support their teachers and specialists. Everyone will benefit from understanding *why* they should function as collaborative teams and answer the question, What is the work of a collaborative team? If you want more connection with your fellow educators and a process to ensure all your students are learning the same content with the same rate of success, this book is for you.

The 15-Day Challenge is adaptable to every educator's situation. Many schools have singletons or special education teachers who don't feel like they fit in with the grade-level or content-area collaborative teams. I'm here to tell you I feel your pain and trust me—you are a critical part of this process! You just may be on the wrong path to collaboration. Consider the following for singletons and special education teachers.

Singletons

Coauthors Brig Leane and Jon Yost (2022) suggest three *on-ramps* (or entry points) in their book *Singletons in a PLC at Work*.

1. **Course-alike teams:** Teachers who teach the same course. Leane and Yost (2022) explain that this is the ideal type of team for singletons.
2. **Common-content teams:** Teachers who have different courses but share common standards, such as citing textual evidence in history and English language arts. According to Leane and Yost (2022), this is the second-most preferable type of team if course-alike teams aren't available.
3. **Critical-friend teams:** Teachers who teach different courses but share general teaching strategies and review one another's materials. This type of team is the least effective (Leane & Yost, 2022).

So if you're a singleton, you can create your own course-alike team by finding someone in another school who teaches what you teach. Get together and have a blast designing your units! You don't need a whole bunch of people; you just need one other person who is going to elevate your teaching practice, brainstorm with you, challenge your thinking, compare common formative assessment data with you, and love teaching the same classes you teach.

And by the way, it doesn't matter where that person is located. I know a teacher in Alabama who collaborates with a teacher in Utah. They use email, phone calls, text, and Zoom to get it done. It just takes one other person, and you are off and running. If you need help finding one or more people to create your own course-alike team (or, if that is not possible, your own common-content team), enlist the help of an administrator. The administrator will be happy to help you find a better fit so you can get the most out of your collaborative team time.

Special Education Teachers

In most schools I visit, the special education teachers meet with other special education teachers or work in isolation. But get this: *Students who have an individualized education program (IEP) are general education students who happen to have an IEP for additional time and support on grade-level standards.* I'll restate part of that: The special education teachers are providing additional time and support on *Tier 1 grade-level standards*. So it would make sense for the special education teacher and general education teachers to collaborate. They're teaching the same standards. Educators and coauthors Heather Frizellie, Julie A. Schmidt, and Jeanne Spiller (2016) find:

Sadly, educators often doubt [students' with special needs] ability to meet these rigorous expectations. Our response as authors to such reservations is simple: *all* means *all*, with the understanding that educators may have to tailor instruction by providing scaffolds, accommodations, and modifications to ensure that all students are successful. (p. 34)

This guidance is based on a straightforward premise: “We cannot afford the irresponsibility of excluding those who teach our most at-risk students from all high-quality professional development focused on best practices” (Frizellie et al., 2016, p. 28). They later conclude, “Improving the outcomes for students with special needs cannot be the sole responsibility of special educators . . . [this can] best be done through the ongoing collaborative work of a PLC” (Frizellie et al., 2016, p. 106).

At our school, we found it important to embed time into the schedule for special education teachers to meet with general education teachers as often as possible. One strategy we used was weekly embedded time for all teachers to meet in the same common area or media center so the special education teachers had access to all same-course and grade-level teams. The bonus was teams also having access to one another so they could ask the teachers questions about essential standards from one grade to the next or from one course to the next course. An example is Algebra 1 teachers meeting near Algebra 2 teachers or second-grade teachers meeting near third-grade teachers.

Disclaimer: Because the content in this book also applies to singletons, special education teachers, and general education teachers, chapters will not contain dedicated content for singletons or special education teachers.

The Structure of This Book

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the 15-Day Challenge, including how the process addresses the foundational three big ideas and four critical questions of a PLC to create a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Chapters 2–8 then detail the steps of the 15-Day Challenge process.

Chapter 2 shows you how to identify standards.

Chapter 3 explains how to unpack essential standards and develop learning targets.

Chapter 4 walks you through prioritizing standards into three categories, which I call *boulders, rocks, and butterflies*.

Chapter 5 digs into creating common formative assessments.

In chapter 6, you will learn how to pace and design a Tier 1 unit of study using the 15-Day Challenge chart.

Chapter 7 explains how to plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions while planning the unit.

Chapter 8 describes how to analyze the common formative assessment data to identify and group students for Tier 2 interventions and extensions.

Chapter 9 shows you how to create a yearlong pacing guide and addresses sustaining the process with insights from several district educators.

The epilogue will end the book on an encouraging note. Following that, I've included an appendix full of examples of the 15-Day Challenge in action done by real PLC teams from various schools across grade levels.

The Goal of This Book

The goal of this book is for you to understand the PLC process and ignite your team to action using the 15-Day Challenge. You are already doing many of the concepts I will outline in this book. My goal is for you to streamline these concepts and find one or two processes that will take your team to the next level. Perhaps it will be backward planning your assessments, planning on the grid so daily learning targets are visible, designing Tier 2 when planning the unit, or teaching to the standards rather than the textbook. Whatever it is, I am here with the *why* and *how*, so let's get started!

Chapter 1

Overview of the 15-Day Challenge

Energy, clarity, intention—these are the words that come to mind when I think of the 15-Day Challenge process. This is a great opportunity for your team to refocus energy on the simplicity of the three big ideas and four critical questions of a PLC.

The following three big ideas help us (as educators) form effective and efficient teams.

1. Focus on learning
2. Collaborative culture
3. Results orientation

In *Learning by Doing, Third Edition*, PLC at Work experts Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas W. Many, and Mike Mattos (2016) explain that the first big idea, *focus on learning*, is based on the promise that all students will learn at grade level or higher. We also know when adults in the school are learning at high levels, students will also learn at high levels.

The second big idea requires adults to work in *collaborative teams* to ensure students learn at grade level or higher. I find this is often the most difficult part of the process, especially if teams have not been working together in the past.

The third big idea is *focus on results*. We gauge our success on students mastering essential standards.

As mentioned in the introduction (page 1), master teachers have always asked:

1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
2. How will we know when they have learned it?
3. What will we do when they haven't learned it?
4. What will we do when they already know it? (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251)

Here's How

Scan this code to watch the author give an overview of the 15-Day Challenge.



Let's be honest, these are the questions you will be answering for the rest of your career in education, so get good at answering them. Remember to celebrate when things are going well and be willing to adjust when the data suggest what you are doing is not working. Always be curious and on the lookout for new ideas and better ways to help students succeed at high levels.

Much to the dismay of teachers, schools often look at the four critical questions of a PLC in isolation, one step at a time. When this happens, answering these questions may turn into separate yearlong initiatives, rather than answering all four questions together in an ongoing cycle of collective inquiry. For example, during the first year, professional development and collaboration time is spent unpacking standards and putting them in a Google File (<https://files.google.com>), sorted into essential and supporting standards. The next year, teams come together to write common formative assessments on the identified essential standards. Members also saved these common formative assessments to the team drive. Then, during year three or four, the school puts together a response to intervention (RTI) committee to come up with a modified schedule to embed supports into the school day.

While all these tasks are excellent ideas and the work of collaborative teams, teachers often see these as separate initiatives to tackle one year at a time. And then the process feels contrived, disjointed, and frustrating. As a result, teachers often feel that a better use of their time would be to spend their collaboration time back in their own room, prepping for tomorrow's lesson.

What would it look like if your team felt like their work each week aligned with what you want students to know and to be able to do? What if your team created units of study embedded with essential standards rather than trying to teach everything to equal importance? What if teams used common formative assessments in a timely manner to determine whether students have mastered the standards? What if looking at those common formative assessments also informed their teaching practice in a formative way?

Teachers, could you embrace this process if it felt authentic and timely to you?

The 15-Day Challenge

The 15-Day Challenge brings all the elements of a PLC together in one unit of study. It is a process you can use whether your school has been implementing PLC practices for a while or is new to the concepts of a PLC.

This chapter will guide you and your teams through the steps of the 15-Day Challenge. The explanation for each step will be brief so you can see the vision of the whole process. The rest of the chapters will walk you and your team through each of the steps in detail as you write a unit of study together. By the time you finish this book, you and your team will have developed a complete unit of study and will have all the tools needed to continue planning units in this way.

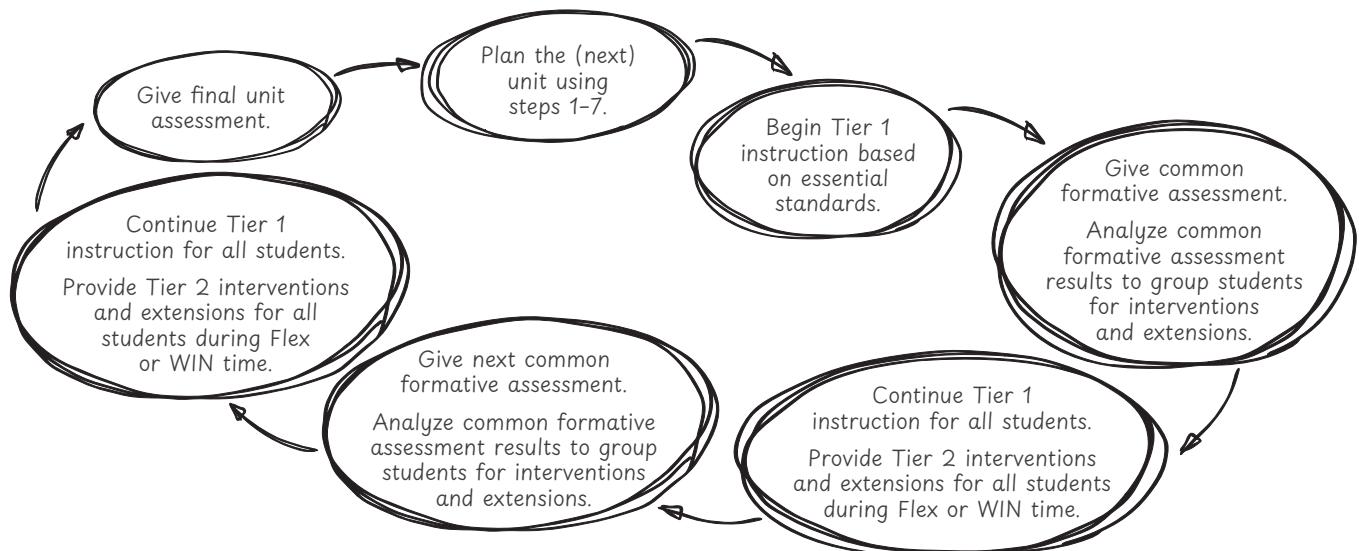
Every step in this process is designed for a specific and powerful purpose, so do the steps in order and don't skip any. Following each of the steps will ensure a laser-like focus. I promise you and your students will reap the rewards!

Here are the steps for the 15-Day Challenge in handy chart format (see table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1: Steps for the 15-Day Challenge

| Steps | Action |
|---|---|
| Step 1 | Identify standards for a unit of study. |
| Step 2 | Unpack standards into learning targets for clarity and agreement. |
| Step 3 | Prioritize standards into three categories: (1) essential (boulder), (2) supporting (rock), and (3) additional (butterfly). |
| Step 4 | Write common formative assessments aligned to the essential standards. |
| Step 5 | Collectively pace and design the unit based on essential standards. Share strategies for daily checks for understanding. |
| Step 6 | Plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions as a team while pacing and designing the unit. |
| Step 7 | Teach the unit and act on the data. |
| Create a yearlong pacing guide by organizing each unit in the order the teachers will teach them. | |

Figure 1.1 shows the 15-Day Challenge learning and assessing cycle in graphic format. Just do this over and over, unit after unit with your team. Once you finish the first 15-Day Challenge, create your next 15-Day Challenge. You will soon be in the flow of your work, achieving consistently high levels of learning for the students you serve. The following sections offer detailed instructions to complete the seven steps of the 15-Day Challenge.



The number of common formative assessments throughout the unit depends on the number of standards or learning targets in the unit.

FIGURE 1.1: The 15-Day Challenge process.

Step 1

Identify standards for a fifteen-day unit of study. See the first column in figure 1.2. You will fill in the other columns during step 3. Note: your unit may be shorter or longer than fifteen days depending on the number and rigor of standards.

| Step 1: Identify standards Write down all standards teachers will teach during the unit of study. | Step 3: Prioritize standards Mark an X in the box to indicate if the standard is a boulder, rock, or butterfly. | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Identified Standards | Essential or Boulder Have to know (Requires a written common formative assessment) | Supporting or Rock Nice to know (May assess) | Additional or Butterfly Fun to know (Do not assess) |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

FIGURE 1.2: Identifying standards for the unit.

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Step 2

Unpack standards into learning targets for clarity and agreement within the unit (see figure 1.3).

If your team is familiar with the standards and has already unpacked them, you will still want to revisit your unpacked standards for additional conversations to increase clarity and agreement on what the standard means.

The following are compelling reasons why you should unpack standards with your collaborative team.

- Unpacking standards will help your team identify the learning targets within the standard.
- Your team will better understand the depth of knowledge (DOK) levels of each standard (Francis, 2022; Webb, 2002).

| Standard: | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Learning Targets | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
| Learning target 1: | | | |
| Learning target 2: | | | |
| Learning target 3: | | | |
| Learning target 4: | | | |
| Academic vocabulary: | | | |

FIGURE 1.3: Unpacking standards into learning targets.

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- During the unpacking process, your team will identify and discuss the academic vocabulary members will systematically teach students.
- Unpacking standards will help your team know how to teach and assess each learning target.

Step 3

Prioritize unit standards into three categories (see the second column in figure 1.2).

1. Essential standard (boulder) or must know
2. Supporting standard (rock) or nice to know
3. Additional standard (butterfly) or fun to know

For more information on boulders, rocks, and butterflies, see chapter 4 (page 47).

Step 4

Create common formative assessments (see figure 1.4, page 14). Begin with the end-of-unit assessment (that is, begin with the end in mind). Next, create common formative assessments throughout the unit for each learning target.

FIGURE 1.4: Creating common formative assessments.

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Step 5

Pace and design the unit (see figure 1.5).

1. Determine the number of days to teach the unit.
2. Determine the number of teaching days for each learning target.
3. Write the learning target to teach on each day.
4. Place common formative assessments after each learning target.
5. Build in intervention and extension days after each common formative assessment (if there is not separate time embedded in the day).
6. Add lessons and materials to teach the daily learning targets.
7. Brainstorm strategies for students to practice daily learning targets. Add the practice time to the daily plan.
8. Model teaching strategies for one another (that is, *Show me!*).

| Name of Unit: | Beginning Date: | Number of Days: |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Standards (from figure 1.2, page 12): | | |
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |

FIGURE 1.5: 15-Day Challenge planning chart.

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There are examples of completed 15-Day Challenge charts included throughout the 15-Day Challenge Examples section (page 17)—one from elementary school, one from middle school, and one from high school—plus several more in the appendix (page 119). You’ll notice many of the fifteen-day planning charts in this book have three days across. This is intentional so the planning chart doesn’t look like a calendar. This format enables you to be more flexible if and when unexpected things come up and all the teaching days have to shift. Just teach from the grid. However, it’s fine if your team prefers to put four or five days across. Do what works best for you!

Step 6

Plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions while pacing and designing the unit (see figure 1.6, page 16).

While your team is planning the unit together and all available teaching materials are laid out on the table, place extra practice sheets and extension materials in labeled folders to use for Tier 2 interventions or extensions. Consider the following questions.

Plan Tier 2 Interventions and Extensions

Write strategies and materials in each box. These are the strategies and materials team members placed in folders while creating the unit. The minutes guide is based on a thirty-minute Tier 2 time.

| |
|--|
| Well Below Grade-Level Proficiency |
| List strategies and materials for interventions (filling holes). (Ten minutes) |
| List grade-level practice strategies and materials. (Twenty minutes) |
| Below Grade-Level Proficiency |
| List strategies and materials for interventions (filling holes). (Ten minutes) |
| List grade-level practice strategies and materials. (Twenty minutes) |
| On or Above Grade-Level Proficiency |
| List strategies and materials for extensions of the standard. |

FIGURE 1.6: Plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions.

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- What strategies and materials are we going to use if students need more practice?
- What strategies and materials are we going to use if students need extended thinking and rigor?
- How will our team get students on or above grade level?
 - + Ten minutes of intervention (fill gaps and holes); I recommend not spending more than ten minutes doing below grade-level work in a thirty-minute instructional period. If we keep teaching students below grade level, that's where they'll stay. You want to fill holes and then move on to grade-level practice.
 - + Twenty minutes of grade-level practice

Step 7

Teach the unit and act on the data after each common formative assessment. Once you complete steps 1–6, you're ready to teach your awesome unit! After your first common formative assessment, go back to steps 5 and 6 to place students in Tier 2 groups to practice the essential standards unit until students demonstrate proficiency. Identify students for Tier 2 interventions or extensions based on common formative assessment data. Remember, *all* students will receive some level of either intervention or extension. You may need more than two or three groups. It depends on the set of students (see figure 1.7).

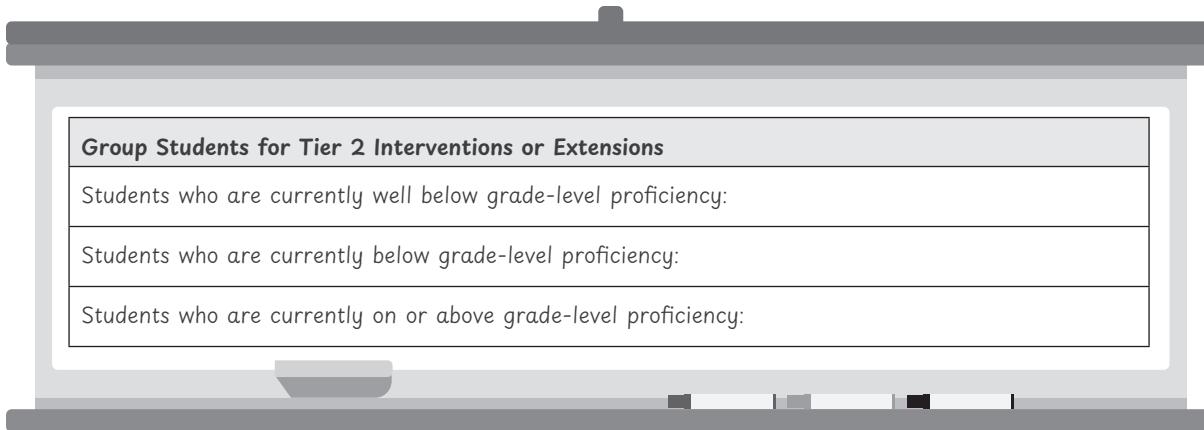


FIGURE 1.7: Identify students for Tier 2 interventions or extensions.

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Then, at the end of the unit, take time to reflect and make necessary adjustments for the next time you and your team teach the unit. You will fine-tune the unit each time you teach it as a team. You've got this!

Create a Yearlong Pacing Guide

A final, unnumbered step in this process is to teach your team how to organize the units of study into a yearlong pacing guide. You could also create a general list of standards for the year. I would be cautious about creating a yearlong pacing guide first because teams often get stuck here. If you are new to the process of planning together as a team, I would suggest starting with one unit of study. I discuss this more in chapter 9 (page 103).

I will also further discuss the process of creating a yearlong pacing guide in chapter 9. Teams create a yearlong pacing guide by ordering their units of study by quarter or trimester throughout the school year, but don't worry about it for now.

15-Day Challenge Examples

The following sections present 15-Day Challenge examples at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. When you and your team create planning charts, you can use color-coded sticky notes or other methods to differentiate between boulders, rocks, and butterflies. In all the examples throughout the book, boulders are shown in boldface, rocks are underlined, butterflies are in italics, and common formative assessments are bold and underlined.

Elementary School

Figure 1.8 (page 18) is an entire example for one standard, which the team identifies as a boulder. The team did not need to unpack the standard into learning targets because items a–d are actually part of the standard. (It's not always that way!) Of course, the team still identified DOK and did all the other required discussions.

Boulder: W.4.1—Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

- Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
- Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.
- Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (such as *for instance*, *in order to*, *in addition*).
- Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

Common formative assessments (bold** and underlined)**

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|--|--|
| <p>W.4.1.a: Fact versus opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead agree or disagree whole-group activity. Have students make fact-versus-opinion posters. Lead farm animal small-group sort activity. Lead fact-or-opinion card sort and discussion with whole group. Have students create anchor chart. <p>W.4.1.a: Common formative assessment on fact versus opinion</p> | <p>W.4.1.a: Generating meaningful topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students create a Pinterest (https://pinterest.com) page. Model text mapping using mentor text (fourth-grade sample). Have students create opinion posters. | <p>W.4.1.a: Generating meaningful topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute text-mapping article. Have students record opinions from texts, curriculum, or life in their writing notebooks. |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <p>W.4.1.b: Stating an opinion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with text-mapping article. Continue with writing notebooks. Review Kagan structure for sharing. <p>W.4.1.b: Common formative assessment on generating an idea or opinion</p> | <p>W.4.1.b: Outlining reasons and evidence for opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with writing notebooks. Distribute article and mentor text, modeling finding reasons for opinion. Review text-mapping student sample. | <p>W.4.1.b: Outlining reasons and evidence for opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with writing notebooks. Have students brainstorm opinions on the article. Group students based on similar opinions. Have students form and outline reasons for opinion using graphic organizer. |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| <p>W.4.1.c: Organizational structure and linking words</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute mentor text: fifth-grade homework sample. Continue with graphic organizer. Distribute "Terrific Transitions and Linking Phrases" handout. <p>W.4.1.c: Common formative assessment on organizing reasons for an opinion</p> | <p>W.4.1.c: Crafting a strong introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute "How to Hook Your Reader and Opening an Opinion Statement" handout (Kristi's book). Model writing lead using ideas from handout and opinions from students' writing notebooks. | <p>W.4.1.c: Crafting a strong introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with handout. Have students write three different leads using one idea from their writing notebooks. Choose best lead. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p>W.4.1.d: Crafting a strong conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute “How to End your Essay and Techniques for Closure” handout (Kristi’s book). Lead group activity with examples of conclusions. Have students identify which type of conclusion the text demonstrates. | <p>W.4.1.d: Crafting a strong conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with handout. Show model conclusion. Have students use same idea from writing notebook and draft three conclusions. Have them choose the best conclusion. <p>W.4.1.d: Common formative assessment on introduction and conclusion</p> | <p>W.4.1.d: Prompt practice—prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have students focus on generating ideas or opinions, and reasons and evidence. Choose one opinion from your writing notebook about which you have strong feelings. Write an opinion paper. Review the rubric for end-of-quarter prompt before prewriting. |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| <p>W.4.1.d: Prompt practice—draft, revise, edit</p> | <p>W.4.1: Second-quarter prompt—prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure students choose a topic different from anything they have done so far. Review end-of-the-quarter prompt rubric before beginning. | <p>W.4.1: Second-quarter prompt—draft, revise, edit</p> |
| <p>W.4.1: End-of-quarter common formative assessment: Think of a topic or issue you know and care about—an issue about which you have strong feelings. Write an opinion paper about it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spring, summer, winter, or fall: Which is the best season of them all? Should students be required to wear school uniforms? Should boys and girls be in separate classes? Should there be allowances? | | |

Source for standard: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA) & Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2010a.

Source: Kristi Monk and Team, Bryant Elementary. Used with permission.

FIGURE 1.8: Completed fifteen-day planning chart—elementary example.

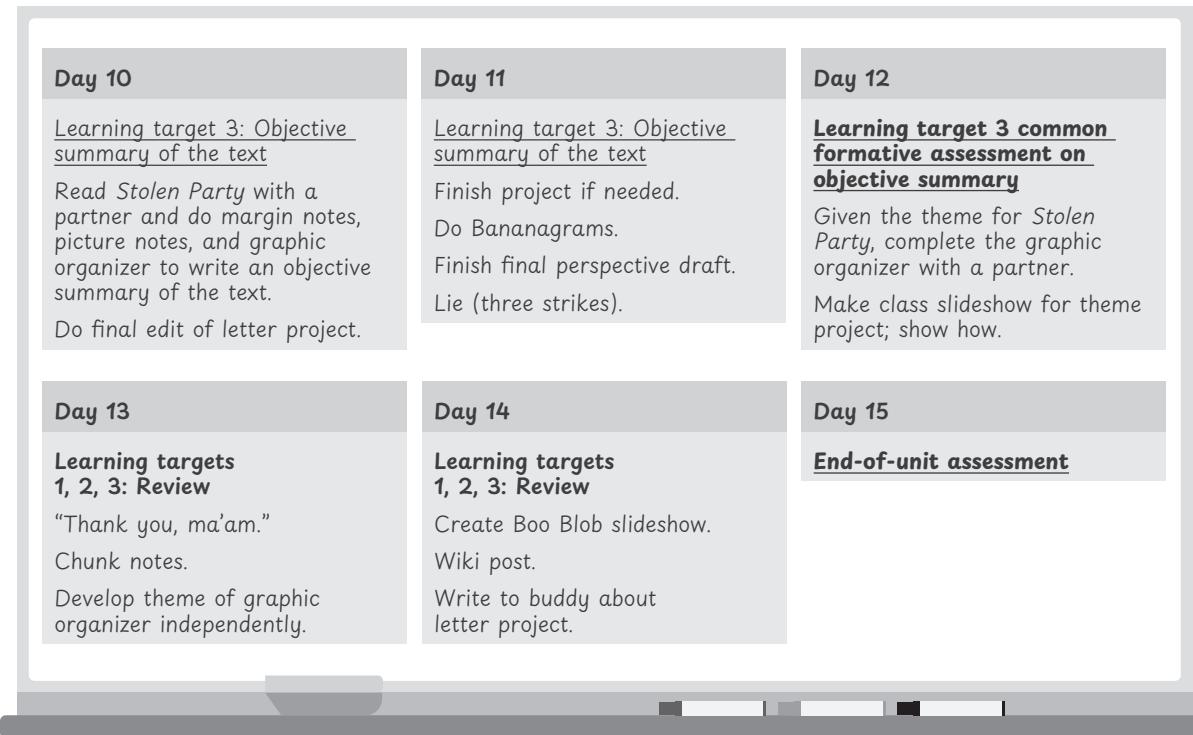
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Middle School

Figure 1.9 (page 20) is an example of an eighth grade English language arts unit of study to determine theme or central idea. You’ll notice that the middle school example contains more standards unpacking than the elementary school example, and students are tasked with exercising multiple skills at once.

- **(Boulder) RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a).**
- **(Boulder) Learning target 1: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.**
- **(Boulder) Learning target 2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot.**
- **(Rock) Learning target 3: Provide an objective summary of the text.**

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Learning target 1: Theme pretest</p> <p>Resource: <i>The Necklace</i></p> <p>Wiki response: Review how to respond in complete thoughts; don't just answer questions and write a bigger-than-me post.</p> | <p>Learning target 1: Analyze theme</p> <p>Analyze theme using <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>.</p> <p>Review sheet.</p> <p>Share common themes students think they know.</p> <p>Preview.</p> <p>Reinforce that <i>identifying</i> is different from <i>analyzing</i>.</p> | <p>Learning target 1: Theme</p> <p>Topic versus theme using "The Sniper" graphic organizer.</p> <p>Introduce perspective: Show letters in nature and paragraphs to introduce assignment (rubric with paragraph).</p> |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <p><u>Learning target 1 common formative assessment on theme</u></p> <p>Wiki: Two truths and a lie activity</p> | <p>Learning target 2: Analyze theme in relationship to character, setting, and plot</p> <p>Cut out and match character, setting, and plot.</p> <p>Go through the selected text examples and write down the themes you see.</p> <p>Take students outside for pictures.</p> <p>Resource review: Do the why and what of mini-grammar lessons.</p> | <p>Learning target 2: Analyze theme in relationship to character, setting, and plot</p> <p>Minilesson</p> <p>Together, make a list of the necessary components of a story with theme as it relates to character, setting, and plot.</p> |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| <p>Learning target 2: Analyze theme in relationship to character, setting, and plot</p> <p>Use "The Sniper" graphic organizer (whole class).</p> <p>Minireview: Character, setting, and plot.</p> <p>Complete letter perspective drafts.</p> | <p>Learning target 2: Analyze theme in relationship to character, setting, and plot</p> <p>Use "Sniper Reviewed" graphic organizer.</p> <p>Whole class breaks into groups of three or four.</p> <p>Identify problems within your group.</p> <p>Grade: Rotate with teacher; students who are done can partner read.</p> | <p><u>Learning target 2 common formative assessment on theme in relationship to character, setting, and plot</u></p> <p>Analyze theme in <i>The Necklace</i> with partners.</p> <p>Revise letter perspective paragraph.</p> |



Source: Jessica Richardson and Gizelle Wells, Fox Lake District 114, Spring Grove, Illinois. Used with permission.

FIGURE 1.9: Completed fifteen-day planning chart—middle school example.

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High School

Figure 1.10 (page 22) is a high school example on cause and effect using primary and secondary sources to support the author's claims. This unit addresses the following multiple state standards that are sourced from Wyoming social studies curriculum (Study.com, n.d.).

- **SS12.4.1:** Describe patterns of change (cause and effect) and evaluate how past events impacted future events and the modern world.
- **SS12.4.5:** Using primary and secondary sources, apply historical research methods to interpret and evaluate important historical events from multiple perspectives.
- **SS12.6.2:** Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text supports the author's claims.

Some key knowledge students must have for this example include the following.

- The new dictatorships and militaristic expansion in the interwar years that led to global warfare
- The factors that allowed Germany, Japan, and Italy to rapidly achieve their military victories in 1931–1941

- America's response to the rising conflict in Europe and the Pacific
- The persecution of Jews and other minority groups during the 1930s

Examples of instructions that aim toward learning targets for this unit are as follows.

- Explain how new leaders established dictatorships in their countries that led to military expansion and global warfare during the 1930s.
- Describe the developments leading up to the global conflict that becomes known as *World War II*.
- Explain the response the United States had toward the growing conflict in Europe and the Pacific.
- Investigate the events associated with Holocaust and other ethnic persecution the Nazis did during WWII.

The following unit activities adhere to the 20.1 standards.

- Reading walkthrough
- Rise of dictators reading and heading activity
- Dictators of WWII common formative assessment

The following unit activities adhere to the 20.2 standards.

- WWII map
- Dunkirk reading
- WWII begins reading analysis
- Origins of WWII common formative assessment

The following unit activities adhere to the 20.3 standards.

- GR—The Holocaust
- PS—The Holocaust
- *Sophie's Choice* reading and questions
- *One Survivor Remembers* video and questions

Essential (Boulder) Standards (boldface)

SS12.4.1: Describe patterns of change (cause and effect) and evaluate how past events impacted future events and the modern world.

SS12.4.5: Using primary and secondary sources, apply historical research methods to interpret and evaluate important historical events from multiple perspectives.

Supporting (Rock) Standard (underlined)

SS12.6.2: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text supports the author's claims.

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
| Introduction to WWII Standard: SS12.4.1 Explain how new leaders established dictatorships in their countries that led to military expansion and global warfare during the 1930s. Reading walkthrough: Introduction to dictators and origins of WWII | Rise of Dictators Standard: SS12.4.1 Rise of dictators: Filling in headings and subheadings | Standard: SS12.4.1 Rise of dictators: Filling in headings and subheadings (continued) Completing a graphic organizer on the major dictators and their rise to power |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| Standard: SS12.4.1 Common formative assessment: Dictators of WWII | The Beginning of WWII Standard: SS12.4.5 Describe the developments leading up to the global conflict that became known as WWII. WWII map | Standard: SS12.4.5, SS12.6.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anschluss Dunkirk reading Winston Churchill Videos |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| Standard: SS12.4.5, SS12.6.2 Explain the response that the United States had toward the growing conflict in Europe and the Pacific. 20.2 WWII begins reading Pearl Harbor | Standard: SS12.4.5 Isolationism Common formative assessment: Origins of WWII | The Holocaust Standard: SS12.4.5, SS12.6.2 Investigate the events associated with the Holocaust and other Nazi persecution. GR—The Holocaust PS—The Holocaust |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| Standard: SS12.4.5 Sophie's Choice reading and questions | Standard: SS12.4.5 One Survivor Remembers video and questions | Standard: SS12.4.5 Common formative assessment |

Source for standards: Study.com, n.d.

FIGURE 1.10: Completed fifteen-day planning chart—high school example.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Take one step of the process at a time.
- If your team is going to the trouble to create a unit of study, you should make it useful; meaning, you should actually use the work your team creates to teach the unit to your students.
- Maximize the expertise on your team.
- Weekly team meetings are the core of your work with 15-Day Challenges. After planning your unit on sticky notes, transfer your plans to digital documents with links, common formative assessments, strategies, excerpts, and videos included.
- Introduce the 15-Day Challenge to new teachers step by step.

Summary

The 15-Day Challenge is a simple seven-step process for unit design. Collaborative teams design units of study based on essential standards. Students learn at higher levels when teachers are intentional about finding the best ideas and strategies to teach essential standards, and providing intervention for students when they don't understand and extending their thinking when they do understand.

The reproducible “Chapter 1 Reflection: 15-Day Challenge” is a tool to help you reflect on where your team is regarding the 15-Day Challenge unit-design process. Use this reflection sheet each time you design units of study.

The best way to use the 15-Day Challenge reflection sheet is to first have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Chapter 1 Reflection: 15-Day Challenge

Rate your team on a scale from 1–5.

1 = Lowest level of proficiency

5 = Highest level of proficiency

| Steps | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1: Identify standards for a unit of study. | | | | | |
| Step 2: Unpack standards. Identify concepts and skills embedded in each standard. This fosters a deep understanding of a standard before determining whether it is essential. | | | | | |
| Step 3: Prioritize standards into three categories. These will be your essential (boulder), supporting (rock), and additional (butterfly) standards. | | | | | |
| Step 4: Write common formative assessments aligned to the essential standards. | | | | | |
| Step 5: Pace and design the unit. Collectively design the unit based on essential standards. Share strategies for daily checks for understanding. | | | | | |
| Step 6: Plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions as a team while pacing and designing the unit. | | | | | |
| Step 7: Teach the unit and act on the data. | | | | | |
| Create a yearlong pacing guide. Determine when to teach each unit during the school year. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for Improvement: | | | | | |



Chapter 2

Identify Standards to Teach for a Fifteen-Day Unit of Study (Step 1)

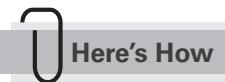
*When something is truly a priority in an organization,
people do not hope it happens; they develop and
implement systematic plans to ensure that it happens.*

—Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour,
Robert Eaker, Thomas W. Many, and Mike Mattos

What would it look like if all teachers on your team agreed on the standards for each unit of study? What if standards were purposefully written on paper rather than hoping the textbook teaches the important standards by default? What if you taught the standards and used the textbook as a tool to help your team achieve the standards? What would it feel like to have that kind of knowledge and power as a team of teachers? I will tell you—it is amazing!

This chapter helps teachers understand how important it is for their team (rather than a textbook company) to select their unit standards. Selecting standards for the unit sets up the rest of the 15-Day Challenge steps. This first step answers the question, “What do students need to know and be able to do?” (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251).

Write down all standards for the unit—even those teachers will only introduce or reinforce from a previous unit. Each standard takes up space and energy, so it is important to clearly identify all standards. Identifying standards for a unit of study gives your team the consensus they need to design an effective unit of study. This is your team’s collective superpower. When my teacher teams first began this process, we didn’t even know where our state standards were located; we were simply in lockstep following our district textbooks. So when we did our first unit of study as a collaborative



Here's How

Scan this code to
watch the author
explain this step and
see teams in action.



team, we identified the standards the team felt were important for students to know and to be able to do, and we listed them at the top of the unit. This way, we were able to make our materials work for us rather than us working for our materials. By clearly identifying our standards, we were able to eliminate some textbook material and supplement as needed.

As you are listing your standards, it is important to consider long-cycle standards for the unit. *Long-cycle standards* are the standards for your course or grade level you want to teach in a progression all year, such as reading and comprehending on grade level.

When listing standards for the unit, you may also include schoolwide focus standards, such as writing across content areas. For example, your middle school mathematics team may consider adding a writing standard to your mathematics unit.

A common mistake is to assume teachers will teach some standards by default and without writing them down. For example, I once worked with a high school English team that had one standard written on paper. When I asked the members about the standard, they said, “Well, actually we have ten standards for this unit.” With a little encouragement, they wrote down all the standards. The team soon realized that creating a list of standards enabled members to have engaging conversations about what they wanted students to know and be able to do. The standards-selection process ensures teams are clear on exactly where they are going to focus their time and energy each day of the unit. If you don’t write the standards down, you will circle around defining them—and you will not know when teaching the standards should start or when students should master them.

Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

It is important for you and your team to understand two terms: *guaranteed curriculum* and *viable curriculum* (Marzano & Waters, 2009). These two terms are used together when your team designs a unit of study.

- **Guaranteed:** *Guaranteed* means teachers will teach the agreed-on standards in each classroom to ensure all students achieve the same level of mastery. The mindset is that all students will be in the same place as their peers by the end of the unit of study—on grade level or higher. A guaranteed curriculum prioritizes equal mastery at each grade level.
- **Viable:** *Viable* means educators select essential standards and design a responsive schedule to determine an appropriate pace for teaching the standards within the allotted time. A viable curriculum prioritizes teaching the selected essential standards at an optimized pace to ensure their full coverage by the end of the unit of study or grade level.

Guaranteed Curriculum

A *guaranteed curriculum* is achieved when two or more teachers identify the essential standards they will teach by course or grade level. Teams that identify standards for a unit of study prior to the start

of the unit are more organized in their efforts. Clearly defined learning outcomes give you and your team a narrow focus on students achieving mastery of essential standards. In the absence of clearly articulated standards, teams often metaphorically set sail to the island of mastery only to zigzag from one place to the next—lost and without clear coordinates to the destination! Then teams throw down anchor and assess students based on materials in the textbook rather than the intended standards. While district-purchased textbooks or online materials serve as great resources, teachers should select standards for each unit based on state standards rather than textbooks or online materials. While we are grateful for these resources, it should never be left up to a publishing company to decide what students should know and be able to do in a course or grade level in your school and district.

It is a great feeling when you finally give yourself permission to shut out all the noise and focus on exactly what you want your students to know and be able to do. In the absence of clearly selected and agreed-on standards, teams may inadvertently offer students an educational lottery. An *educational lottery* occurs when what students learn in a course or grade level varies from teacher to teacher. Consider this example of two sixth-grade Ancient World History teachers. In one classroom, the teacher is following the textbook from pages 1–700. In the classroom next door, the students are learning about what the teacher likes to teach the most. When this happens, what students learn in Ancient World History depends on who their teacher is in that course. Schools should be able to guarantee all students will master the same essential standards regardless of the teacher they are assigned.

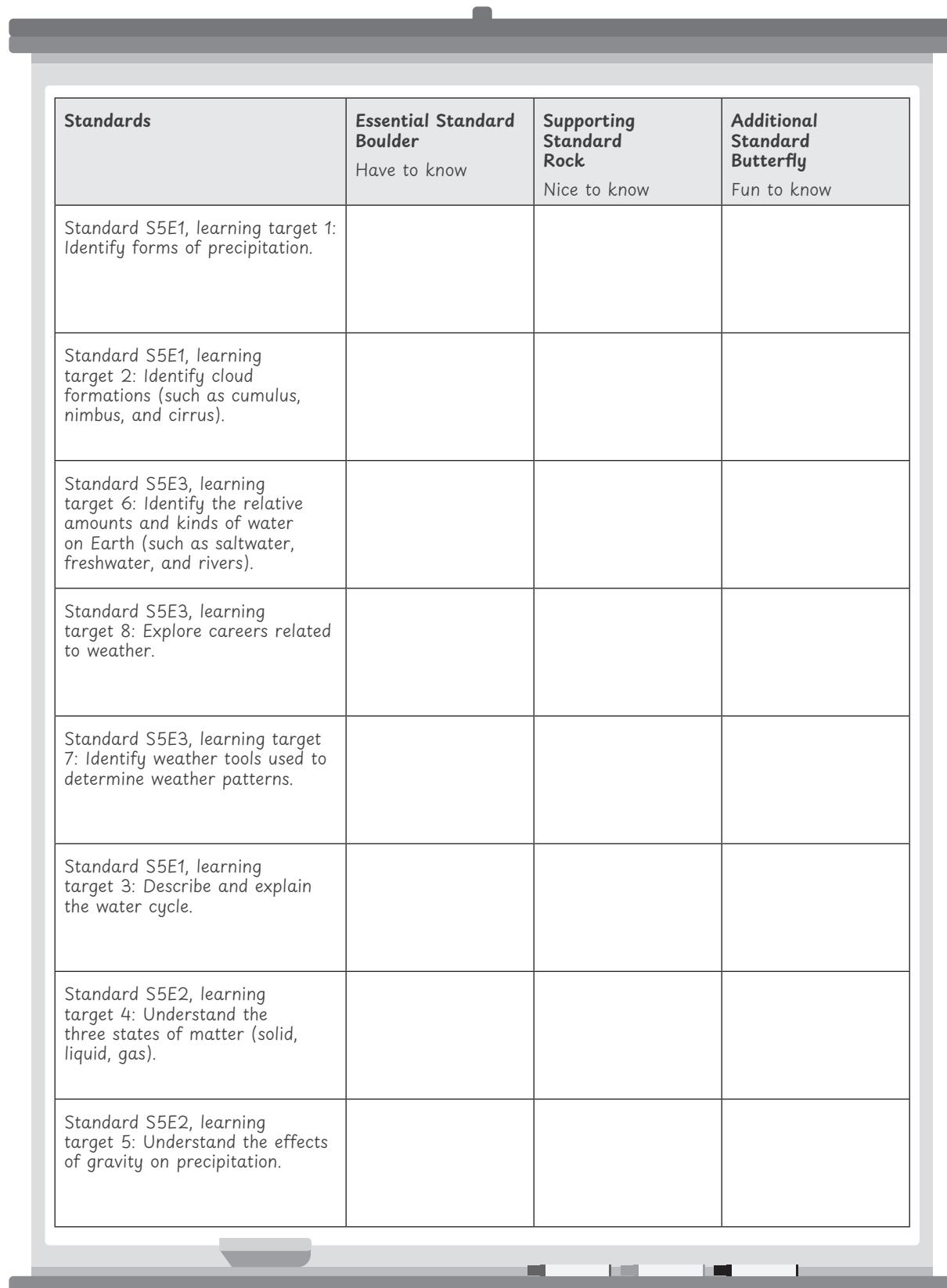
Viable Curriculum

Viability is also critical. A *viable curriculum* means teachers can teach the essential standards within a nine-month school year. If a tested subject, then teachers are able to teach the intended standards in just over seven months, when they give students the state test.

Teachers achieve a viable curriculum when they create a pacing guide to determine when they will teach the standards (by semester, quarter, and units of study) to ensure they cover the material in the allotted time. A reoccurring problem I often see is teachers trying to teach too much in too little time. Now is the time to come to clarity and agreement on the essential standards and teach them to a deep, rich understanding.

Build Your Unit: Write Down Standards for Your Unit of Study

Figure 2.1 (page 30) shows an example of the standards a team might identify for a unit on the water cycle using Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS Lead States, 2013) to determine learning targets. For this part of the process, the team has filled in the Standards column. They will complete the other three columns in step 3. Use the reproducible “Identify and Prioritize Standard for a Unit Template: Step 1” (page 32) to write down standards for the unit of study you and your team are building.



The image shows a whiteboard with a black border and a grey header bar at the top. On the whiteboard, there is a table with four columns and eight rows. The columns are labeled "Standards", "Essential Standard Boulder", "Supporting Standard Rock", and "Additional Standard Butterfly". The rows contain descriptions of learning targets related to the water cycle.

| Standards | Essential Standard Boulder | Supporting Standard Rock | Additional Standard Butterfly |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation. | Have to know | Nice to know | Fun to know |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations (such as cumulus, nimbus, and cirrus). | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (such as saltwater, freshwater, and rivers). | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather. | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns. | | | |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle. | | | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas). | | | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation. | | | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 2.1: Example of standards a team identified for a unit of study on the water cycle.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Write down all the standards, not just some of them.
- Don't just rely on your textbook to list all the standards.
- Consider standards that might be in every unit (such as reading on grade level).

Summary

It is important to identify all the standards for a unit of study. Base these standards on your state standards. As a team, write down every standard members will teach in the unit, even the standards your team finds less important. When teachers do not clearly list the standards or assume they will cover some standards by association over the course of the year, this lack of clarity perpetuates the idea of the educational lottery. Some students master different standards according to who their teacher was rather than all teachers in the same course or grade level guaranteeing students master the same standards, regardless of the teacher students were assigned. Use the reproducible “Chapter 2 Reflection: Identify Standards for a Unit” (page 33) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding identifying standards for a unit. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Identify and Prioritize Standard for a Unit Template: Step 1

| Standards | Essential Standard Boulder Have to know | Supporting Standard Rock Nice to know | Additional Standard Butterfly Fun to know |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| 1: | | | |
| 2: | | | |
| 3: | | | |
| 4: | | | |
| 5: | | | |
| 6: | | | |

Chapter 2 Reflection: Identify Standards for a Unit

| Rate your team on a scale from 1–5 1 = Lowest level of proficiency 5 = Highest level of proficiency | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The team collectively decides the standards for the unit based on state standards. | | | | | |
| The team writes down all standards for the unit, not just the essential ones. | | | | | |
| The team identifies the standards regardless of what the textbook identifies as standards. | | | | | |
| The team may add schoolwide focus standards, such as writing on grade level, to the unit (even though it may be a mathematics unit). | | | | | |
| The team considers important standards members taught in a previous unit for review. | | | | | |
| The team considers the number of identified standards for the unit to be viable or doable in the allotted time frame. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |

Chapter 3

Unpack Standards (Step 2)

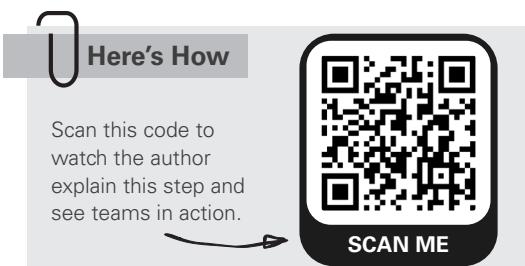
Determining the most essential standards for your students, unwrapping them to find the learning targets that underpin them, and agreeing on proficiency levels is the way teams and individual teachers become masters of the standards they teach.

—Sharon V. Kramer

What if you and your team shared the same clarity and agreement on the meaning of a standard? What if your team collectively unpacked standards into learning targets, identified DOK levels, listed academic vocabulary, and shared ideas on how to teach and assess the standards? What if your team identified what student mastery looked like, as members shared samples of on grade-level student work or artifacts with one another? What if the target became so clear it was impossible for students to miss it?

The purpose of step 2, *unpacking the standards*, is for your team to establish clarity and agreement on what the standards mean and what it will look like for students to demonstrate mastery. *Unpacking* is a strategy that enables your collaborative team to achieve collective clarity and agreement regarding specific learning targets contained within each standard. In this chapter, your team will learn how to unpack a standard in six steps, prioritize learning targets, and unpack a few sample standards from elementary, secondary, and mathematics content. This is an important step on the journey of answering the first critical question of a PLC, “What do students need to know and be able to do?” (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251).

Basically, your team is identifying which island of mastery you are rowing toward as a team. What does this standard mean? What does mastery look like? What will students do to demonstrate learning? Can you imagine everyone jumping in the boat and then realizing they don’t have the same vision or expectation for their journey or the same end destination? Unpacking gives your team a clear, shared picture on where your team is going with students and what it will look like when you get there.



Use the Collaborative Process

I get it! You would rather have a colonoscopy than unpack a standard! But trust me, your work as a team will become more focused when you understand the standards. Teams often feel they don't need to unpack or even talk through the standard because there is the assumption everyone sees it the same way. I find that collective sameness is rarely the case. According to my friend and colleague Jeanne Spiller, "When teachers examine the standards in isolation, each teacher is likely to interpret the intent and rigor differently. This results in a different level of student expectations and quality of instruction from class to class" (personal communication, September 10, 2012). Consider the following additional benefits of unpacking standards.

- When teachers unpack the standards in isolation, they often interpret the standard different than their peers. Collectively unpacking standards ensures everyone sees the standard the same way before planning a unit of study together.
- Teachers who understand their standards are able to identify the essential (boulder) standards that all students will master in a unit of study.
- When teachers understand the rigor of the standard, they have more clarity on the cognitive demand the students will face when mastering the standard. They are able to plan lessons so students have ample opportunities to practice the standard at the required rigor.
- When standards are unpacked, there is greater consensus among team members regarding what the standard means and how students will demonstrate mastery of that standard on a common formative assessment.
- The alignment of standards and assessment makes it easier to diagnose where students each are in their learning, and then to provide intervention (when they don't understand) or extension (when they do understand).
- The unpacking process ensures *all* students learn at high levels.

The process to unpack is simple and shouldn't take much time once your team is in the swing of things. Unpacking standards should never be a one-time event. Unpacked standards should have dog-eared corners and pizza sauce spilled on them from continually referring to them as you create units of study. Other times to review your unpacked standards include at the beginning of the year, the beginning of each unit, and the end of the unit as a reflection to make necessary changes. When revisiting the standards, ask the following questions.

- "Do we still see the standard the same way?"
- "Did we teach to and assess the rigor or DOK we identified as a team?"
- "Has the priority for this standard changed or shifted?"
- "Did the materials we used to teach the standard align with our understanding of the standard?"
- "Was there a part (or a learning target) of the standard that we prioritized but inadvertently didn't teach?"
- "Will this standard be included in additional units of study?"

Unpack a Standard in Six Steps

So let's get started unpacking. There are six steps to unpack a standard.

1. Read the standard as a course or grade-level team.
2. Circle the skills (verbs) then underline the key concepts and criteria.
3. Determine the number of learning targets within the standard.
4. Come to consensus on the rigor (DOK) of each learning target.
5. Identify academic vocabulary embedded in the standard.
6. Discuss initial ideas for instruction and assessment.

Decide on Learning Targets

Don't worry so much about the process of unpacking standards into learning targets. Teachers often fear they will do it wrong. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The answer is what your team decides. And you can always change your mind on separating or combining learning targets the next time you teach the unit. If you are going to teach and assess learning targets separately, then make each its own learning target. If you are going to teach and assess learning targets together, then leave them together as one learning target. Remember, it is important not to separate concepts that should stay together (Webb, 2002). Ultimately, you and your team will make the best decision for your students. Figure 3.1 is an example of an unpacked standard for grade 6 reading.

| Grade 6 Example | | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Reading Standard for Literature—CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2 | | | |
| <u>Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</u> | | | |
| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
| Learning target 1: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. | 2 | | |
| Learning target 2: Provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. | 2 | | |
| Academic vocabulary: <i>theme, central idea, text, conveyed, summary, personal opinion</i> | | | |

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 3.1: Example of unpacked standard for grade 6 reading.

Figure 3.2 is a chart you can use to determine the DOK levels for your learning targets.

| What is the DOK level? | What is the cognitive demand? | What is the demand of the task students must complete? | What is the demand of the mental processing students must perform? | What is the demand of response students must provide? | What is the demand of the goal and expectation for students? |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| DOK 1 (recall) | Low | Just the facts Just do it | Recall information Recall how to | Answer correctly | Answer it |
| DOK 2 (skill or concept) | Moderate | Show and share or summarize Comprehend and communicate Specify and explain Give examples and nonexamples | Apply knowledge, concepts, or skills Use information and basic reasoning | Establish and explain with examples | Use it to explain it |
| DOK 3 (strategic thinking) | High | Delve deeply Inquire and investigate Critical thinking Problem solving Creative thinking Defend, justify, or refute with evidence Connect, confirm, conclude, consider, or critique | Think strategically Use complex reasoning supported by evidence | Examine and explain with evidence | Use it to prove it |
| DOK 4 (extended thinking) | Extensive | Go deep within a subject area Go among the texts and topics Go across the curriculum Go beyond the classroom | Use extended reasoning with supportive evidence Think extensively | Explore and explain with examples and evidence (over an extended period) | Go for it |

Source: Adapted from Francis, 2022.

FIGURE 3.2: DOK levels chart.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

There are many DOK charts available online for various subjects, and you can find expert guidance on this topic from Erik M. Francis's (2022) *Deconstructing Depth of Knowledge*. While it is nice to

have a reference point, keep in mind that deciding the DOK as a team is what will bring you to clarity and agreement, not just completing the chart. You may also find that one verb may describe various DOK levels.

- Describe the characteristics of metamorphic rock (DOK 1).
- Describe the difference between metamorphic and igneous rock (DOK 2).
- Describe the relationships that exist between the rock cycles (DOK 3).

Each of these examples uses the verb *describe* in different DOK levels.

Practice: Unpacking a Standard

Now it's your turn. Select either the elementary or secondary example to unpack using the six-step process listed on page 37.

Elementary Unpacking Examples

Figure 3.3 provides an example of the unpacked standard.

| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
|--|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Learning target 1: Describe characters in a story (such as their traits, motivations, or feelings). | 1, 3 | | |
| Learning target 2: Explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. | 3 | | |
| Academic vocabulary: <i>characters, traits, motivations, feelings, contributes, sequence of events</i> | | | |

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 3.3: Example of unpacked elementary literacy standard with two learning targets.

As figure 3.4 (page 40) shows, teachers often divide CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3 into three learning targets by separating learning target 1 into two learning targets: one for traits and another for motivations and feelings. There is never a “wrong” or “right” answer when it comes to unpacking standards. It is the conversation and slogging through that brings a team clarity and agreement on what the standard means and how members should teach it.

Grade 3 Example

Reading Standard for Literature—CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (such as their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
|---|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Learning target 1: Describe characters in a story (such as their traits). | 1 | | |
| Learning target 2: Describe characters in a story (such as their motivations or feelings). | 3 | | |
| Learning target 3: Explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. | 3 | | |

Academic vocabulary: *characters, traits, motivations, feelings, contributes, sequence of events*

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 3.4: Example of unpacked elementary literacy standard with three learning targets.

Please use the reproducible at the end of this chapter (page 44) to unpack your own standard.

Secondary Unpacking Example

Figure 3.5 shows an example of an unpacked standard for a secondary English language arts standard.

It's best to unpack all standards for the unit of study by identifying learning targets, determining DOK and academic vocabulary, and then going back to jot down some ideas in the Instruction and Assessment boxes (see figure 3.5). Caution: This is not a planning session. Consider it an initial brain dump of ideas. Jot down ideas for instruction and assessment, but do not go into detail about them during this step of the process. You will plan specific strategies and assessments in steps 3 and 4 of the process.

Secondary Example

Reading Standard for Literature—CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (such as those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
|--|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Learning target 1: Analyze how complex characters (such as those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text. | 3 | | |
| Learning target 2: Analyze how complex characters (such as those with multiple or conflicting motivations) interact with other characters. | 3 | | |
| Learning target 3: Analyze how complex characters (such as those with multiple or conflicting motivations) advance the plot or develop the theme. | 3 | | |
| (Create a fourth learning target by separating <i>plot</i> from <i>theme</i> ; but again, the team decides.) | | | |

Academic vocabulary: *complex characters, conflicting motivations, course of the text, plot, theme*

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 3.5: Example of unpacked secondary literacy standard.

Mathematics Unpacking Example

You may be wondering how to unpack for your specific content area. Unpacking standards is the same for every content area. I used English language arts standards to have you practice in this chapter because most of us can relate to these standards before transferring the unpacking process to your own specific course or content area. Figure 3.6 (page 42) shows an example of an unpacked standard for mathematics, grade 3.

Grade 3 Mathematics Standard
CCSS.Math-Content.3.MD.D.8
~~Solve real world and mathematical problems involving perimeters of polygons, including finding the perimeter given the side lengths, finding an unknown side length, and exhibiting rectangles with the same perimeter and different areas or with the same area and different perimeters.~~

| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
|--|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Learning target 1: Solve real world and mathematical problems involving perimeters of polygons, including finding the perimeter given the side lengths. | 2 | | |
| Learning target 2: Solve real world and mathematical problems involving perimeters of polygons, finding an unknown side length. | 2 | | |
| Learning target 3: Solve real world and mathematical problems exhibiting rectangles with the same perimeter and different areas or with the same area and different perimeters. | 3 | | |
| Academic vocabulary: <i>perimeter, polygon, unknown side length, exhibiting rectangles, area</i> | | | |

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010b.

FIGURE 3.6: Example of unpacked mathematics standard.

Build Your Unit: Unpack Standards Into Learning Targets

Use the reproducible “Standards Unpacking Template” (page 44) to unpack the standards you identify for the unit you’re building with your team. Use the six steps for unpacking a standard mentioned on page 37.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Have a strategy to teach academic vocabulary from the standard to your students.
- Unpacked standards are living documents; revisit them often for your learning targets to become even clearer.
- Go over standards each year and at the beginning of each unit as a refresher.

Summary

Unpacking standards as a team is critical for understanding what the standards mean, the DOK of the standards, and academic vocabulary. When you know your standards better, you can dig deeper into how to teach them at higher levels. The unpacking process also encourages an initial team conversation about how to teach and assess each standard. Unpacking gives your team a more explicit explanation of what a standard means and how it looks. Revisit unpacked standards often during the year for greater clarity about the meaning of the standards and what it looks like when students master them.

Use the reproducible “Chapter 3 Reflection: Unpacking Standards” (page 45) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding unpacking standards. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Standards Unpacking Template

| Standard | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Learning Target | DOK Level | Instruction | Assessment |
| Learning target 1: | | | |
| Learning target 2: | | | |
| Learning target 3: | | | |
| Learning target 4: | | | |
| Academic vocabulary: | | | |

Chapter 3 Reflection: Unpacking Standards

Rate your team on a scale from 1–5.

1 = Lowest level of proficiency

5 = Highest level of proficiency

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| The team unpacked the standards together (not a task force or district team). | | | | | |
| The team identified learning targets within the standard. | | | | | |
| The team discussed the DOK of each learning target. | | | | | |
| The team identified and understood academic vocabulary. | | | | | |
| Teachers on the team share initial engagement strategies or ideas on how to best teach the identified standards. | | | | | |
| Teachers discussed assessment ideas for each learning target. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |

Chapter 4

Prioritize Standards Into Three Categories (Step 3)

Teacher teams need to prioritize standards, coming to consensus on what is absolutely essential for students to know and be able to do as a result of the course or grade level.

—Bob Sonju, Sharon Kramer,
Mike Mattos, and Austin Buffum

What if you and your team stopped trying to teach all the state standards to mastery and instead focused on the most important or essential standards for your students to know and be able to do? What if the essential standards and learning targets were crystal clear so your students could see and hit the targets? What if doing this made your stress level go down and your students were learning at a deep, rich level?

As I previously stated in the introduction (page 1), when teams try to teach everything, they find themselves rowing to the island of mastery with their “hair on fire!” That isn’t good for teachers or students. Prioritizing the standards will help your team focus its energy on the important standards and skills students must know in a course or grade level. We all agree—we can’t teach all the state standards to mastery in nine months. We also know that behind closed doors, every teacher prioritizes standards. But how about we do it together as a collaborative team?

Table 4.1 (page 48) shows the three categories of standards. The terms for each type of standard—*essential, supporting, and additional*—vary from district to district and state to state. For example, in Utah, the standards your team decides are the most important may be called *power standards*, while in Texas, they may be called *promise standards*. Some common terms are *power standards, priority standards, readiness standards, promise standards, and must-know standards*. Throughout this book, I use the term *essential standards*.

Here's How

Scan this code to watch the author explain this step and see teams in action.



SCAN ME

TABLE 4.1: Three Categories of Standards

| Type of Standard | Metaphor | Importance |
|------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Essential | Boulder | Have to know |
| Supporting | Rock | Nice to know |
| Additional | Butterfly | Fun to know |

Essential standards (*boulders*) are the big ones; students must have a deep, rich understanding of these standards before leaving the course or grade level. Examples include reading and comprehension on grade level, knowing the alphabet in kindergarten, mastering multiplication tables in third grade, and understanding how body systems work together in biology in high school.

Supporting standards (*rocks*) support the essential standards. Examples include folktales, fairytales, myths, and legends. A supporting standard doesn't stand alone as an essential standard; it supports reading and comprehending on grade level, the author's purpose, and text dependency. Think about it this way: I want to expose my students to the rich stories of folktales, fairytales, myths, and legends, but in the larger scheme of things, I won't be concerned if my adult children know the difference between these types of stories. However, I do care if my adult children can read and comprehend on grade level. Supporting (rock) standards help students achieve the essential (boulder) standards.

Additional standards (*butterflies*) are standards that are fun to know or informational, but teams won't put students in an intervention group if they didn't master these additional standards. An example of this would be careers in weather. Careers in weather would be fun to know, but teachers wouldn't expect students to master that information. Butterflies land and leave!

I'm sure that right now your team could name some boulders, rocks, and butterflies for your course or grade level. Don't overthink the process or stress too much. Standards can be moved freely from one category to the next as you teach your units and have greater insights. For example, I had a high school mathematics team who prioritized statistics and probability in Integrated Math 2 as boulders. A year later, based on Advanced Placement (AP) courses and college requirements, the team demoted statistics and probability to a butterfly in Integrated Math 2, and eventually moved both standards to a business class.

There are several criteria for essential standards. Remember *REAL*: readiness, endurance, assessment, and leverage (Reeves, 2002).

- **Readiness:** Knowledge and skills necessary for success in the next grade level or unit of instruction (for example, letter-sound recognition, logarithms)
- **Endurance:** Knowledge and skills valued beyond a single test date (for example, point of view, place value)

- **Assessment:** Assessment on district benchmark assessments or the end-of-year state test (If you teach a state-tested subject, examine the state testing blueprint for standards covered on the end-of-year test.)
- **Leverage:** Knowledge and skills valued in multiple disciplines (for example, reading informational text in other subject areas, using unit rate problems in mathematics for science)

A standard is essential if it is important enough for teams to do the following.

- Spend time on teaching with depth.
- Assess.
- Discuss results based on data.
- Intervene if students need additional time and support to demonstrate mastery.

There may be disagreements as you work with your team to prioritize standards. Here are some ways you can come to consensus.

- If everyone believes it is *essential* or *not essential*, the decision is easy!
- If one or more teachers have different opinions, listen to the reasons why or why not.
- Read the standard for the courses or grade levels before and after your grade.
- Consider if other standards are similar.
- Clarify *why* the standard is essential using the REAL criteria.

Practice: Sort Standards

With your team, use the following exercise to practice the process of sorting standards. The practice uses the metaphors of boulders, rocks, and butterflies to sort standards; however, if you prefer, use the formal language your state or district uses such as *essential standards*, *supporting standards*, and *additional standards*.

Begin with boulders, repeat the process for butterflies, and then for rocks. This order of deciding is the easiest because boulders and butterflies seem to be the most obvious, and the “nice to know” rocks will become evident by the process of elimination.

The three categories are as follows.

1. Essential (Boulder): Have to know
2. Supporting (Rock): Nice to know
3. Additional (Butterfly): Fun to know

Follow these instructions.

1. Read through the unit standards in figure 4.1 (page 50). Without consulting your teammates, identify which standards you believe are essential (boulders) and mark those. (Two or three minutes)
2. The facilitator tallies team members’ responses for each standard. Team members accomplish this by raising their hands on standards they have marked.

| Standards | Essential Standard Boulder Have to Know | Supporting Standard Rock Nice to Know | Additional Standard Butterfly Fun to Know |
|--|---|---|---|
| Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation. | | | |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations (such as cumulus, nimbus, and cirrus). | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (such as saltwater, freshwater, and rivers). | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather. | | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns. | | | |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle. | | | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas). | | | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation. | | | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 4.1: Sorting standards exercise example.

3. Conduct a table talk. Ask, “Where do you agree or disagree?” (Five minutes)
4. Come to team consensus. (Five minutes)
5. Repeat for additional (butterfly) standards.
6. Repeat for supporting (rock) standards.

Don’t peek at the example team responses on the next page!

Figure 4.2 shows an example of a completed exercise. Do you agree or disagree with this team’s selected boulders, rocks, and butterfly standards? What did your team collectively decide? Would you have prioritized the standards the same way? Remember, it is what your team decides to do—not what another team or book tells you to do. And also remember, you can change your mind after your team teaches the unit and has more experience with the standards.

| Standards | Essential Standard Boulder | Supporting Standard Rock | Additional Standard Butterfly |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Have to Know | Nice to Know | Fun to Know |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation. | X | | |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations (such as cumulus, nimbus, and cirrus). | X | | |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (such as saltwater, freshwater, and rivers). | | | X |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather. | | | X |
| Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns. | | | X |
| Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle. | X | | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solid, liquid, gas). | | X | |
| Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation. | | X | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 4.2: Completed sorting standards exercise example.

Build Your Unit: Prioritize Standards Into Three Categories

Use the reproducible “Identify and Prioritize Standard for a Unit Template: Step 3” (page 53) to write the standards for the unit of study you and your team are creating. This is where you will also prioritize standards into boulders, rocks, and butterflies. It is important to note there may be units in mathematics or other subject areas with only one standard for the entire unit (such as fractions in mathematics).

As I noted earlier, *essential standards* are a carefully selected subset of the total list of grade- and course-specific standards within each content area students must know and be able to do by the end of each school year to be prepared to enter the next grade level or course (Ainsworth, 2010).

Essential standards are the standards teams guarantee *all* students will know and be able to do by the end of the year. These are the standards important enough to write common formative assessments about and provide Tier 2 for intervention and extension.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Don't let standards get lost in the minor details of the curriculum.
- The essential (boulder) standards are the boss! (Textbooks are used to support the essential standards.)
- Don't worry as you prioritize standards. You can change your mind about them after teaching the unit.

Summary

Prioritizing the selected standards allows teams to focus their time and energy on the standards the teams agree are essential learning. Teams then sort the selected standards into three categories: essential (boulder), supporting (rock), and additional (butterfly). When the team identifies the most important standards, members know where to prioritize their time during planning and teaching. Use the reproducible “Chapter 4 Reflection: Identifying and Prioritizing Standards” (page 54) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding prioritizing standards. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Identify and Prioritize Standard for a Unit Template: Step 3

| Standards | Essential Standard Boulder Have to know | Supporting Standard Rock Nice to know | Additional Standard Butterfly Fun to know |
|-----------|--|---|---|
| 1: | | | |
| 2: | | | |
| 3: | | | |
| 4: | | | |
| 5: | | | |
| 6: | | | |
| 7: | | | |
| 8: | | | |

Chapter 4 Reflection: Identifying and Prioritizing Standards

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rate your team on a scale from 1–5. 1 = Lowest level of proficiency 5 = Highest level of proficiency | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The team chose the selected standards for the unit from state or national standards. | | | | | |
| All teachers on the team collectively agree on the identified unit standards. | | | | | |
| The team has purposefully written down all standards on paper (rather than identified verbally). | | | | | |
| The team has prioritized standards into boulders, rocks, and butterflies. | | | | | |
| All teachers on the team have reached consensus on the prioritized standards. | | | | | |
| All teachers agree to teach the identified standards. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |

Chapter 5

Create Common Formative Assessments (Step 4)

We argue that the benefits of using team-developed common assessments for formative purposes are so powerful that no teacher team should be allowed to opt out of creating them.

—Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour,
Robert Eaker, Thomas W. Many, and Mike Mattos

What if your unit assessments aligned with essential standards? What if your team was able to look at the data quickly to provide intervention or extension within forty-eight hours of administering the assessment? What if you were able to provide intervention and extension throughout a unit rather than waiting until the end? What if the data also informed your practice as a teacher? What if you were hungry for the data rather than dreading data analysis as a team?

In *Learning by Doing, Third Edition*, the authors refer to *common formative assessments* as the “lynchpin” of the PLC process (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 133). A *lynchpin* is the fastener used to prevent a wagon wheel from sliding off the axle. Without the lynchpin, everything falls apart. As you read through the list of common assessment practices, consider what your team is currently doing and where you might want to tighten up your practices together.

- Create or agree on the assessment as a team.
- Give each assessment on the same day in the same way.
- Take action on data within forty-eight hours.
- Look at the data on item-analysis sheets.
- Create a plan for intervention and extension for students by learning target.
- Inform our practice as teachers based on common formative assessment data.
- Be vulnerable and have thoughtful conversations about the data.



- Make changes in instructional practices to get the desired results.
- Keep it simple and doable.

As educators, we often find ourselves running away from data for multiple reasons. It could be because of our own prior experiences as a student. It could be because *data* just equates to a grade in the grade-book. It could be that our team has a plethora of data, but we don't act on the data. This situation is where the phrase *data rich, information poor* (or *DRIP*) comes from. Be aware of the dreaded DRIP (Peters & Waterman, 1982). We determine the value of data based on the information we receive back. The assessment should tell us to what degree students have mastered the standard. The assessment should also add value to our teaching. We gauge our success not on "Have we taught it?" but on "Have students learned it?"

In our school, when teachers first started talking about giving the same assessment, some worried about others judging them because of their data. I even had one teacher who changed her data before she brought it to the team meeting because she was afraid of not being the best or what other teachers would think of her teaching! Hesitation in bringing data to the table can happen for a variety of reasons. I would imagine you could list a few reasons right now that might impact your team's ability to look at data together.

To overcome this hesitancy, our staff had some staff culture issues to overcome and some data-analysis practices to figure out, but we were motivated to improve. We soon figured out how to have authentic conversations about data to help us meet our goal of high levels of learning for our students.

Teachers determined that looking at data on an item-analysis sheet was helpful to quickly see what students knew by learning target. The item-analysis sheet also gave teams information on how the assessment was performing. We realized our assessments were way too long. We started to cut common formative assessments back to four or five questions per learning target to achieve the quick turnaround we desired.

At first, the teams' end-of-unit assessments were the only common assessment they were giving. Teachers were heading to the island of mastery, but students were falling out of the boat along the way, and we didn't notice until it was too late. Something had to change, so we started to write common assessments after each learning target to ensure mastery throughout the unit. We discovered that solid common assessments are key to the success of students learning the identified standards. Over time, common assessments became more systematic.

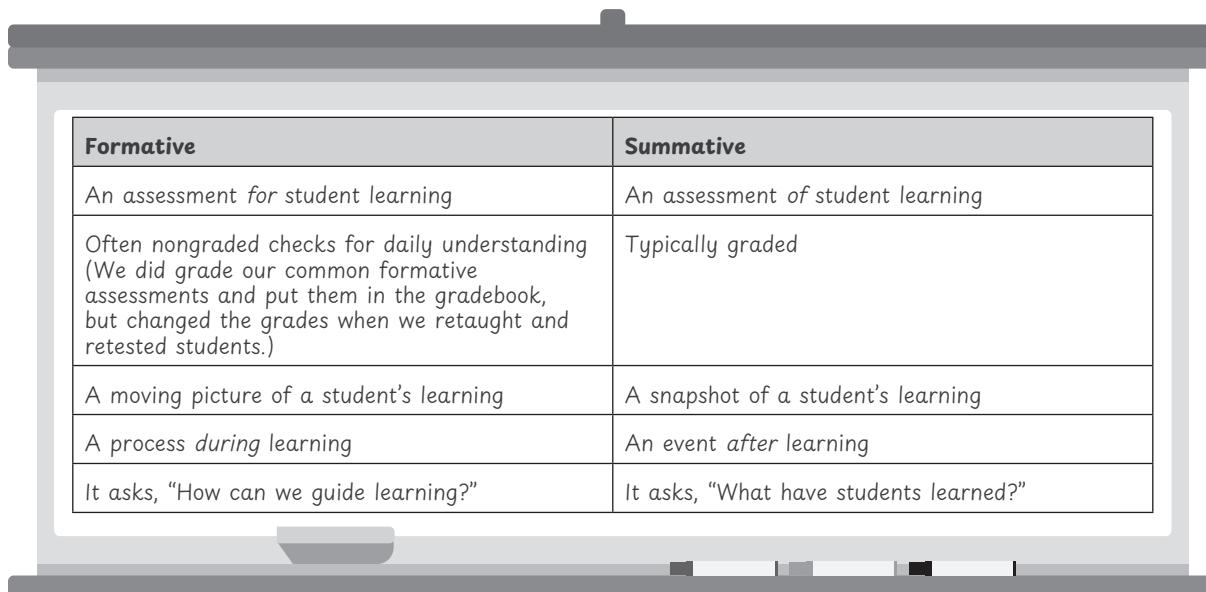
Understand Formative Versus Summative Assessment

It is important for your team to understand the difference between formative and summative assessments. *Formative assessment* happens during learning, while *summative assessment* happens after learning. How you use it determines the difference between formative and summative assessment. If a student has one opportunity to take the assessment, then it is summative. If the teacher reteaches and retests a student, then it is formative. Assessment expert and educational consultant Kim Bailey (2019) clarifies the difference between formative and summative assessment, stating, "When I think about the

most clarifying description of the power of formative assessment, it is the one shared by Dr. Richard DuFour: ‘A summative assessment is how students prove they have learned. A formative assessment gives a student a chance to *improve* upon their learning.’ This explanation captures the intent and power of formative assessment.”

Many educators grew up with a summative assessment system, where there was one chance to take the assessment and the score went into the gradebook or computer. However, there is a mountain of evidence that students benefit greatly from a formative assessment system, where the focus is on students mastering the essential standards rather than the score (Ozan & Kincaid, 2018). Table 5.1 summarizes the differences between formative and summative assessment.

TABLE 5.1: Formative Versus Summative Assessment



| Formative | Summative |
|---|--|
| An assessment <i>for</i> student learning | An assessment <i>of</i> student learning |
| Often nongraded checks for daily understanding (We did grade our common formative assessments and put them in the gradebook, but changed the grades when we retaught and retested students.) | Typically graded |
| A moving picture of a student’s learning | A snapshot of a student’s learning |
| A process <i>during</i> learning | An event <i>after</i> learning |
| It asks, “How can we guide learning?” | It asks, “What have students learned?” |

Rather than using the common term *summative assessment* for our end-of-unit assessment, we started calling them *formative end-of-unit assessments*, which moved us away from the old summative term that implies a one-time event! We were still able to reteach and reassess our students even after the unit ended (except for when it was the last unit of the semester and the class was only one semester long, or when it was the end of the school year).

Consider these questions as a team.

- Does your school have a formative assessment system?
- How will your school move toward a more formative assessment system?

Have Students Track Mastery of Essential Standards

When students know what mastery of a standard looks like and can track their own progress, they are more likely to engage the grit necessary to master the standard. Figure 5.1 (page 58) shows an example of an *I can* self-assessment form students can fill out to monitor their progress toward mastery of an essential standard.

| Name _____ | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I Can Statements | I Can Teach This to Others | I Can Do This by Myself | I Can Do This With Help | I Cannot Do This Yet |
| Strong mathematicians can determine a fraction by finding a part of a whole. (5.1) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can write mixed numbers and improper fractions by understanding the whole or one. (5.2) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can compare fractions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thinking which is closest to 0, $\frac{1}{2}$, or 1• Finding common denominators• Noticing all the numerators are the same (5.3) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can write equivalent fractions by multiplying or dividing the numerator and the denominator. (5.4) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can rename fractions as decimals by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finding equivalent fractions with 10 or 100 as the denominator• Dividing the fraction (5.5 and 5.6) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can find decimal equivalents by using a calculator. (5.7) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can convert fractions to percentages by changing the fractions to a decimal then to a percent. (5.8) | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Strong mathematicians can identify different graphs by knowing the properties of each. (5.9) | | | | |
| Strong mathematicians can find the percent of the area on a circle graph by using a percent circle. (5.10) | | | | |



Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010b.

FIGURE 5.1: I can student self-assessment form.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

As our teams became more proficient at looking at their data, we soon realized we needed to start or stop doing some assessment practices. This next section will help your team analyze where you are in common assessment practices.

DuFour and colleagues (2016) posit there are five common assessment practices teams should implement.

1. The focus is on students learning essential standards.
2. Teams create and agree on assessments.
3. Teams collaboratively analyze and act on results.
4. Students and teachers receive immediate feedback.
5. Students have multiple opportunities for success.

As your team designs common formative assessments, take care to ensure the test questions align with the identified essential standards. It is important for students and teachers to have immediate feedback, and students to have multiple opportunities to practice and master the standards. Assessment is a powerful tool to increase both student and adult learning.

Practice: Analyze Common Assessment Practices

Using the five common assessment practices, complete this practice exercise with a partner using the following directions.

1. Read each scenario (beginning on page 60) with a partner.
2. Circle key words in the scenario to help you decide if it is a common assessment practice.

3. On the chart in figure 5.2, mark *yes* if the scenario describes a common assessment practice or *no* if it does not. List reasons that support your answers.
4. Figure 5.3 shows the answer key. Don't peek!

| Scenario | Yes | No | Reason for your answer |
|----------|-----|----|------------------------|
| One | | | |
| Two | | | |
| Three | | | |
| Four | | | |
| Five | | | |

FIGURE 5.2: Common assessment scenario recording chart.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

Scenario One

Geometry teachers at Skyline High School meet to plan their measurement unit. They decide on skills their students need to demonstrate mastery. They then create common assessments. Throughout the unit of study, students receive common assessments to check for understanding. Teachers meet frequently to look at student data and provide opportunities for students to extend their learning or receive additional help to achieve specific skills.

Scenario Two

Teachers give the end-of-chapter reading test to all students in the third grade. They score the tests and enter the scores into the computer. Mr. Thomas, the lead teacher, looks over all scores, divides the students into ability groups, and distributes the lists to all third-grade teachers. Intervention or extension activities begin the next day during Tier 2.

Scenario Three

In tenth-grade basic mathematics class, each student goes to the board to work problems. Each student has the same number of problems to do on the board. As they work problems, students receive immediate feedback and support from the teacher. Their grades for the day are based on their willingness to try, good behavior, and the number of problems they got correct on the board.

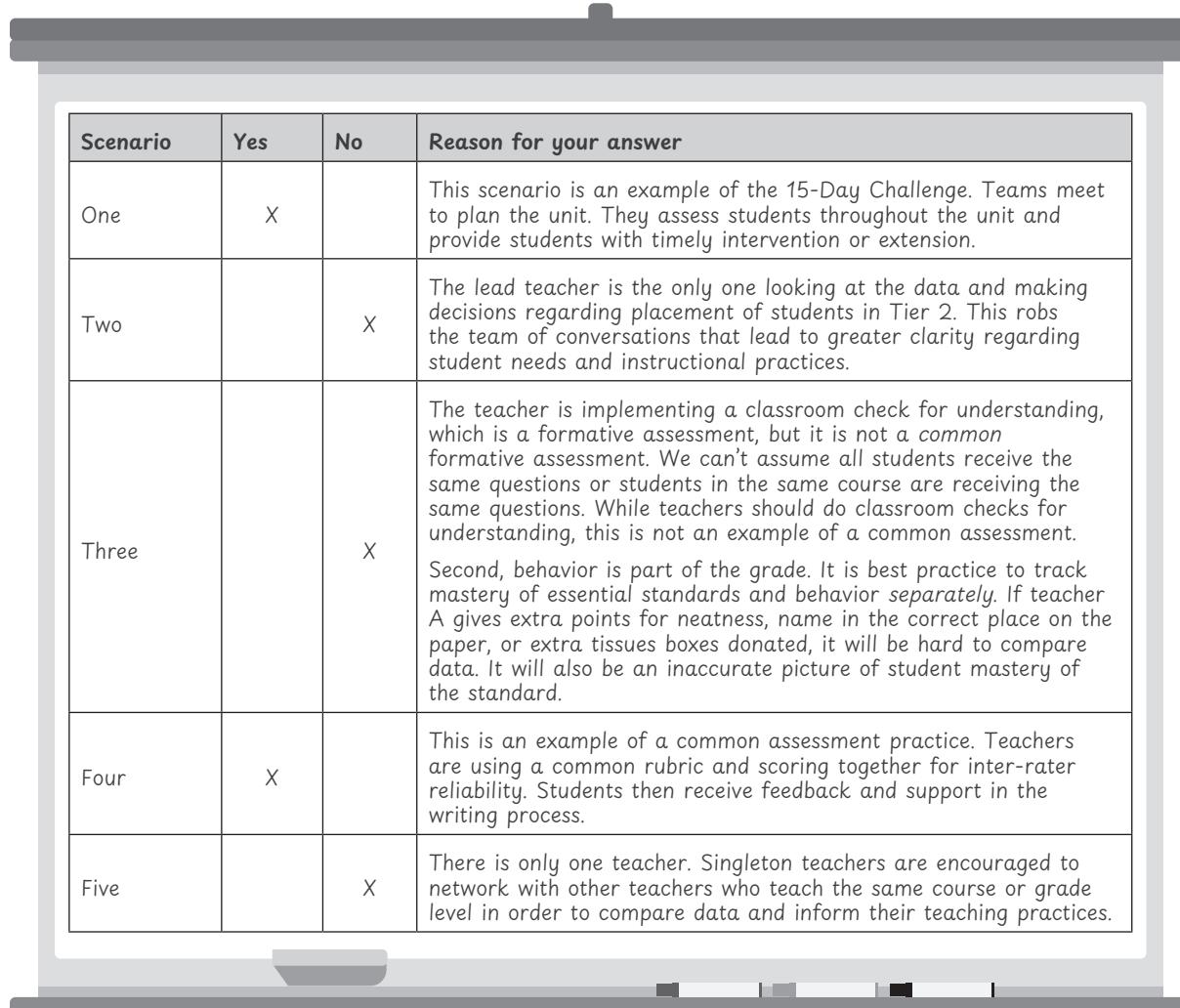
Scenario Four

Seventh-grade teachers use a team-developed rubric to assist their students in writing an opinion paper. During the writing process, each teacher takes a sampling of student papers to the seventh-grade team meeting. Teachers score each paper according to the rubric and agree on each student's writing proficiency (whether it is a 1, 2, 3, or 4). This process ensures all teachers are scoring their papers the same way. Next, the teachers each score the rest of their own class papers. Students receive feedback and support, and the writing process continues.

Scenario Five

During eighth-grade Orchestra II class, all Mrs. Larsen's students play a simple scale together on their instruments. Next, they demonstrate their skills individually. Each student receives immediate feedback. In the next week's class, the students play the scale again. They receive a grade based on accuracy in playing the scale.

Figure 5.3 shows the answer key. How do your answers compare?



| Scenario | Yes | No | Reason for your answer |
|----------|-----|----|--|
| One | X | | This scenario is an example of the 15-Day Challenge. Teams meet to plan the unit. They assess students throughout the unit and provide students with timely intervention or extension. |
| Two | | X | The lead teacher is the only one looking at the data and making decisions regarding placement of students in Tier 2. This robs the team of conversations that lead to greater clarity regarding student needs and instructional practices. |
| Three | | X | The teacher is implementing a classroom check for understanding, which is a formative assessment, but it is not a <i>common</i> formative assessment. We can't assume all students receive the same questions or students in the same course are receiving the same questions. While teachers should do classroom checks for understanding, this is not an example of a common assessment. Second, behavior is part of the grade. It is best practice to track mastery of essential standards and behavior <i>separately</i> . If teacher A gives extra points for neatness, name in the correct place on the paper, or extra tissues boxes donated, it will be hard to compare data. It will also be an inaccurate picture of student mastery of the standard. |
| Four | X | | This is an example of a common assessment practice. Teachers are using a common rubric and scoring together for inter-rater reliability. Students then receive feedback and support in the writing process. |
| Five | | X | There is only one teacher. Singleton teachers are encouraged to network with other teachers who teach the same course or grade level in order to compare data and inform their teaching practices. |

FIGURE 5.3: Answer key for figure 5.2.

Build Your Unit: Create Common Assessments

The following steps help keep you on track when creating your assessments for each unit of study. Work collaboratively with your team to follow the steps to create common assessments for the unit you're building.

1. Backward map the assessments for the unit of study using figure 5.4. *Backward mapping* means you begin planning with the end in mind. Start by creating the end-of-unit assessment. Beginning with the end-of-unit assessment gives teams a clear understanding of what they expect students to know and be able to do by the end of the unit.
2. Each team member brings sample test questions based on essential (boulder) standards, previously created assessments, or assessments from the textbook to the team meeting. Use figure 5.5 (page 64) to collect any questions or lists of already-created team assessments. There are two sections in figure 5.5 for use with two learning targets. Each section has six boxes. Use the boxes to write individual questions, or already-created team assessments to bring to collaboration time.
3. Collectively design the assessment as a team. Avoid letting one person create the assessment and administering it for everyone. Go through each question to see if it aligns with the DOK of the standard. Select the best questions.
4. Tally the number of questions on the assessment for each learning target or standard (see figure 5.6, page 65).
5. Take the test! Give each team member a copy of the assessment to complete during collaboration time. This process clears up misconceptions or tricky questions. This step is important and has many benefits for teachers and students.
6. Agree on how to administer the assessment. Consider the following.
 - + Can students use a calculator?
 - + Can students use a times-table chart?
 - + Can students access vocabulary definitions?
 - + Can teachers read a portion of the assessment to students?
7. Agree on how to score the assessment. Consider the following.
 - + Is partial credit available?
 - + What constitutes partial credit?
 - + Is the team using a rubric? (Score sample papers together for inter-rater reliability.)

Repeat steps 1–7 for each common assessment embedded throughout the unit of study.

| Unit Map | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--|---|
| Common Formative Assessments | Date | Learning Targets | Assessment Resources and Ideas |
| Formative: | September 2 | 1 Describe characters in a story, such as their traits. (RL.3.3) | Choose a character from a story; create a character profile together as a class. Discuss the character's physical traits. Ask students to provide evidence from the text to support their descriptions. |
| Formative: | September 6 | 2 Describe characters in a story, such as their motivations or feelings. (RL.3.3) | Arrange for "interviews" with characters from the story. Students can prepare questions as if they are interviewing the character. This activity can help students think deeply about character motivation and actions. |
| Formative: | September 12 | 3 Explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. (RL.3.3) | Create character maps or diagrams that visually show the relationship between characters and how their actions influence one another. This helps students understand the interconnectedness of characters in a story. |
| Formative End-of-Unit Assessment: | September 18 | 2, 3 RL.3.3 | Trace the development of a character throughout the story. Discuss how the character's actions at the beginning differ from those at the end, and how this evolution contributes to the story's overall progression. |
| Notes: | | | |

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 5.4: Unit assessment map example.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Directions: Each team member brings sample questions, former assessments, textbook assessments, and so on to the team meeting. The team selects the questions from resources that best align with the essential (boulder) standards.</p> <p>Write down the questions that best align with the learning target and DOK. Copy this form for additional learning targets.</p> | | |
| <p>Learning target 2: RL.3.3—Describe characters, such as their motivations.</p> | | |
| 1. Act out a role of a character. | 2. Create a character map. | 3. Maintain a character journal. |
| 4. Have a group discussion about the motivation of a character. | 5. Arrange character interviews. | 6. Support your finding with evidence from the text. |
| <p>Learning target 3: RL.3.3—Explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.</p> | | |
| 7. Compare the actions of two or more characters. | 8. Complete a graphic organizer. | 9. Explain the characters' actions on the story's sequence. |
| 10. Write a story from a view of the character. | 11. Create a map that shows the relationship between characters and their actions to drive the plot. | 12. Trace the development of a character. |

Source for standard: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 5.5: Assessment questions example.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

When tallying the number of questions for each learning target or standard, note the following.

- Questions unrelated to the identified unit standard may end up on the assessment when using a test from a textbook or online test bank. Delete or cross out these questions.
- It is unnecessary to assess nonessential (butterfly) standards.
- As a team, it is important to identify how many questions students must answer correctly to constitute mastery of a learning target.
- Going through the process of quantifying assessment questions ensures the assessment is balanced regarding standards or learning targets.

Figure 5.6 shows an example of a completed tally sheet.

| Essential Standard | Number of Questions <i>You may also write the question number in the box rather than just a tally mark.</i> | Mastery <i>How many questions do students need to answer correctly to show mastery of the standards?</i> |
|--------------------|--|---|
| RL.8.1 | | 4/5 |
| RL.8.2 | | 2/3 |
| RL.8.3 | | 4/6 |

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

FIGURE 5.6: Quantify assessment questions example.

Tally the number of questions for each learning target or standard on the assessment using the reproducible “Quantify Assessment Questions Template” (page 67). This form is helpful if you are assessing more than one standard on the common formative assessment. It is also helpful to quantify the assessment if you are using an already-created team assessment. This process keeps your assessment balanced so you don’t over assess one learning target and underassess another learning target.

Figure 5.7 is a data questions example that will help keep your team focused on asking the right questions. In the beginning, our teams had generalized questions, such as, “How did it go for you?” The answers were also general, such as, “Not bad. We still need a little work,” and teams would move on to the next agenda item. After we started using the data questions template (see figure 5.7), teams became more focused and their conversations became more productive.

| Questions | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| What worked well? | |
| Where do our students struggle the most? | |
| Item analysis: Which problems do students miss most frequently? Why? | |
| How can we improve the assessment? | |
| Review preplanned materials. Where can we intervene or expand? | |

FIGURE 5.7: Data questions template.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Schedule when your team will look at data together on the calendar.
- Begin with the end in mind by starting with the end-of-unit assessment.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to show proficiency.
- Review district benchmark assessments and the state test blueprint when designing assessments.

Summary

Common formative assessments are the lynchpin of the PLC process. The purpose of common assessments is twofold. First, common assessments tell teams which students have mastered the standard and which students need additional time and support during intervention time. Second, common assessments tell teachers and teams if what they are doing is working or not. Create common formative assessments prior to planning the unit to ensure your assessments align with your team's selected essential standards. Teams should look at data within forty-eight hours of giving the assessment to provide students with timely intervention and extension. Item-analysis sheets help teams more efficiently look at the data to adjust instructional practices and take action to support student learning. Use the reproducible "Chapter 5 Reflection: Common Assessment Practices" (page 68) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding common assessment practices. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team's responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Quantify Assessment Questions Template

| Essential Standard | Number of Questions You may also write the question number in the box rather than just tally marks. | Mastery How many questions do students need to answer correctly to show mastery of the standards? |
|--|---|---|
| <i>Example:</i> 3.NBT.A.2 | <i>Example:</i>  | <i>Example:</i> 4/5 |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| If there are standards on the assessment that do not align with the essential standards, remove them from the assessment. (This usually happens when the assessment has already been created such as in a textbook, online assessment bank, or computer programs.) | | |
| Notes: | | |

Chapter 5 Reflection: Common Assessment Practices

Rate your team on a scale from 1–5.

1 = Lowest level of proficiency

5 = Highest level of proficiency

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| The assessment focuses on students learning essential standards. | | | | | |
| The team collaboratively creates and agrees on the assessment. | | | | | |
| The team delivers the common assessment in the same time frame. | | | | | |
| The team collaboratively analyzes results and takes action. | | | | | |
| Feedback is immediate for students and teachers. | | | | | |
| The assessment is formative and guides student and adult learning. | | | | | |
| Students receive multiple opportunities for success. | | | | | |
| Students who are not proficient receive skill-specific interventions. | | | | | |
| Students who achieve mastery receive rigorous extensions of the targets. | | | | | |
| Students are involved in monitoring their own progress. | | | | | |
| Teachers acknowledge and celebrate student progress. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |



Chapter 6

Pace and Design the Unit (Step 5)

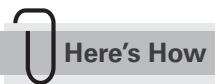
When teams develop the skills necessary to engage in ongoing cycles of collective inquiry around the impact that their professional choices are having on student learning, they build confidence in their capacity to be agents of change—and that confidence makes all the difference.

—William M. Ferriter

What if your team collectively designed units of study based on essentials standards? What if the process was doable and fun? What if teachers shared engagement strategies and ideas? What if the unit of study was visible to students as well as teachers? What if your team could achieve above grade-level or higher results on essential standards for the students it serves? What if you could implement the four critical questions of a PLC in every unit of study?

This chapter will take a deep dive into step 5, when teams *pace and design a unit of study* using the 15-Day Challenge planning chart in the section Practice: Fill Out a 15-Day Challenge Planning Chart for a Unit You Are Currently Teaching (page 81). Steps 1–4 are critical to complete before jumping to step 5. The previous steps set you up for success by creating a clear road map when blocking out the unit of study.

Finally! This is probably the step you've been waiting for! This is where you and your team design the unit of study using the four critical questions of a PLC embedded in an easy-to-use grid.



Here's How

Scan this code to watch the author explain this step and see teams in action.



SCAN ME

As you can see in figure 6.1, we used chart paper and sticky notes to plan our units. It was easier for everyone to contribute, and sticky notes allow you to move ideas around as you are planning. Even if you are using a paper-sized template, you can use the small, quarter-sized sticky notes while planning. Trust me, it's the way to go! I recommend you use different colored sticky notes to help visually distinguish between boulders, rocks, and butterflies. Adding sticky notes on the 15-Day Challenge planning chart discussed in this chapter's Practice section (page 81) should be fun and exciting. I also have teams who design on electronic sites designed for teachers. But be aware that going straight to electronics may diminish getting everyone's voice in the conversation. After the unit is planned, digitize the 15-Day Challenge planning chart in Google.



FIGURE 6.1: Team members adding sticky notes to the 15-Day Challenge planning chart.

The 15-Day Challenge Planning Chart

It's time to get on the chart or the grid, as I often call it. The steps for planning on the chart use dot notation (5.1, 5.2, and so on) to emphasize that, collectively, each makes up part of step 5 of the 15-Day Challenge, pace and design the unit. I will explain each of the steps in the following sections. You have already learned the conceptual background for each step, but this list will help you finally take action.

Step 5.1: Write the Standards for the Unit of Study

This is important for clarity. The team needs to be crystal clear about the standards it's going to teach. See figure 6.2 for a visual representation of this step.

| Water Cycle | Number of Days |
|--|----------------|
| Boulders: Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | |
| Rocks: Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | |
| Butterflies: Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | |
| 1 | 2 |
| 4 | 5 |
| 7 | 8 |
| 10 | 11 |
| 13 | 14 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.2: Standards for the unit of study for the water cycle in the planning chart.

Step 5.2: Determine the Total Number of Days for the Unit

Based on the number of standards you're going to cover and the rigor of those standards, how many days do you think it will take to cover all the material in this unit? Determine the number of days for the unit, and write it at the top right-hand corner of the planning chart. As the team maps out the unit, the number of days may change, but it is a good idea to start with an estimated number. Keep the units manageable. If the unit is too long, for example, the team often loses track of when standards begin and end when pacing out an entire nine-week quarter as one unit.

The first time we did the 15-Day Challenge as a school, each team selected a fifteen-day unit. This made sense; the entire school could begin and end at the same time to have productive conversations about the process. However, not all units are fifteen days long! The length of the unit depends on the number of learning targets and the complexity of the learning targets. Also, if your school is on a block schedule, it may be a 7-Day Challenge. See figure 6.3 (page 72) for a visual representation of this step.

Water Cycle

| | | Number of Days |
|--|--|----------------|
| | | 15 |

Boulders:
Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation
Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations
Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle

Rocks:
Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas)
Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation

Butterflies:
Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers)
Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns
Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather

| | | |
|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.3: Determine the number of days for the unit on the water cycle in the planning chart.

Step 5.3: Determine the Number of Teaching Days for Each Learning Target

How many days do you think it will take your students to learn what they need to master each of the essential learning targets (boulders)? Teachers who have previously taught the course or grade-level content area are helpful in determining an appropriate length of time. These teachers will also know how long it took for students to master the standard in years past. It may also be helpful to look at older district plan books or pacing guides. Additionally, consider the total number of days available and any textbook or material suggestions. Keep in mind that the number of days may change as you actually plan the unit and add supporting (rock) and additional (butterfly) standards. See figure 6.4 for a visual representation of this step.

Water Cycle

Number of Days 15

Boulders:
Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation
Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations
Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle

Rocks:
Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas)
Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation

Butterflies:
Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers)
Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns
Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather

| | | | |
|----|--|---|----|
| 1 | S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation → Four days | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | | 5 S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations → Five days | 6 |
| 7 | | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | S5E1, LT3 Describe and explain the water cycle → Four days | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | | 14 Practice all learning targets together in preparation for end-of-unit assessment | 15 |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.4: Teaching days per learning target for the water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Step 5.4: Add Common Assessments to the Chart

Once your team determines a general outline, add common assessments to the chart. Begin by adding the end-of-unit assessment. If it is the end of the semester and students will be leaving your class, you may consider giving the end-of-unit assessment a few days before the end of the semester to allow for intervention and extension—thus turning a summative assessment into a common formative assessment.

Next, place common formative assessments on the chart after each learning target. Remember, common formative assessments are powerful tools for assessing learning targets throughout the unit of study.

It is also wise to schedule a day on your working calendar to look at the data together as a team so that days don't just slip past. If a week has passed before looking at data, the "catch students quick" ship has sailed, and students may be more confused than ever! See figure 6.5 for a visual representation of this step.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|----|
| Water Cycle | | Number of Days | 15 |
| Boulders: Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | | | |
| Rocks: Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | | | |
| Butterflies: Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | | | |
| 1 S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation Four days | 2 | 3 | |
| 4 Common formative assessment 1 | 5 S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations Five days | 6 | |
| 7 | 8 | 9 Common formative assessment 2 | |
| 10 S5E1, LT3 Describe and explain the water cycle Four days | 11 | 12 | |
| 13 Common formative assessment 3 | 14 Practice all learning targets together in preparation for end-of- unit assessment | 15 End-of-unit assessment | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.5: Common assessments for the water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Step 5.5: Add the Plan for Tier 2 After Each Common Assessment

Step 5.5's content is determined through your work in step 6 (see chapter 7, page 85), but it's shown here to reflect the evolution of the planning chart. Add sticky notes with the plan for intervention and extension groups (folders) to the planning chart. See figure 6.6 for a visual representation of this step.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Water Cycle | | Number of Days | 15 |
| Boulders: Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | | | |
| Rocks: Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | | | |
| Butterflies: Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | | | |
| 1 | S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation Four days | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | Common formative assessment 1 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Tier 2 Plan | 5 | S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations Five days |
| 7 | | 8 | 6 |
| 10 | S5E1, LT3 Describe and explain the water cycle Four days | 11 | 9 |
| 13 | Common formative assessment 3 Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Tier 2 Plan | 14 | 12 |
| | | Practice <i>all</i> learning targets together in preparation for end-of-unit assessment | 15 |
| | | End-of-unit assessment Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 Tier 2 Plan | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.6: Tier 2 plan for water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Now it is time to begin daily lesson planning, which you'll do in steps 5.6 to 5.8. Before you get started, bring all your materials from your filing cabinets, computers, textbooks, and so on to the meeting. This includes lesson plans, activities, projects, worksheets—everything. Spread everything out on a table and sort into three stacks: (1) boulders, (2) rocks, and (3) butterflies.

Step 5.6: Add Boulders to Each Day on the First Learning Target

Look through the stack of boulders and select the best strategies and materials to use each day you're working on the boulders for the first learning target. Write these strategies and materials on sticky notes and place them on the planning chart. (Sticky notes are efficient because you can move them around.)

Be sure you're including engagement strategies for students to practice daily learning targets. Don't just list lessons from the textbook on your sticky notes! When I tell this to teams, the members think they need to find lots of songs, videos, and other interactive strategies and tools to engage students in learning. Those are all fine, but they don't necessarily need to be those kinds of activities. An engagement strategy may be as simple as having students do just a few questions on a worksheet. This enables you to do a quick formative check for understanding, which is key to the whole process. If you don't plan opportunities to do checks for understanding, then you won't "catch" students who need extra support before moving on. We call this ability to pivot in a lesson *instructional agility*. You might as well just teach from the textbook if you fail to plan engaging strategies for students to practice the standard. See figure 6.7 for a visual representation of this step.

| Water Cycle | | Number of Days | 15 |
|---|---|---|----|
| Boulders: | Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | | |
| Rocks: | Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | | |
| Butterflies: | Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | | |
| 1 S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation Four days | 2 LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Intro videoDiagram all forms of precipitationLearn precipitation song | 3 LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review all types of precipitationMake rainSing precipitation song | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|---|---|---|
| 4 | LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6 (pages 3-6) • Fill out diagram with a partner • Review for common formative assessment <table border="1"> <tr> <td><u>Common formative assessment 1</u></td><td>Folder 1</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Folder 2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tier 2 Plan</td><td>Folder 3</td></tr> </table> | <u>Common formative assessment 1</u> | Folder 1 | | Folder 2 | Tier 2 Plan | Folder 3 | 5 | S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations Five days | 6 |
| <u>Common formative assessment 1</u> | Folder 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| | Folder 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| Tier 2 Plan | Folder 3 | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | | 8 | | 9 | | | | | | |
| 10 | S5E1, LT3 Describe and explain the water cycle Four days | 11 | | 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | <u>Common formative assessment 3</u> | Folder 1 | 14 | Practice all learning targets together in preparation for end-of-unit assessment | | | | | | |
| | | Folder 2 | | | | | | | | |
| | Tier 2 Plan | Folder 3 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 15 | | | | | | |
| | | | <u>End-of-unit assessment</u> | Folder 1 | | | | | | |
| | | | | Folder 2 | | | | | | |
| | | | Tier 2 Plan | Folder 3 | | | | | | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.7: Boulders for each day of first learning target in the planning chart.

Figure 6.8 is a close-up of one of the boulders.

LT1: Identify precipitation

- Chapter 6, science book
- Echo read (pages 1-2)
- Partner talk
- Activity (bottom page 2)
- Sing precipitation song

FIGURE 6.8: Sample boulder standard note.

Step 5.7: Add Rocks on the Days You Will Teach a Rock Standard

Next, you'll layer in the rocks. Go back to your three stacks and look through the rocks stack. As you did with the boulders, choose the best materials and strategies, write them on sticky notes, and add them to the planning chart. And, once again, be sure you're including engagement strategies for students to practice the learning target. See figure 6.9 for a visual representation of this step.

| Water Cycle | | | Number of Days |
|--|---|--|----------------|
| | | | 15 |
| Boulders: Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | | | |
| Rocks: Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | | | |
| Butterflies: Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | | | |
| 1 S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation Four days | 2 LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Intro videoDiagram all forms of precipitationLearn precipitation song LT4: Three states of matter <ul style="list-style-type: none">Handout | 3 LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chapter 6, science bookEcho read (pages 1-2)Partner talkActivity (bottom page 2)Sing precipitation song LT5: Gravity <ul style="list-style-type: none">Video | |
| 4 LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chapter 6 (pages 3-6)Fill out diagram with a partnerReview for common formative assessment Common formative assessment 1 Tier 2 Plan | 5 S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations Five days | 6 | |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|--|----------------------------------|
| 7 | 8 | 9 <u>Common formative assessment 2</u> Tier 2 Plan | Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 |
| 10 S5E1, LT3 Describe and explain the water cycle Four days | 11 | 12 | |
| 13 <u>Common formative assessment 3</u> Tier 2 Plan | 14 Practice <i>all</i> learning targets together in preparation for end-of- unit assessment | 15 <u>End-of-unit assessment</u> Tier 2 Plan | Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

FIGURE 6.9: Rock standards for the water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Figure 6.10 is a close-up of one of the rocks.

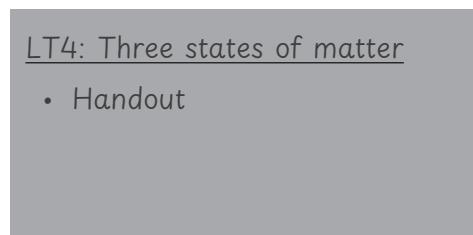


FIGURE 6.10: Sample rock standard note.

Step 5.8: Add Butterflies on the Days You Will Teach a Butterfly Standard

Finally, layer in the butterflies. As you did for the boulders and rocks, go to the butterflies stack, choose the best materials and strategies to teach those learning targets, write them on sticky notes, and place them on the planning chart. Remember to include engagement strategies, not just content you will teach.

At this point you've outlined the entire unit and completed the daily planning for your first learning target. Now repeat this process for each of the other learning targets on the 15-Day Challenge planning chart.

Ask yourself (as a teacher) during this step, "How will I ensure all teachers are teaching the strategies in the best way possible?" While you are planning the unit and sharing strategies with other teachers,

remember to model the strategies for them too (*Show me!*). In the absence of modeling for one another, some teachers may make a lot of assumptions or have confusion on how it looks to actually teach the strategy.

When you're done with this step, go back and repeat the process for the other learning targets in the unit. Please see figure 6.11 for a visual representation of this step.

| Water Cycle | | | Number of Days | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | 15 | | |
| Boulders: Standard S5E1, learning target 1: Identify forms of precipitation Standard S5E1, learning target 2: Identify cloud formations Standard S5E1, learning target 3: Describe and explain the water cycle | | | | | |
| Rocks: Standard S5E2, learning target 4: Understand the three states of matter (solids, liquids, gas) Standard S5E2, learning target 5: Understand the effects of gravity on precipitation | | | | | |
| Butterflies: Standard S5E3, learning target 6: Identify the relative amounts and kinds of water on Earth (for example, saltwater, freshwater, rivers) Standard S5E3, learning target 7: Identify weather tools used to determine weather patterns Standard S5E3, learning target 8: Explore careers related to weather | | | | | |
| 1 | S5E1, LT1 Identify forms of precipitation Four days | 2 | LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intro video Diagram all forms of precipitation Learn precipitation song LT4: Three states of matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handout | 3 | LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all types of precipitation Make rain Sing song LT5: Gravity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video |
| 4 | LT1: Identify precipitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 6 (pages 3–6) Fill out diagram with a partner Review for common formative assessment Common formative assessment 1 | 5 | S5E1, LT2 Identify cloud formations Five days | 6 | |
| | | | Folder 1 Folder 2 Folder 3 | | |
| | Tier 2 Plan | | | | |

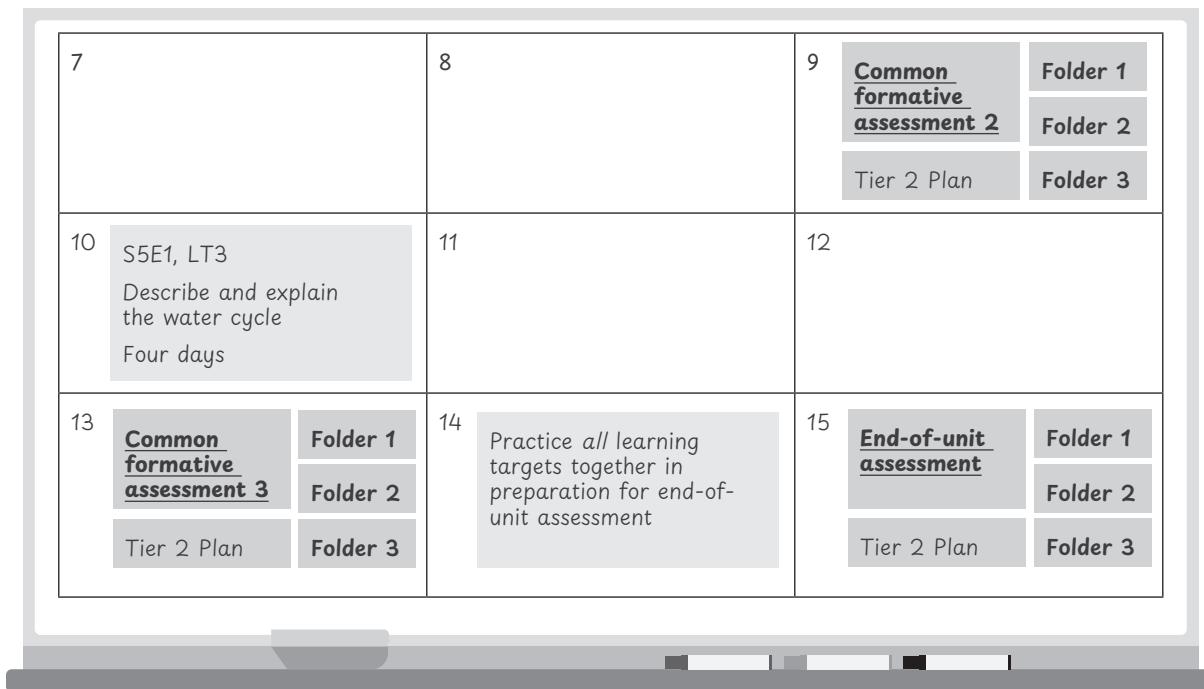


FIGURE 6.11: Butterfly standards for the water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Figure 6.12 is a close-up of a butterfly standard.

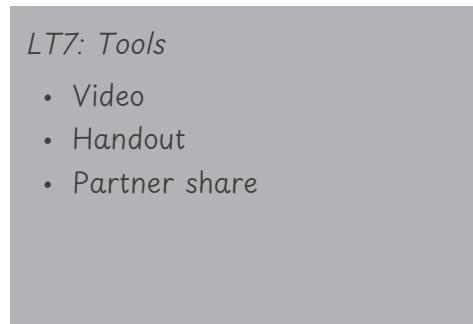


FIGURE 6.12: Sample butterfly standard note.

Practice: Fill Out a 15-Day Challenge Planning Chart for a Unit You Are Currently Teaching

Use the 15-Day Challenge planning chart template in figure 6.13 (page 82) to practice building a unit of study with your team. Keep it simple for this practice. Write down the name of the unit and number of days. Then insert a few standards from your current unit. Select blocks of time for designated standards or learning targets, and start adding teaching strategies to each box. Add in the common assessments throughout the unit. Have fun mapping out a unit together!

Add additional rows and boxes as needed. There are completed examples of planning charts in chapter 1 (page 9).

FIGURE 6.13: 15-Day Challenge planning chart template.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

Build Your Unit: Fill Out a 15-Day Challenge Chart for Your Next Unit of Study

Use the 15-Day Challenge chart (see figure 6.13) to plan a unit of study with your team. Add additional rows and boxes as needed. There are completed examples of planning charts in chapter 1 (page 9).



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Jump in! Don't be afraid to try something and fail forward.
- Be willing to make mistakes and own and grow from them.
- Remember the modeling portion in the lesson, where you share ideas on how to teach the standard with other teachers.
- Add strategies each year as you learn more about how to best teach the standard.
- Add feedback notes to your plan to help make changes for next year.

Summary

The 15-Day Challenge uses the three big ideas and the four critical questions of a PLC as foundations for systematic unit design. As you go through the process, remember to follow the steps in order and don't skip any steps. Although this chapter illustrates planning for Tier 2, chapter 7 shows you *how to* do this for your unit. Stay tuned, have fun planning together while remembering to model best practices for one another, and keep your materials out on the table. Remember, *show me* should be your favorite two words while you plan together!

Making the unit visible is beneficial for you and your students. Use the reproducible "Chapter 6 Reflection: Pacing and Designing a Unit of Study" (page 84) to reflect on pacing and designing a unit of study with the 15-Day Challenge planning chart. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team's responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Chapter 6 Reflection: Pacing and Designing a Unit of Study

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rate your team on a scale from 1–5. 1 = Lowest level of proficiency 5 = Highest level of proficiency | | | | | |
| Steps | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The team determined the number of days for the unit and when the unit would begin and end. | | | | | |
| The team added common assessments to the planning chart throughout the unit of study (rather than waiting until the end of the unit) to ensure students are mastering the identified learning targets. | | | | | |
| The team reviewed materials and brainstormed strategies for students to practice daily to master the learning targets. | | | | | |
| The team added materials and strategies to the planning chart. | | | | | |
| The team modeled strategies for one another (<i>Show me!</i>). | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |

Chapter 7

Plan Tier 2 Intervention and Extension While Pacing and Designing the Unit (Step 6)

Like any other professionals who make life-altering decisions on behalf of those they serve, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to utilize practices proven to best ensure every student succeeds.

—Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos, and Janet Malone

What if your team planned Tier 2 intervention and extension while planning core instruction for Tier 1? Planning Tier 2 while planning the unit alleviates the stress of trying to find time to plan on your prep period or after school.

Could you feel confident knowing you don't have to stay after school planning for intervention and extension after you have given your students the assessment?

The fundamental goal of any high-functioning school is to ensure every student learns at high levels, acquiring the essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors required for success at the next grade level (Buffum, Mattos, & Malone, 2018).

To make this a reality, while designing each 15-Day Challenge unit, teachers plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions while planning Tier 1 instruction. Teachers gather support materials to reteach or extend the lesson as they plan the unit of study. They then separate these materials into folders, which are ready for Tier 2 intervention or extension groups.

We initially assumed everyone wanted to follow the common RTI practice of sharing students across classrooms for Tier 2 intervention or extension after looking at common formative assessment data. We learned the hard way that our assumption was faulty. Teachers were struggling with the idea of mutual accountability for all students in a course or grade level. We discovered the following beliefs held us back.



- Other teachers won't have a plan for their assigned group.
- Teachers should keep their own students because they already knew them.
- It is the interventionist's job to come up with a plan for Tier 2.
- It is the interventionist's job to train paraprofessionals and teach the groups.
- It is just one more thing to do.
- Students should just learn it the first time.

There was a different problem for exchanging students. Teachers waited to plan Tier 2 until after they looked at their common formative assessment data. As a result, it was up to the individual teacher assigned to a group to decide the materials and strategies to use to reteach or extend the learning. Teachers felt they were always staying late to prepare for their group or grabbing things to teach the next day before groups began. This started to create some resentment toward the process of exchanging students for Tier 2. It also became evident that some distrust between teachers started to emerge—one teacher was staying after contract time to prepare and another teacher was leaving at contract time. (And, by the way, you should be able to leave at contract time!) Something had to change.

We decided to switch gears and plan Tier 2 intervention and extension while planning the unit of study. While the teachers laid out materials on the table to plan Tier 1, they pulled additional materials and put them in piles for Tier 2. These piles were labeled *intensive support, firm it up, and extend the learning*. Teachers then created folders and labeled them accordingly.

The following were the benefits of preplanning materials and strategies for Tier 2 groups.

- Teachers knew what was happening in each group.
- Materials were preplanned, so none of the teachers were staying until 6:00 p.m. preparing for their group.
- Because they knew what was happening in one another's classrooms, teachers began to trust one another.
- Teachers increased their capacity and expertise on the essential standards by planning together.

This is how we did it: teams anticipated common errors on assessments and created folders of materials to use while teaching Tier 2 groups. Folders were labeled *intensive intervention practice, additional intervention practice, and extension activities for students who demonstrated mastery*.

It is critical to embed Tier 2 intervention and extension time during the day in the master schedule. This creates time during the day for students to practice mastering a standard. Our teachers were also able to swap students among themselves, rather than trying to meet the diverse needs of all students in their own class. Think of it as cloning yourself!

If your school does not have Tier 2 time embedded in the day, consider the following ideas.

- Teachers can trade students with other teachers who teach the same course during the same class period.
- Teachers can provide Tier 2 interventions in their own classrooms during core instruction or Tier 2. This is much less efficient than trading students with other teachers because now one teacher is responsible for all the various needs in the classroom, rather than focusing on students in like groups.

- Build intervention and extension days into the 15-Day Challenge unit plan after each common assessment.

Build Your Unit: Plan Strategies and Materials for Tier 2

Use figure 7.1 to plan interventions and extensions for the first learning target in your unit. Fill out a new sheet for each learning target. The result of this work will ultimately reflect in your planning chart, which you first saw in step 5.5 of chapter 6 (figure 6.6, page 75). For clarity, the sticky note portion of that chart is replicated here as figure 7.2 (page 88).

The form consists of a central white box with three horizontal sections, each with a title and two lines of text. The top section is for 'Well Below Grade-Level Proficiency', the middle for 'Below Grade-Level Proficiency', and the bottom for 'At or Above Grade-Level Proficiency'. Each section has a title at the top and two lines of text below it. The entire form is set against a background of grey bars at the top and bottom.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Write strategies and materials in each box. These are the strategies and materials your team placed in folders while creating the unit. The ten- or twenty-minute guides are based on a thirty-minute Tier 2 planning time. | | |
| Well Below Grade-Level Proficiency | | |
| List strategies and materials for intervention (filling holes). (Ten minutes) | | |
| List grade-level practice strategies and materials. (Twenty minutes) | | |
| Below Grade-Level Proficiency | | |
| List strategies and materials for intervention (filling holes). (Ten minutes) | | |
| List grade-level practice strategies and materials. (Twenty minutes) | | |
| At or Above Grade-Level Proficiency | | |
| List strategies and materials for extension of the standard. (Ten minutes) | | |

FIGURE 7.1: Build your unit while planning strategies and materials for Tier 2.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Create electronic folders for each Tier 2 group and add student work samples.
- Plan to swap students with other teachers for greater efficiency.
- Build trust by deciding the group structures as a team (such as how many students will be in each group, where the groups will meet, and so on).
- Plan *WIN* (or *What I need*) groups as a team, rather than individual teachers each planning materials, lesson plans, and so on for their assigned group of students.

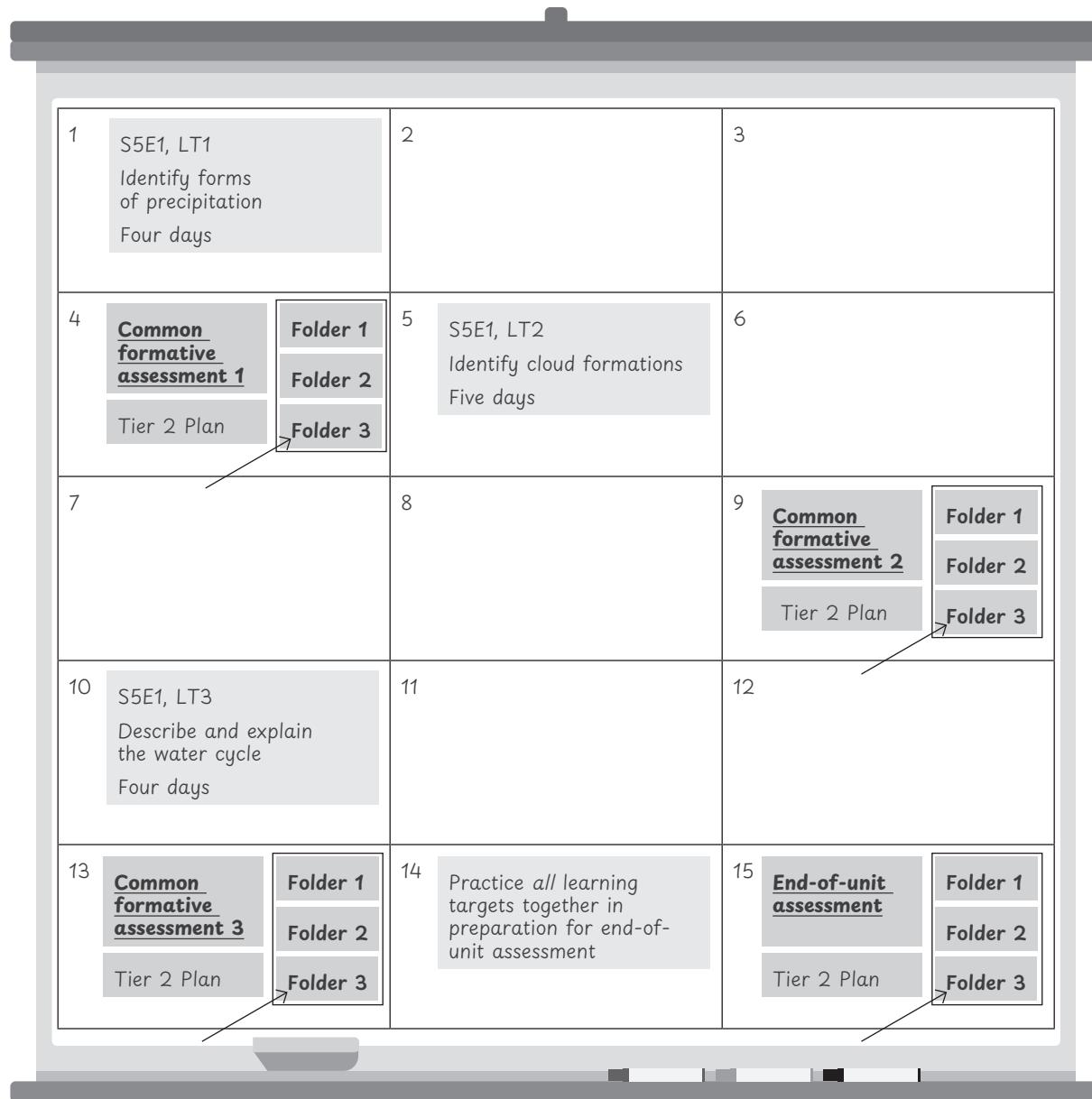


FIGURE 7.2: Revisiting Tier 2 plan for water cycle unit in the planning chart.

Summary

While designing each 15-Day Challenge unit, plan Tier 2 interventions and extensions while planning Tier 1. Teachers gather support materials to reteach or extend the lesson as they plan the unit of study, and then separate the materials into folders, ready for intervention and extension. It is critical to embed Tier 2 time during the day in the master schedule. Use the reproducible “Chapter 7 Reflection: Planning Tier 2” to reflect on where you are as a team regarding planning Tier 2 intervention and extension while pacing and designing a unit of study. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Chapter 7 Reflection: Planning Tier 2

| Rate your team on a scale from 1–5. 1 = Lowest level of proficiency 5 = Highest level of proficiency | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| The school plans time during the day for Tier 2. | | | | | |
| The school plans time during the day for Tier 3. | | | | | |
| Teachers plan Tier 2 interventions while planning Tier 1. | | | | | |
| Teachers plan Tier 2 extensions while planning Tier 1. | | | | | |
| Teacher plan Tier 3 interventions while planning Tier 1. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |



Chapter 8

Teach the Unit and Act on the Data (Step 7)

Collaborative teacher teams take lead responsibility in determining essential academic standards, providing initial instruction, and assessing student progress toward meeting these critical learning outcomes.

For this reason, they are the professionals best positioned to take lead responsibility for . . . Tier 2 academic interventions.

—Austin Buffum, Mike Mattos,
Chris Weber, and Tom Hierck

Response to intervention is the framework teams use during the 15-Day Challenge to group students for intervention or extensions. RTI is built on the third big idea (focus on results) and answers critical questions 3 and 4, “What will we do when they haven’t learned it?” and “What will we do when they already know it?” (DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251). The RTI model is based on the fundamental belief that every student is capable of learning at high levels, while understanding that every student does not learn the same way or at the same speed (Buffum et al., 2018). During the planning process, teams must address and intentionally design interventions for these students.

RTI has two important characteristics; it must be (1) multitiered and (2) systematic. The multitiered system addresses the three Tiers—Tier 1, access to essential grade-level standards for all students; Tier 2, additional support to master essential grade-level standards; and Tier 3, intensive remediation support (Buffum et al., 2018).

Teams create Tier 2 interventions to ensure students who do not understand the essential standards during Tier 1 receive additional support to master essential standards. Based on common formative assessment data, teachers reteach students in small groups using research-based strategies

and programs, and the students receive multiple opportunities to demonstrate success. Throughout this process, teachers reteach and retest students until they reach mastery.

Tier 3 intervention is *intensive* intervention. Students in Tier 3 generally have a classification that constitutes additional time and resources, such as IEPs, speech language pathology (SLP) support, occupational therapy (OT) support, English learner (EL) support, or behavior intervention plans (BIPs); however, teachers may identify students as at risk without a classification. Tier 3 is a time for students to fill holes on their far below grade-level skills. However, teachers also find value in having students practice on grade-level standards. Consider these compelling questions: What if teams looked at data and quickly dropped students into intervention or extension groups? What if teams were so laser-like in

their focus that all students made it to the island of mastery? What if the school designated time during the day for additional time and support? What if special education services aligned with regular education services so students received extra time and support on grade-level standards? What if teachers made it look easy to everyone looking in—because it was?



Once a complete unit plan is in place, begin teaching the unit of study. Throughout the unit, plan as a team to give the same common formative assessment on the same day and in the same way. Next, plan a time to review data and drop students into Tier 2 intervention or extension groups.

Tiers of Intervention—Ski Analogy

During Tier 1, the essential standard is for students to learn how to snow ski in two weeks down Gentle Ben ski run with only one fall.

If students don't learn to ski the first time, it would seem ridiculous to send students to the lodge during Tier 2 intervention for an avalanche safety course. And it wouldn't make sense to have students practice going down the hill on a snowboard during Tier 3.

The point is, if we determine skiing is our essential standard, but then we send students to avalanche safety in Tier 2 and throw them on a snowboard in Tier 3, they will never learn to ski! Well-meaning schools often have a tiered system where each tier functions as an independent contractor. This results in teachers practicing slightly or drastically different learning targets in each tier. For example, the essential standard in Tier 1 is adding fractions, but the additional practice in Tier 2 is on practicing mathematics facts, and in Tier 3, students are on the computer practicing double-digit addition. You would be surprised at how often I see this happening in schools. Does this happen in your school?

As Mike Mattos often says: core and more core; core and more core. What would it look like if students were learning how to add fractions in Tier 1, and practicing adding fractions in Tier 2 and Tier 3? It seems obvious, but students would, with enough practice, learn how to add fractions.

In trying to perfect our RTI systems, we recognized some students had holes to fill. We designated portions of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 time when students were missing previous unit skills or were below grade level on their skills. For example, if a student keeps crossing the skis during Tier 1, the team would fill a hole by tying ski tips together for the student to practice skiing. In reading, it might be practicing phonics, fluency, or comprehension; then, with scaffolding, practice reading grade-level texts. At the secondary level, it might be practicing skiing with proper free weight form before moving on to the circuit for the rest of the day.

One of the greatest shifts you might make with your team during Tier 2 is spending the bulk of the time practicing the identified grade-level standard and filling gaps or holes for a small portion of the time. If students practice below grade level, they will stay below grade level. If students practice grade-level standards, then, with scaffolding, they will master grade-level standards.

By the way, it's up to you and your team to determine how to group students for Tier 2. If your school uses proficiency scales or standards-based grading, you may put students in groups according to proficiency scale scores. If your school uses percentages, you can use those to group students. If you want to focus on one learning target and group students based on the group's level of mastery of that target, you can do it that way. You may simply sort assessments into stacks according to what students missed, and then each teacher on the team takes a stack. The bottom line is to address what each student needs based on the essential standards you're teaching.

I hope you are hungry for the data to see how much your students learned. I also hope you are eager to improve your teaching practices by looking at your data together as a team and having meaningful conversations.

RTI Steps

Follow these RTI steps in your classroom and during your planning phase.

1. Analyze common formative assessment data using an item-analysis sheet.
2. Group students for intervention or extension based on essential standards.
3. Assign teachers to groups.
4. Review folders for each group and make any adjustments based on the data.
5. Hand out the folders teachers created for each group.
6. Begin Tier 2 groups the next day.

See figure 8.1 (page 94) for an example of the RTI process applied to the ski analogy.

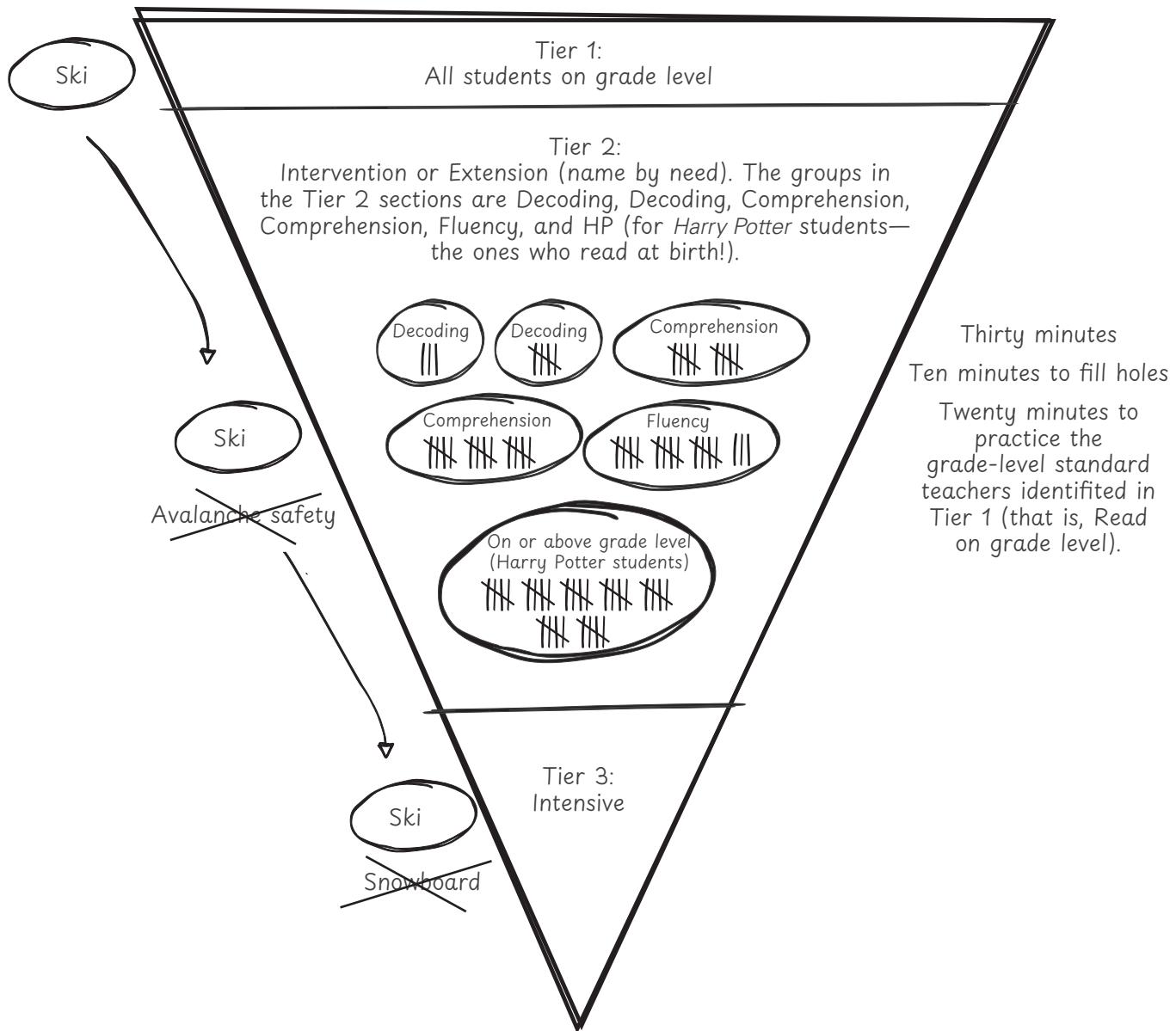


FIGURE 8.1: RTI using a ski analogy example.

Item-Analysis Sheet

An *item-analysis sheet* is one of the best assessment tools for looking at data quickly and efficiently. Item-analysis sheets serve three purposes. First, teams can identify where students need help on individual learning targets. Second, an item-analysis sheet tells teams how the test performed, such as the most frequently missed question. Third, the test informs teachers on how well they have taught the learning targets.

An item-analysis sheet makes data easy to read and understand. Rows tell teams how students are doing by name and need. When added up, the columns reveal how the assessment performed by

showing how many students missed each question. Looking at the most frequently missed questions helps teams answer questions like the following.

- Was there tricky wording in the question?
- What can we learn from a teacher whose students scored high on the question?
- What can we do to firm up instructional practices?
- Did we teach the standard the question assessed?
- Is the DOK in alignment with the standard?

Our teams also learned it was easier to look at data when they cluster questions by learning target. Examples of learning targets might include having questions 1–5 assess addition, questions 6–10 assess subtraction, and questions 11–15 assess story problems. There are a few digital programs teams can use to attach questions to learning targets. The students then take the test online, and the program puts the information on an item-analysis sheet.

One of the simple programs to use is called *Student Mastery Connect* (<https://student.masteryconnect.com>). The free version doesn't allow teams to combine data, and it has a limit of ten questions, but it is easy to use for short common formative assessments. Teachers then print out their own item-analysis sheets and bring a copy to the team meeting. Google Forms, Student Mastery Connect, Excel, and paper copies also work as an item-analysis sheet. Many teams begin with a paper copy, like the template in figure 8.2 (page 96).

Figure 8.3 (page 97) shows a teacher's initial attempt at completing an item-analysis sheet.

In my school, we learned a lot from our early attempts at item-analysis sheets! We weren't all scoring the questions the same way. We hadn't identified the learning targets by each question, and the test was too long. The average looked good, but we weren't identifying students who needed help by learning target, and we hadn't planned rigor for the students who aced the test. The ten steps we developed for common assessment practices evolved over time and helped us streamline the process.

We also discovered some teams were playing what is called *PLC Lite* (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Mattos, & Muhammad, 2021). The teams *said* they were giving common assessments, but they weren't giving the same assessment or were giving assessments weeks apart. This made it difficult to have authentic conversations, and impossible to take mutual accountability for all students in the course or grade level.

| Student Name: | Teacher: Holt | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Common formative assessment 4 | | | | | | Score | | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------|----|----|----------------------|-----|--|
| | 2 points | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 100 | |
| Ben | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 100 | |
| Declan | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 19 | 83 | |
| Bridger | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20 | 87 | |
| Ty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 91 | |
| Hadley | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 19.5 | 85 | |
| Kyle | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 91 | |
| Lexie | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 100 | |
| Sydnee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 91 | |
| Chase | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20 | 87 | |
| Ellie | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20 | 87 | |
| Will G. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20.5 | 89 | |
| Jaxon | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 22 | 96 | |
| Wyatt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 19 | 83 | |
| Hector | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20 | 87 | |
| Griffin | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 91 | |
| Taylor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 91 | |
| Danee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 20.5 | 89 | |
| Emily | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 100 | |
| Carlie | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 19 | 83 | |
| Samantha | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 100 | |
| Alex | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 13 | 57 | |
| Kaden | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | — | — | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | | | |
| Total Missed | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 10 | | Model drawing = 20.4 | | |
| Target | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Average = 88.9 | | |

FIGURE 8.3: A teacher's initial attempt at item analysis.

Team Data Sheet

Once teachers each had completed their own item-analysis sheet, they used a team data sheet to help them collectively look at their data. Teachers separate information on this form so they can easily identify patterns. For example, if two of a teacher's students are scoring significantly higher than everyone else's, find out what that teacher is doing differently. How can you learn together as teachers to improve your teaching practices? How can you support one another to take all students in the course or grade level to the island of mastery together?

Collectively looking at all the data together holds teams mutually accountable and ensures teachers are giving common assessments on the same day.

Figure 8.4 shows an example of a completed team data summary sheet for a common assessment covering one learning target. This example shows overall percentage. If your school uses proficiency scores, you can record those instead.

| Geometry Unit 1 | | Common Assessment 1 | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| Teacher | Number of Students Who Took Assessment | Overall Average Score | Number of Students Who Are Proficient (19 of 23) | Number of Students Who Are Not Proficient (18 or fewer of 23) | Names of Students Needing Additional Intervention |
| Clark | 20 | 20.5 (89 percent) | 15 | 5 | Chase—passed Wyatt, Daxton, Chelsey, Tyler— Tier 2 intervention |
| Wall | 18 | 21 (91 percent) | 15 | 3 | Kaden—retaught and retested— passed Emma—Tier 2 Audrey—resource push-in model |
| Jones | 22 | 20.5 (89 percent) | 18 | 4 | Samantha—sick three days Tayla, Griffin, Danee—Tier 2 intervention |
| Total | 60 | 20.6 (90 percent) | 48 | 12 | |

FIGURE 8.4: Common assessment team data sheet example.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

Use the template in figure 8.2 (page 96) to look at your team's common assessment data.

Student Groups by Name, Need, and Learning Target

Look at data after each common assessment in a unit (using the data from the data-analysis sheets) and group students by their individual levels of mastery on each learning target. Student groups may change after the next common formative assessment. Group mastery levels are *above proficiency*, *below proficiency*, and *well below proficiency*. (Teachers determine the grade-level samples of student work or artifacts of mastery during step 2, after collaborative teams unpack standards.)

Practice: Teach the Unit and Act on the Data

Teams use figure 8.5 to write down the names of students they identify for intervention or extension. For this practice, write down the names of the students in the current unit you are teaching and identify which students need intervention or extension based on common formative assessment data. Do you have data to support your decisions?

| Group Students for Tier 2 Intervention or Extension | | |
|---|--|--|
| Students who are currently well below grade-level proficiency: | | |
| Students who are currently below grade-level proficiency: | | |
| Students who are currently on or above grade-level proficiency: | | |

FIGURE 8.5: Group students for Tier 2 intervention or extension template.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

Grouping Styles

There are typically three ways to group and intervene with students, depending on the school site and schedule. Each of the following grouping styles comes with advantages, based on individual and classroom needs.

1. Schools without built-in intervention time may use classroom flexible groupings.
2. There is intervention time with no teacher or student movement, so teachers intervene during Tier 2 with their own students. This style is for schools with built-in intervention time.
3. Teams across a grade level or course share students for Tier 2 time, also called *collaborative team grouping*. This style is for schools with built-in intervention time or common teaching times.

Classroom Flexible Grouping

Classroom flexible grouping is the strategy to use if the school does not have built-in intervention time. In this type of school, teachers perform the intervention in the classroom. In the elementary setting, intervention or extension takes place in the classroom after the teacher gives each common formative assessment. The teachers then quickly analyze data and group students by level of mastery. Teachers swap students among teachers on grade level. Teachers will reteach or extend the learning for students in these groups. At the middle and high school levels, teachers give a common formative assessment, and then group students by level of mastery. Most likely, this will occur the next school day after the assessment. If the classroom has a co-teacher, paraeducator, or teacher's assistant, the adults split up to work with individual groups.

Intervention Time, No Teacher or Student Movement Grouping

If the school is following the RTI model, a Tier 2 intervention or extension time is embedded into the daily schedule. In the beginning, teams are often hesitant to swap students during Tier 2. Instead, teachers group their own students in their own classrooms during Tier 2. This often results in teachers at the elementary level setting up stations or workshops for students to rotate through while a teacher pulls groups of students to reteach or enrich. At the secondary level, teachers only request the students from their classes who need intervention during this time.

Collaborative Team Grouping

The gold standard of intervention grouping is when a collaborative team takes mutual accountability for all students in a course or grade level. Teams collectively look at data to share students and provide intervention and extension during Tier 2.

For ideas on how to schedule a time during the day for Tier 2, reference *It's About Time: Planning Interventions and Extensions in Elementary School* (Buffum & Mattos, 2015) or *It's About Time: Planning Interventions and Extensions in Secondary School* (Mattos & Buffum, 2015) by RTI at Work™ experts Austin Buffum and Mike Mattos. There are also models for scheduling Tier 2 time on the AllThingsPLC website (<https://allthingsplc.info>) under the tab, Evidence of Effectiveness.

Build Your Unit: Teach the Unit and Act on the Data

Teams use figure 8.5 (page 99) to write down the names of students they identify for intervention or extension. Group students based on common assessment data. Do you have current data to support your decisions?



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- Take action on common assessments throughout the unit rather than waiting until the end of the unit.
- Share strategies for daily formative checks for understanding.
- Give students timely feedback during the unit and always use the data to adjust, reteach, share strategies, and plan interventions.
- Complete individual class item-analysis sheets, rather than a course or grade-level item-analysis sheet.
- Look at and act on data within forty-eight hours for optimal results.
- Move students to a different group when they demonstrate mastery of the standards.

Summary

A multilevel response to learning creates a system where all students receive additional time and support during the day to master essential standards. It is the work of collaborative teams to identify students for intervention and extension. Fill below grade-level holes and allow students to practice the grade-level essential standards during Tier 2 and Tier 3. Use the reproducible “Chapter 8 Reflection: Intervention and Extension” (page 102) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding intervention and extension. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Chapter 8 Reflection: Intervention and Extension

Rate your team on a scale from 1–5.

1 = Lowest level of proficiency

5 = Highest level of proficiency

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teams collaboratively look at data. | | | | | |
| Tier 2 and Tier 3 align with Tier 1 standards. | | | | | |
| Teachers gather data on the effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3. | | | | | |
| Teachers take mutual accountability of all students in the course or grade level. | | | | | |
| Students practice grade-level standards at each tier. | | | | | |
| During Tier 2, the teachers fill holes below grade level and students also practice on grade level. | | | | | |
| During Tier 3, teachers fill holes far below grade level and scaffold students on grade-level standards. | | | | | |
| Teachers each use an item-analysis sheet to place students in Tier 2 and Tier 3. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |



Chapter 9

Sustaining the Process With a Yearlong (and Beyond) Pacing Guide

In a PLC, there is no expectation that all teachers will teach a concept the same way . . . However, it is important for teams to use the same pacing.

—Kim Bailey and Chris Jakicic

What if all your standards-based units lined up to create a yearlong pacing guide? What if those units of study showed consistent mastery from the beginning of the year until the end of the school year? What if you felt confident enough in your ability to create units of study based on essential standards that you could create a solid plan to span the beginning of the year to the end of the year? What if teams flourished together, designing engaging units of study based on essential standards through the simple, yet effective steps of the 15-Day Challenge? What if district and site leadership empowered teams of teachers and built their capacity to do the work? What if it became the way you do business?

Once your team has completed their first 15-Day Challenge, it will be time to begin another 15-Day Challenge. These units of study will combine to create a yearlong pacing guide.

Simply begin by teaching one unit together per quarter or trimester then filling in other units the next year. Some teams choose one subject area and build every unit over the course of the school year. That is pretty intense, since you will be finishing one unit and then starting the next one. But if you are enthusiastic and organized, it is totally doable.

You could also begin by identifying all your essential standards and putting them in a simple chart format before you begin planning units as a team.



Here's How

Scan this code to watch the author explain this step and see teams in action.



SCAN ME

Figure 9.1 shows a sample pacing guide for Integrated Math 1.

| Essential Standards | Pacing | Materials | Supplement |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Quantities and relationships (N-Q, A-CED) | Through September 8 (three weeks) | 1 | |
| Graphs, equations, and inequalities (A-REI, F-IF) | Through September 29 (three weeks) | 2 | Inequalities |
| Linear functions and sequences (F-LE, F-BF) | Through November 17 (six weeks) | 3, 4 | |
| Exponential equations, systems of linear equations, and systems of linear inequalities (A-REI, F-IF) | Through March 9 (nine weeks) | 5, 6, 7 | Systems of linear equations |
| Geometry on the coordinate plane and three congruence transformations (G-CO, G-GPE) | Through May 4 (four weeks) | 12, 13.1–13.3 | |
| Additional skills necessary for success in the next course, Integrated Math 2 | Through May 25 (three weeks) | | Book camp after state testing |

FIGURE 9.1: Yearlong pacing guide example for Integrated Math 1.

Visit go.SolutionTree.com/PLCbooks for a free reproducible version of this figure.

The Yearlong Pacing Guide

Use a yearlong pacing guide to pace all the course or grade-level standards for the school year. Pacing will keep your team organized and prepared. If your grade or course is a state-tested subject area, it is important to pace to the state test rather than the end of the school year. This will ensure you teach all tested standards and students master them prior to giving students the state test. Too often, units of study fall off at the end of the year because teams simply run out of time to teach them. A well-planned pacing guide will keep your team focused on teaching all the essential standards to mastery.

Use the reproducible “Chapter 9 Reflection: 15-Day Challenge Review” at the end of this chapter (page 116) to reflect on where you are as a team regarding creating a yearlong pacing guide. Have team members each fill out their own reflection sheet. Next, have a team member tally the team’s responses. At the bottom of the sheet, write down team celebrations and areas to improve as a team.

Case Studies From Participating Districts and Teams

While I encourage teams to keep it simple and begin with one unit, there is always the question, How do you sustain the process beyond the yearlong pacing guide? The following districts shared their

insights into how they continue using the 15-Day Challenge after teachers teach the first unit. This includes sustaining the work, continuing improvement, onboarding new staff, and promoting growth year after year.

Uinta County School District #1, Doug Rigby, Superintendent of Secondary Schools

Doug Rigby is the superintendent of secondary schools in Evanston, Wyoming. Uinta County School District #1 has embraced the 15-Day Challenge as a process for ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum in the district. Doug, along with other district and school leadership teams, has been instrumental in guiding and ensuring the work of collaborative teams is meaningful and sustainable, and based on teaching essential standards across the district. The following are Doug's six main tenets for building and sustaining the work of effective collaborative teams using the 15-Day Challenge process.

1. **Be there:** It is important for school and district leaders to attend collaborative team meetings. The purpose of attendance changes based on where the team is in the 15-Day Challenge design process. In the beginning, teams will need support on how to go through the steps to build a unit. Some teams will need additional support as they continue designing units of study together. Other teams will see the vision of their work together and need less support.
2. **Model:** A foundational principle of effective leadership is to refrain from asking your staff to do anything you are not willing to do yourself. This ranges from modeling how to establish norms for smooth collaboration or the processes for aligning assessment to learning targets and everything in between during the 15-Day Challenge process.
3. **Support:** Although always a challenge, supporting struggling teams due to personality conflicts is best done by the leader keeping members focused on the work of the four critical questions of a PLC and how teams will contribute *today*.
4. **Define:** Identify the products with the greatest impact on student learning and that relate to the four critical questions of a PLC. In the beginning, leaders should be with teams to help guide consensus on the 15-Day Challenge work.
5. **Prioritize:** It is important to prioritize the work of teams. For example, part of prioritizing is helping teams set realistic deadlines, such as when a team will create and teach its first unit of study.
6. **Invest:** Give your staff resources, access, and support. Bring experts on the 15-Day Challenge into your schools to support your teams while they design 15-Day Challenges.

Pasadena Independent School District, Marsha Jones, Daniel Hoppie, Janet Nuzzie

Pasadena Independent School District (ISD) is a large, urban, high-poverty school district southeast of Houston, Texas, with fifty thousand students. After 230 campus and district administrators attended a summer PLC at Work Institute in San Antonio, Texas, in 2013, the district's schools began the odyssey into learning, applying, and putting into practice PLC at Work concepts at the district and campus

levels. To continue and extend student learning and support campus administrators, the district began to provide professional learning opportunities to campus teacher leaders through a series of after-school workshops throughout the year. All school principals selected and asked teacher leaders to attend, and those chosen increased their knowledge and capacity on PLC practices. From 2015–2019, the focus of the Pasadena ISD PLC Teacher Leader Collaborative was to dig deeper and apply the concepts and teachings in *Learning by Doing, Third Edition* (DuFour et al., 2016). In 2019, Marsha Jones, Dan Hoppie, and Janet Nuzzie attended my two-day workshop, The 15-Day Challenge. There, the team decided to take my ideas and share them districtwide. Read this passage about their experience:

We began the 15-Day Challenge professional development training with our teachers in September 2019 and completed our final session in February 2020, with sixty-five teachers electing to join the learning. The teachers were engaged, receptive, and loved digging into the 15-Day Challenge and applying concepts on the campus between sessions. We were grateful to finish in February 2020, because the world stood still in March 2020 when a global pandemic was declared. As our work shifted to online learning, the processes and protocols teams had established because of the 15-Day Challenge professional development training allowed them to sustain their PLC practices during this challenging time.

When August 2020 came around, our teachers faced some of the toughest challenges of their careers—teaching students virtually while also working with students in the classroom. We knew our teachers were exhausted and pushed to the limit, but we decided to once again offer our PLC Teacher Leader Collaborative centered on the 15-Day Challenge process, which gave our preK–12 grade teams (with varying dismissal times) the option to join our sessions virtually from their classrooms or at home at the end of the day. We decided if fifteen to twenty teachers attended, we were happy to learn and grow with these teacher leaders. The information for the optional workshop went out, and to our shock and amazement, 120 teachers enrolled! Teachers loved the flexibility of training virtually and the structure of the activities that allowed campuses time to collaborate in every session through the use of breakout rooms. Surveys at the end of this pandemic year indicated teacher leaders learned and grew professionally as a result of implementing the 15-Day Challenge. Additionally, the flexibility of the learning format was well received, and we have chosen to facilitate the PLC 15-Day Challenge in the virtual format. (M. Jones, D. Hoppie, and J. Nuzzie, personal communication, 2023)

Structure of 15-Day Challenge Professional Learning Through Pasadena ISD PLC Teacher Leader Collaborative

We provided protocols to support the teacher leaders as we moved forward and shared examples of artifacts as celebrations at the start of the next session. It was exciting to see our teacher leaders and administrators—whether participating as singletons or as a small or large collaborative team—deepen their knowledge of the PLC process through the 15-Day Challenge format, and apply the concepts in their professional learning teams and classrooms.

Campus administrators and campus coaches often joined us at one or two of the sessions to share their reflections and answer questions such as the following.

- How has the process of the 15-Day Challenge been beneficial to the traditional classroom teachers on your campus?
- How has the process of determining essential standards for the 15-Day Challenge been beneficial to the teachers who teach in personalized learning classrooms on your campus?
- What have been some successes?
- What have been some challenges?

It was beneficial for session participants to hear the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from other educators who were a few steps further along on their journey with the 15-Day Challenge and learning by doing.

As our PLC Teacher Leader Collaborative shifted from face-to-face sessions to virtual sessions, our handouts and applicable materials also shifted from paper-based, PDF handouts to viewable Google Docs (<https://google.com/docs/about>) with team artifacts shared in Google Drive (<https://google.com/drive>) folders. Our team conversations shifted from face-to-face table conversations to virtual breakout rooms, with participants assigned to teams by campus or with other singletons. Our session participants shifted from mostly representing grade-level or content-area teams at a campus to including cross-district teams of content-specific teachers with district instructional specialists facilitating the cross-district team conversations during the virtual breakout rooms. During the 2022–2023 school year (our fourth year of implementing the 15-Day Challenge), we shifted from a six-session course to a seven-session course, with the added session addressing best practices for managing conflict, consensus, and resisters on a professional learning team. (M. Jones, D. Hoppie, and J. Nuzzie, personal communication, 2023)

Longevity of Implementation of the 15-Day Challenge

As we continue to move this work forward in Pasadena ISD, two major themes begin to come to the forefront. The first theme is to stay consistent with our work and the message we are sending to students and staff. In a district of roughly fifty thousand students (and with hundreds of new teachers pouring into the district each year), it has been essential to provide a clear message: *forming and cultivating collaborative teams is the way we do business in our district*. From the professional development we provide to the daily practices on one's collaborative team, it is evident to all staff that the district values collaboration and the PLC at Work process. The district's messaging and actions must stay consistent to produce the collaborative learning we desire. With this in mind, we limited the number of initiatives in our district to better establish and sustain the focus on PLC at Work practices and the 15-Day Challenge.

The second emerging theme worth mentioning is best shared in conjunction with one of Maria's uses of imagery in her trainings. In several of her training sessions, she compared the teaching and learning process to helping students get in a boat and helping those students get to a proverbial island of success [mastery]. By using concepts like the 15-Day Challenge, she uses the boat imagery to help educators clarify where the island is (PLC question one: "What do students need to know and be able to do?" [DuFour et al., 2016, p. 251]), and how we help them to get the boat to the island (PLC questions two, three, and four [DuFour et al., 2016]).

Furthering this same imagery, leaders in Pasadena ISD believe it is critical to actually "be in the boat," and not just tell the passengers how to get there from the shore. In other words, we value

the concept of “Do as I do” and not “Do as I say.” The 15-Day Challenge provides significant implementation-process support to campus collaborative teams. We see evidence of the 15-Day Challenge being implemented at the campuses as we visit classrooms and support administrators. Our goal is to celebrate each small success and help teams work through common PLC concerns. While our district as a whole has become a PLC, we understand we actually implement these practices at the school and classroom levels. We know all students can learn at high levels. By partnering with campus leadership in synergistic ways, we have been able to help more students get to that proverbial island of success [mastery].

The actions we take include the following.

- Facilitate professional learning with norms that reflect the three big ideas of a PLC: a focus on learning, a collaborative culture, and a focus on results.
- Embrace the notion that growth also entails components of productive struggle.
- Work to create a safe place where our educators feel free to ask questions, take risks, and make mistakes, while also learning from those mistakes.
- Focus conversations on *our* district, *our* campuses, *our* teacher teams, and *our* students.
- Use our collective mindset to connect educators across campuses as allies in these efforts.
- Ensure our educators have the tools, protocols, and student work samples (or artifacts) necessary to implement the 15-Day Challenge.
- Provide differentiated support through individual conversations, team conversations, or campus-based coaching.

The 15-Day Challenge has provided direction for us as we’ve journeyed together as a PLC in our efforts to ensure all students have the time and support necessary to learn at grade level or above. (M. Jones, D. Hoppie, and J. Nuzzie, personal communication, 2023)

Nevada Joint Union High School District, Luke Browning, Tim Reid

Early in the 15-Day Challenge process, Nevada Joint Union High School District leadership began by having their departments prioritize all the state standards for each course before ever getting a chance to experience the benefits of seeing the process in action. After engaging in this process, the leaders realized this approach soon became an overwhelming task. Teachers began to disengage in the process or complete the first step out of compliance rather than authentically striving to determine what they wanted their students to know and do. Because of this experience, they gravitated toward the 15-Day Challenge and shifted their approach to having teams of teachers pick one unit to focus on rather than an entire course. This process not only gave the teachers a taste of the process but also (and more importantly) provided them with a quick win by giving them the experience of getting all their students to master an essential standard. Once the teams tasted the success of getting all students to the island, the rest of the PLC process began to fall into place, and teachers were able to commit to tackling other units or entire courses.

The mathematics department learned the process of the 15-Day Challenge and collaboratively designed their first unit of study together. At the end of the challenge, the team debriefed the process and reviewed student data to determine the number of students who could reach mastery. Then, because of their progress and the effectiveness of the new professional development model, both the teachers

at Nevada Union and site and district administrators decided to expand the model into a districtwide approach that included all teachers. The professional development the mathematics and English departments teachers received continued, and the model was expanded to include all departments in the school. This process snowballed into districtwide professional development days, and school department chairs began to transform into a guiding coalition with the mission of facilitating, researching, and modeling the process.

Early in the process, site administrators at Nevada Union wanted to move quickly. While setting clear standards and goals was beneficial, there were times when the teams needed to slow down and address the culture in the room. Despite having clear norms and collective commitments, each team engaged in the process needed time and space for each member to be seen and heard, and the failure of the administrators to address this early on only created more work at a later stage in the process.

In addition to meeting teachers where they are, leaders should also be cautious about moving too quickly through steps and recognize that the power in the process comes from the struggle. Early in the process, teacher teams at Nevada Union would move quickly by prioritizing standards until site leaders realized it was not the final product that was important, but rather the conversations, disagreements, and dialogue between teachers. The real power in the process came when some of the teachers in the room identified a standard as a boulder while others adamantly said it was a rock, and still, others protested it was a butterfly. When these debates happened, they were always followed by well-thought-out conversations that provided clarity and calibration to the teams engaged in the process.

After experiencing the joys and discomforts of implementing the PLC process and the 15-Day Challenge, Nevada Union leaders committed to staying the course and sustaining the progress made. To accomplish this, these leaders know they must rely on what DuFour and colleagues (2016) refer to as a *top-down, bottom-up approach*. In the absence of consistent pressure and clarity on what leadership will monitor, the process will only sustain itself in pockets; it will never fully flourish districtwide. The forefront of this pressure will include the continual review of schoolwide data pictures and a renewed focus on aligning the district's hiring and evaluation process with tenets of a PLC.

In the same way, leadership must remain *tight* at the top (DuFour et al., 2016). The leaders must also continually seek ways to empower teachers to take more ownership of the process by providing a higher level of responsibility to the site and district guiding coalitions. For the process to sustain, department chairs and building leaders must continue to transition from their traditional role to instructional leaders. This includes continually revisiting pacing guides and unit design through the 15-Day Challenge and receiving the professional development they need to advance the process.

SPC. Rafael Hernando III Middle School, Valerie Hairston, Principal

Bringing the 15-Day Challenge to SPC. Rafael Hernando III Middle School was a game changer for our campus. When I first arrived at Hernando as the campus principal, I quickly identified we needed support in providing quality Tier I instruction. After attending the first summer PLC at Work Institute with a team of teachers and instructional leaders from this campus, it was clear to me that quality Tier I instruction would not be evident in classrooms until teachers had a common understanding of their state standards and curriculum. For us, collaborating about a

guaranteed and viable curriculum would be the fastest route to ensuring all students received quality Tier I instruction and interventions that met their needs. Maria's approach to establishing a common guaranteed and viable curriculum (while getting crystal clear about standards) provided our instructional teams an opportunity to interact with state standards with more depth and complexity. Once we began the process of understanding the purpose and methodology of the 15-Day Challenge, it was important to provide teachers with enough common planning time to work with their curriculum. As an instructional leadership team, we had to shift our mindset about the purpose of common teacher planning time and ensure we guarded that time as sacred to the overall mission of our campus. While we do many things that are both important and necessary for the overall success of the campus, from an instructional standpoint, nothing we do at Hernando is more important than beginning every unit of study by completing our 15-Day Challenge. As the principal of a national Model PLC at Work School that began its PLC journey with a heavy investment in the 15-Day Challenge, I offer this advice to schools navigating their own journeys:

We began with a small team at a summer PLC at Work Institute, but we needed to find a way to provide professional development from PLC experts in a faster and more economical way. Through the Solution Tree representative in our area, we were able to connect with Maria and set dates for initial and ongoing support for our PLC and 15-Day Challenge journey. Maria worked with our teams on-site on multiple occasions to coach us through our work with the 15-Day Challenge.

- Teachers must have time to work as collaborative teams; this also requires that teachers are ready to work as collaborative teams. Establishing a vision, mission, collective commitments, team goals, and team norms is essential to the overall success individual teams will have.
- I cannot stress enough that teachers must have common planning time! Each school is different, but we have utilized all of the following:
 - Common planning periods
 - Half-day power planning (We achieve this by covering content teams with substitutes for a half-day so they can engage in guided planning with a member of our instructional leadership team.)
 - Paid, guided, planning time outside school hours (after school, weekends, fall, spring, and summer break)
 - Even as things become more digital, completing our 15-Day Challenges the original way was most effective (We used Excel sheets, Word documents, and everything in between; however, chart paper, sticky notes, and meaningful collaboration seems to produce the best results.)
- Becoming a PLC and engaging in the practice of the 15-Day Challenge increased staff morale! Because we provided ongoing support and invested in our teachers, our teachers are well versed, knowledgeable, and highly skilled in their content and practice. When teachers know and understand their content, leaders can trust them with the autonomy to make decisions that best serve all students; as a result, teachers feel valued as professional educators. (V. Hairston, personal communication, 2023)

Interview Questions With Lead Educators and Administrators

The following are interview excerpts from district and school leaders and teachers on how to guide this process as a leader with a team, school, or district.

How have you guided this work as a leader?

Kendra Barrera, high school English teacher: Throughout meetings, I consistently refocus the group on revisiting the focus standards for the unit and the standards to teach daily as we plan instructional activities and assessments. More intentional teaching occurs.

Luke Browning, assistant principal: In the same way the 15-Day Challenge gives teacher teams an opportunity to make mistakes, have small victories, and fine-tune their process, it also gives district leaders an opportunity to fine-tune the support they provide teachers. It allows leaders an opportunity to get clear about what data they are going to measure to ensure the success of this process.

Heather Friziellie, superintendent: I developed a district template on poster paper to provide a working structure, as well as a process to increase efficiency. Teams share their products during each collaborative planning time.

Janel Keating, superintendent; Lori Curtis, director of digital learning services; and Jill Duffy-DeGoede, secondary English language arts and social studies specialist: We led the introduction of the process, and created a scope and sequence to drive the units and a planning template. We're involved in planning on a daily basis.

How do principals guide this work in their schools?

Barrera: Principals hold their team leaders (as well as individual team members) accountable for completing these steps together. Principals observe classes, allow teachers to observe other teachers, and look at data with the collaborative teams.

Browning: As a school leader, it is critical to know where each team is in the process. It is important to know a team's stage of development, what the members have learned in the process (and what they still need to learn), and what they are celebrating.

In my district, the opportunity to watch teams make mistakes as they plan and implement 15-Day Challenges allowed me the opportunity to alter the type of professional development we provide. It has also forced me to get really clear about what I need to measure at each stage of the process.

Additionally, as department teams each goes through the process, I share their victories, aha moments, and the challenges they face to help other teacher teams find success. A prime example of this is when our ninth-grade English team codesigned a unit and then, because of time and some weather-related school closures, decided members each would use their own assessment to measure student mastery of the standards. When the team came back together to collaborate and share data, its largest aha moment was when team members realized they needed to use a common assessment. Our biology team mapped out a 15-Day Challenge and said there was no way to embed a Tier 2 intervention into the unit. After making the unit visible and mapping it out on the wall with boxes and sticky notes, the members

decided to take the one-day review they do prior to the summative assessment and split it into two half-days of class interventions directly after each formative assessment.

Friziellie: Principals provide ongoing collaborative time to work on 15-Day Challenge plans. In turn, these plans provide a visual for principals to know what to look for when walking through to check that activities match what was planned, as well as talking points for feedback. Principals also allow teams to share and celebrate their successes.

Keating and colleagues: To operationalize this process throughout our core subjects, we must work with team leaders to identify the power standards and then process this with the rest of the teams, including the support staff who serve students in a support role. Building ownership and shared leadership for these standards has helped with targeted planning. The next step in guiding this work has been pulling up a chair with teams, which will inevitably get mired in the muck of the learning process. Potential pitfalls may include unpacking the learning target progression, creating an end-of-unit assessment that measures what we want students to know and be able to do (and checking DOK level), identifying the formative checks that inform the targeted skills, and weaving content standards into and throughout the 15-Day Challenge. Teachers often need little support in developing the learning tasks and instructional strategies. Once we develop the structure, these are the topics of ongoing conversations in the teachers' areas of expertise.

How will you sustain the work?

Barrera: By continuing to start with the end in mind and, after completing the units, revisiting fifteen-day unit maps to revise, edit, make changes, and improve.

Browning: Once teacher teams share an understanding of their purpose, lay out their procedures in the form of norms and collective commitments, and complete a 15-Day Challenge, they are well on their way to sustaining the work. All teams really need to do at that point is replicate the 15-Day Challenge over and over until they have codesigned units for all essential standards, which will result in a fully comprehensive pacing guide. It is, however, equally important for school administrators to continue to monitor this work, know where each team is in the process, and monitor department goals.

Friziellie: We will continue to use the 15-Day Challenge to build our capacity to move to standards-based reporting and encourage student goal writing.

Keating and colleagues: We will begin to build next year's scope and sequence based on this year's work (tweaking it based on student data and work). Plans will only be revised, not rebuilt. We will share out the fifteen-day plans and assessments (artifacts) with interdisciplinary and vertical teams to give feedback and celebrate growth. Teams will do assessments and interventions first. Teams will also craft SMART goals on just the targets they will address in the 15-Day Challenge (not the entire standard; Conzemius & O'Neill, 2014). The 15-Day Challenge is the continuous-improvement cycle in action!

Practitioner Views

The 15-Day Challenge looks great on paper, but how does it stand up in practice? Let's see what practitioners say in response to the following interview questions.

What do you like about the 15-Day Challenge process for unit design?

Barrera: I like that it allows teachers to identify focus standards for a unit and then break down each day to clearly see what standards to focus on, as well as how much time to devote to teach and practice each standard prior to assessments. This better guides teachers in pacing and assures them that the amount of time they spend on each standard corresponds to the priority that the team has agreed on for each standard.

Browning: One of the biggest challenges teams face when starting the PLC journey is members getting overwhelmed by the idea of unpacking every standard. The 15-Day Challenge gives departments a quick win by giving them the freedom to choose two or three essential standards, unpack the standards for clarity and agreement, and then design and teach a unit of study together. This allows the teams to put the four critical questions of a PLC into practice quickly.

Friziellie: The 15-Day Challenge process helps teachers maintain focus and stay on the same page, especially with assessment. Planning can often be overwhelming, but this process makes it feel doable and less intimidating while delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Check-ins during the instructional unit allow for reteaching, and instruction is always standards driven. Lining up all the units helps educators see the big picture for learning. And best of all, the process is simple and allows for quick wins.

Keating and colleagues: It has simplified and targeted planning, it brings clarity to the unit of study, and it's doable! Teams have specific start and end dates. They design unit assessment first, but intervention is not an afterthought. This keeps us focused on one power standard and has created alignment within the entire department. Team conversations are more productive and supportive, and it has helped us give students targeted feedback.

How has the 15-Day Challenge made a difference for teachers?

Barrera: Teachers are often on the same page now, and this allows for more conversation and collaboration about how much they should emphasize and teach certain standards, as well as if they are giving too much or too little time to teaching prior to an assessment. Lesson objectives have also become much clearer.

Browning: The 15-Day Challenge quickly makes the PLC process real for teachers. It increases their capacity to understand the standards and gets them to see the benefit of codesigning and teaching a unit together. During the 15-Day Challenge, teacher teams experience big successes and make key mistakes. Without the 15-Day Challenge, teams would not be able to fail safely and the consequences of their mistakes would be amplified, making it a lot harder for teacher teams to be successful.

Friziellie: The 15-Day Challenge helps lay a framework for scope and sequence, especially when there are high levels of staff turnover and many novice teachers. This framework provides the building blocks and shows how the curriculum connects. Teachers are more engaged with the content because they are planning short chunks at a time and always revisiting them. They share responsibility and continuously work toward better teamwork and collaboration. They are able to bring clarity to the work and provide meaningful feedback to students.

Keating and colleagues: The 15-Day Challenge adds a visual hands-on collaborative element to unit planning. Teachers are more focused and more intentionally unpack the standards together. They feel like they can teach one standard at a time to a deeper level. They appreciate the hard-and-fast end dates, and they see how all the pieces fit together. It offers more intentional learning targets and success criteria and more accountability for (turning in) student work.

How has the 15-Day Challenge made a difference for students?

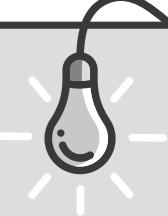
Barrera: Because teachers are clearer on exactly what the focus is for each day, students are also clearer; students are more likely to know and understand what they are learning, what teachers expect them to do, and what assessments will include.

Browning: The 15-Day Challenge directly benefits students in the form of increasing their mastery on essential standards. Students quickly gain the benefit of having multiple teachers codesign a unit that includes formative assessments and built-in Tier 2 interventions. When students demonstrate they need more help to master an essential standard, they receive that help, and when students demonstrate they have mastered the standard, teachers provide extensions of their understanding of that standard.

Additionally, one of the biggest surprises for us in this process was how much fun the students had knowing the teachers were designing and working together to help each student reach success.

Friziellie: Students are clear on what they're working on and receive feedback along the way.

Keating and colleagues: Students have more clarity (narrow and targeted) and understanding of specifically what they are learning. This includes depth of knowledge, support from one content area to another, more targeted feedback, and more accountability for their work. Teachers give Tier 2 support during core instruction; planned intervention in the unit provides proactive intervention.



Teacher Tips

As you engage with the processes in this chapter, use the following tips to enhance your work.

- It's best to do a couple of units of study before tackling yearlong pacing. Try a few units of study using the 15-Day Challenge method and then implement your yearlong pacing guide.
- Remember, if necessary, you can move units around in the future when creating a yearlong pacing guide.
- Once you design your units of study, it's easy to see the progression over the year. As you move forward, you will see the success of your collaborative efforts.

Summary

Many schools and teams successfully use the 15-Day Challenge format to design exciting and engaging units of study for the students they serve. Use the reproducible “Chapter 9 Reflection: 15-Day Challenge Review” (page 116) to reflect on where you are as a team with sustaining this process. As you can see by the district and school leader and teacher comments, the 15-Day Challenge is doable and fun. It will, of course, take some time to get efficient as a team with the process. But when you do, your team will be unstoppable and your students’ learning will go through the roof. Hold on to your hat!

Chapter 9 Reflection: 15-Day Challenge Review

Rate your team on a scale from 1–5.

1 = Lowest level of proficiency

5 = Highest level of proficiency

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| The team looked at all the standards and decided the order to teach them. | | | | | |
| The team identified standards in multiple units of study all members will teach. | | | | | |
| The team identified the proficiency progression for standards that will evolve throughout the year. | | | | | |
| If the state tests a subject area, teams paced those units until the state test. Teams paced other grade subjects or courses to the end of the year. | | | | | |
| State-tested subject areas helped the team solidify essential standards for the next grade or course after the state test. | | | | | |
| Teams reviewed yearlong pacing guides at the beginning and end of the year to make necessary adjustments. | | | | | |
| Celebration: | | | | | |
| Areas for improvement as a team: | | | | | |



Epilogue

As I travel the United States coaching schools on this process, educators often ask me how to achieve amazing and consistent results. My answers are always the same.

- Keep it simple—don't take this process and make it complicated!
- Complete the steps for unit design in order. There is a reason for each step!
- Don't skip any steps. When teams get in a hurry, they often skip steps 2, 4, and 6. When teams skip steps, the process is not as strong. Team clarity on the standard grows cloudy. Each step has a specific role in the process.
- Everyone on the team designs the unit together. Assign someone on your team to ensure all voices are heard.
- Remember, when adults learn together, students learn. That is why the process is called *PLC at Work*.

The 15-Day Challenge has changed literally hundreds of schools and impacted thousands of students. You can do it too! I believe in you!

—Maria

 **Here's How**

Scan this code to watch the author explain her final thoughts.


SCAN ME



Appendix

Sample 15-Day Challenge Unit Plans

In this appendix, you will find ten examples of the 15-Day Challenge used with an assortment of school levels and subjects. Use these as a reference to guide your own work.

15-Day Challenge Example: Primary English Language Arts

See figure A.1 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for primary English language arts.

Boulders (bold)

- **RL.1.3: Describe characters, setting, and major events in a story, using key details.**
- **RL.1.2: Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.**

Rocks (underlined)

- RF.1.3.D: Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word.
- RF.1.3.E: Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables.
- W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

Source: Tiffany Richards, first grade team, Pasco SD, 2023. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.1: 15-Day Challenge for primary English language arts example.

continued ►

Butterflies (italics)

- RI.1.1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- RI.1.2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- RI.1.3: Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 |
|--|---|---|--|
| Reading RL.1.3 Read aloud <i>Clean Your Room, Harvey Moon</i> Revisit story elements chart Orally retell Story elements process grid (throughout the unit) <u>Word study RF.1.3.D</u> Weekly chart (add soft C) <u>Writing W.1.2</u> My favorite story with model | Reading RL.1.3 Describing characters inside A, C (p. 25) Read aloud <i>Tackylocks and the Three Bears</i> <u>Word study RF.1.3.D</u> Weekly chart (add soft g) <u>Writing W.1.2</u> Review heart brainstorm ideas, discuss and model characters and who they could be (you, neighbor, a friend; p. 28) | Reading RL.1.3 Describing characters outside A, C. <i>Fancy Nancy: My Family History</i> <u>Word study RF.1.3.D</u> Weekly chart (add in with secret story) <u>Writing W.1.2</u> Model writing NOTE: pp. 28, 40, and 50 drawing activity, possibly add to a Wednesday activity | Reading RL.1.3 Discussion of supporting characters— <i>Lon Po Po</i> Make web with main character and supporting characters Process grid—add supporting characters |
| Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 |
| Reading RL.1.3 Describing plot anchor chart: <i>Too Many Tamales</i> Process grid—problem <u>Word study RF.1.3.E</u> Problem—What's wrong? | Reading RL.1.3 <i>Amazing Grace</i> Reading journal—listen, sketch problem, and solution Process grid—solution <u>Word study RF.1.3.E</u> Solution—solve the problem | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 <i>Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile</i> Smartboard major events—What is the most important (minor events are not critical for the problem and solution)? Foldable activity Process grid—plot <u>Word study RF.1.3.E</u> Event—things that go together | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 <i>Lily's Purple Plastic Purse</i> Discussion major events—What is the most important? |
| Day 9 | Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| Reading RL.1.3 <i>Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding</i> Setting input chart (geography, location, weather, climate, human made objects—dams, bridges, and so on) Process grid—setting | Reading RL.1.3 <i>Fly Away Home</i> Setting input chart (geography, location, weather, climate, human made objects—dams, bridges, and so on) Process grid—setting | Reading RL.1.3 <i>Fly Away Home</i> Setting input chart (geography, location, weather, climate, human made objects—dams, bridges, and so on) Process grid—setting | Common formative assessment (mid-unit) |

| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 | Day 16 |
|--|---|--|---|
| Reading RL.1.2 Problem and solution Problem and solution flip chart Read aloud <i>Knuffle Bunny</i> and add to flip chart Vanishing content—The solution is how a problem is solved in a story Shared reading: Story elements song | Reading RL.1.3 Describing characters (comparing two characters' adventures) Read aloud <i>Knuffle Bunny Too</i> (discuss the problem solution) Compare and contrast two characters—G. O. (Venn diagram) Response journal | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Retell a story, find central message Central message anchor chart (Cupcake anchor chart) Read aloud—orally identify central message <i>Stellaluna</i> retell—focus on problem and solution in discussion and identify the central message *Practice reading to someone: Orally retell <i>Knuffle Bunny</i> with a partner Describing characters (<i>Knuffle Bunny</i>) | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Describing characters and story elements Read aloud— <i>The City Mouse and the Country Mouse</i> Add to story elements flip chart Hula Hoop Venn diagram compare and contrast <i>The City Mouse and the Country Mouse</i> |
| Day 17 | Day 18 | Day 19 | Day 20 |
| Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Describing characters and story elements Orally retell <i>The City Mouse and the Country Mouse</i> with a partner <i>The City Mouse and the Country Mouse</i> art and opinion writing using evidence from the text Discuss central message <u>Common formative assessment number 1: Tops and bottoms (problem, solution)</u> | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Describing characters and story elements Read aloud— <i>Jack the Wolf</i> Add to story elements flip chart—central message only (How do we know? Use evidence from the text.) Vanishing content—The central message is what the author wants us to learn from the text. | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Describing characters and story elements <i>Jack the Wolf</i> retell activity—reading response journal (first, next, then, last) <u>Common formative assessment 2: Ugly Duckling—central message</u> | Reading RI.1.3 Text features Text features anchor chart Text features scavenger hunt (nonfiction text or scholastic news) Text features walk about |
| Day 21 | Day 22 | Day 23 | Day 24 |
| Reading RI.1.1, RI.1.2 Ask and answer questions about the main idea Ask and answer questions sentence frame anchor chart <i>Inka Runners</i> (<i>Beats and Banjos—Sound Kit</i>) | Reading RI.1.1, RI.1.2 Ask and answer questions and main idea Main idea anchor chart <i>Sounds in My Day (Beats and Banjos—Sound Kit)</i> Sounds nature walk (focusing on sounds) Main idea pudding Vanishing content—The main idea is what the text is mostly about | Reading RI.1.1, RI.1.2 Ask and answer questions and main idea Close reader— insect messages Ask and answer questions graphic organizer Discuss main idea as a class | Reading RI.1.1, RI.1.2 Ask and answer questions and main idea Student reader (journeys)—How animals communicate Main idea with details and class graphic organizer |

continued ►

| Day 25 | Day 26 | Day 27 | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Shared reading: sound chants and songs | Reading RL.1.2, RL.1.3 Describing characters and story elements Read aloud <i>Wemberly Worried</i> <i>Wemberly Worried</i> activity—central message and real-life application | Common formative assessment: <u>story elements</u> *Sentence dictation: <i>At the park, I play on the swings and run in the grass</i> (assess retell to administer in small groups) | |
| *Integrate nonfiction lessons into fiction lessons depending on science kit schedule (no assessing—this is a butterfly) | | | |

15-Day Challenge Example: Primary Mathematics (Addition and Subtraction Within 1,000 With Word Problems to 100)

See figure A.2 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for primary mathematics.

Boulder (bold)

- **2.NBT.7: Add and subtract within 1000, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method. Understand that in adding or subtracting three-digit numbers, one adds or subtracts hundreds and hundreds, tens and tens, ones and ones; and sometimes it is necessary to compose or decompose tens or hundreds.**

Rocks (underlined)

- 2.NBT.8: Mentally add 10 or 100 to a given number 100–900, and mentally subtract 10 or 100 from a given number 100–900.
- 2.NBT.9: Explain why addition and subtraction strategies work, using place value and the properties of operations.

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|---|---|
| 2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians relate 10 more, 10 less, 100 more, and 100 less to addition and subtraction of 10 and 100. Lesson 1 Cyclical review Video—Addition with regrouping Exploration jigsaw Multistep problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Practice with partners • Exit ticket • Independently | 2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians add and subtract multiples of 100, including counting on to subtract. Lesson 2 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice with partners • Exit ticket • Independently | 2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians add multiples of 100 and some tens within 1,000. Lesson 3 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Table team • Exit ticket • Independently |

| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians subtract multiples of 100 and some tens within 1,000. Lesson 4 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Partners • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians use the associative property to make a hundred in one addend. Lesson 5 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Expert groups • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians use the associative property to subtract from three-digit numbers and verify solutions with addition. Lesson 6 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Partners • Exit ticket • Independently |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians share and critique solution strategies for varied addition and subtraction problems within 1,000. Kahoot Common formative assessment</p> | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians relate manipulative representations to the addition algorithm. Lesson 8 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Application • Partners • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians relate manipulative representations to the addition algorithm. Lesson 9 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice • Table teams • Exit ticket • Independently |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians use math drawings to represent additions with up to two compositions and relate drawings to the addition algorithm. Lesson 10 Cyclical review Application problem and problem set Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners • Kahoot | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians use math drawings to represent additions with up to two compositions and relate drawings to the addition algorithm. Lesson 11 Cyclical review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whiteboard • Problem set • Whole group • Practice • Partners • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9 Learning target: Mathematicians choose and explain solution strategies and record with a written addition method. Expert groups Common formative assessment</p> |

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010b.

Source: Jessica Chandler and Jayna Smith. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.2: 15-Day Challenge primary mathematics (addition and subtraction within 1,000 with word problems to 100) example.

continued ►

| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
|--|---|--|
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians relate manipulative representations to the subtraction algorithm, and use addition to explain why the subtraction method works.</p> <p>Lesson 13</p> <p>Display anchor chart</p> <p>Video to subtraction with regrouping rap</p> <p>Video to show subtraction with regrouping</p> <p>Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians use math drawings to represent subtraction with up to two decompositions, relate drawings to the algorithm, and use addition to explain why the subtraction method works.</p> <p>Lesson 14</p> <p>Cyclical review</p> <p>Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice • Partners • Quizzes | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians use math drawings to represent subtraction with up to two decompositions, relate drawings to the algorithm, and use addition to explain why the subtraction method works.</p> <p>Lesson 15</p> <p>Cyclical review</p> <p>Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice • Partners |
| Day 16 | Day 17 | Day 18 |
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians subtract from multiples of 100 and from numbers with zero in the tens place.</p> <p>Lesson 16</p> <p>Cyclical review</p> <p>Application problem and problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice • Partners • Exit ticket • Independently | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians subtract from multiples of 100 and from numbers with zero in the tens place.</p> <p>Lesson 17</p> <p>Cyclical review</p> <p>Problem set</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group • Practice • Partners | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians apply and explain alternate methods for subtracting from multiples of 100 and from numbers with zero in the tens place.</p> <p>Coaches circle review</p> <p>Common formative assessment</p> |
| Day 19 | Day 20 | |
| <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians choose and explain solution strategies and record with a written addition or subtraction method.</p> <p>Lesson 19 as a class; gradual release method</p> <p>Lesson 20 with a partner</p> <p>Teamwork review problems</p> | <p>2.NBT.7, 2.NBT.8, 2.NBT.9</p> <p>Learning target: Mathematicians choose and explain solution strategies and record with a written addition or subtraction method.</p> <p>End-of-unit common formative assessment</p> | |

15-Day Challenge Example: Intermediate Mathematics (Place Value, Rounding, Algorithms)

See figure A.3 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for intermediate mathematics.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Boulders (bold)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.OA.3: Solve multistep word problems posed with whole numbers and having whole-number answers using the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted. Represent these problems using equations with a letter standing for the unknown quantity. Assess the reasonableness of answers using mental computation and estimation strategies including rounding. • 4.NBT.2: Read and write multi-digit whole numbers using base-ten numerals, number names, and expanded form. Compare two multi-digit numbers based on meanings of the digits in each place, using $>$, $=$, $<$ symbols to record the results of comparisons. • 4.NBT.4: Fluently add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm. <p><u> Rocks—Supporting Standards (underlined)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>4.NBT.1:</u> Recognize that in a multi-digit whole number, a digit in one place represents ten times what it represents in the place to its right. • <u>4.NBT.3:</u> Use place value understanding to round multi-digit whole numbers to any place. <p>Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)</p> | | |
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
| <p><u>4.NBT.1</u> Interpret a multiplication equation as a comparison.</p> <p>Lesson 1 Sprint Template Homework page • Problems 1a, b, c Problem set</p> | <p><u>4.NBT.1</u> Recognize a digit represents 10 times the value of what it represents in the place to its right.</p> <p>Lesson 2 Template Homework page • Problems 1 and 4 Practice using a coaches circle</p> | <p>4.NBT.2 Name numbers within 1 million by building understanding of the place value chart and placement of commas for naming base thousand units.</p> <p>Lesson 3 Sprint Whiteboards Homework page • Problem 3a Problem set</p> |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <p>4.NBT.2 Read and write multi-digit numbers using base ten numerals, number names, and expanded form.</p> <p>Lesson 4 Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, b, c, 3 (two lines) Expert group practice</p> | <p>4.NBT.2 Compare numbers based on meanings of the digits using $>$, $<$, or $=$ to record the comparison.</p> <p>Lesson 5 Sprint Template Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, 2b Problem set as a table team</p> | <p>4.NBT.2 Find 1, 10, and 100 thousand more and less than a given.</p> <p>Lesson 6 Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, 2a, b, 3a Problem set</p> |

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010b.

FIGURE A.3: 15-Day Challenge for intermediate mathematics (place value, rounding, algorithms) example.

continued ►

| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|---|---|--|
| <p><u>4.NBT.3</u> Round multi-digit numbers to the thousands place using the vertical number line.</p> <p>Lesson 7 Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, c, 2 Problem set</p> <p><u>4.NBT.2 Common formative assessment 1</u></p> | <p><u>4.NBT.3</u> Round multi-digit numbers to any place using the vertical number line.</p> <p>Lessons 8 and 9 Sprint Whiteboards Homework page • Problem 3 (Lesson 8) • Problems 1a, 2a (Lesson 9) Problem set with a partner • Problems 1a, b, c, 3 (Lesson 8) • All problems (Lesson 9)</p> | <p><u>4.NBT.3</u> Use place value understanding to round multi-digit numbers to any place value using real world applications.</p> <p>Lesson 10 Sprint Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, b, c, 3a, b, c Problem set Exit ticket</p> |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p>4.NBT.4, 4.OA.3 Use place value understanding to fluently add multidigit whole numbers using the standard addition algorithm, and apply the algorithm to solve word problems using tape diagrams.</p> <p>Lesson 11 (addition) Template Whiteboards</p> <p><u>Common formative assessment</u></p> | <p>4.OA.3, 4.NBT.4 Solve multistep word problems using the standard addition algorithm modeled with tape diagrams, and assess the reasonableness of answers using rounding.</p> <p>Lesson 12 (addition) Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, b Partner tape diagrams</p> | <p>4.OA.3, 4.NBT.4 Use place value understanding to decompose to smaller units once using the standard subtraction algorithm, and apply the algorithm to solve word problems using tape diagrams.</p> <p>Lesson 13 (subtraction) Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, 3 Partner work</p> <p><u>Common formative assessment</u></p> |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| <p>4.OA.3, 4.NBT.4 Use place value understanding to decompose to smaller units up to three times using the standard subtraction algorithm, and apply the algorithm to solve word problems using tape diagrams.</p> <p>Lesson 14 (subtraction) Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, 2 Problem set</p> | <p>4.OA.3, 4.NBT.4 Use place value understanding to fluently decompose to smaller units multiple times in any place using the standard subtraction algorithm, and apply the algorithm to solve word problems using tape diagrams.</p> <p>Lesson 15 (subtraction) Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, 2 Kahoot</p> | <p>4.OA.3, 4.NBT.4 Solve two-step word problems using the standard subtraction algorithm fluently modeled with tape diagrams, and assess the reasonableness of answers using rounding.</p> <p>Lesson 16 (subtraction) Sprint Whiteboards Homework page • Problems 1a, b, c Problem set</p> |

| Day 16 | Day 17 | Day 18 |
|--|--|------------|
| <p>4.OA.3 Solve additive compare word problems modeled with tape diagrams. Lesson 17 Sprint Whiteboards <u>4.NBT.4 Common formative assessment #1 (subtraction)</u></p> | <p>4.OA.3 Solve multistep word problems modeled with tape diagrams, and assess the reasonableness of answers using rounding. Lesson 18 Whiteboards Homework page • Problem 1 Problem set</p> | Review day |
| Day 19 | | |
| <u>End-of-unit assessment (4.NBT.2, 4.NBT.3, 4.NBT.4, 4.OA.3)</u> | | |

15-Day Challenge Example: Intermediate English Language Arts (Writing Personal Narratives)

See figure A.4 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for intermediate English language arts.

Boulders (bold)

- **W.4.3 (Writing): Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.**
 - Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
 - Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
 - Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
 - Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
 - Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **RI.4.1 (Reading Informational): Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.**

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

Source: Jodi Mitchell, Stacie Largent, and Chloe Reifon, fourth grade, Aspen Elementary. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.4: 15-Day Challenge for intermediate English language arts (writing personal narratives) example.

continued ►

Rocks (underlined)

- RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (such as chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (such as a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Butterflies (italics)

- RI.4.6: Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.
- L.4.3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- L.4.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|--|---|
| RI.4.1, W.4.3 Infer information from a six-word memory (activity page 1.2) W.4.3 Common formative assessment 1: Write a paragraph about a summer memory (activity page 1.1) | W.4.3, RL.4.3 Character traits Group discussion and writing on what makes a good friend Activity page 2.3 Activity page 2.4 | RI.4.1 Cite evidence from the text in describing character traits Lesson 2 Reading A Good Lie Activity page 2.1—slides Activity page 2.2 |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| RI.4.5, W.4.3 Lesson 3 Use a trade book to teach cause and effect Activity page 3.1 Whole group—write a cause and effect paragraph on the trade book Activity page 3.3 | RI.4.1, W.4.3 Lesson 4 Identify sensory details in a text Activity page 4.2 Write a paragraph using sensory details Activity page 4.3 | RI.4.2, W.4.3 Lesson 5 Describe the events of “How to Eat a Guava” Activity page 5.1 Outline a sequence of events Activity pages 5.2 and 5.3 |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| RI.4.1, W.4.3 Lesson 6 Describe character traits and support with quotes from the text Activity page 6.2 Write a narrative that includes dialogue Activity pages 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, and 6.6 W.4.3 Common formative assessment 2: Activity page 6.6 | RI.4.1, RI.4.5, W.4.3 Lesson 7 Refer to text in explaining what a text says Activity page 7.1 Describe the chronology of a personal narrative Activity page 7.2 Use transition words in planning a chronological narrative Activity pages 7.3, 7.4, and 7.5 RI.4.1 Common formative assessment 1 | RI.4.1, RI.4.6, W.4.3 Lesson 8 Identify details that demonstrate the narrator’s feelings Activity page 8.2 Compare facts from first and secondhand accounts Activity page 8.3 Complete planning their personal narratives Activity page 8.4 Vocabulary practice: Activity page 8.1 |

| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
|---|--|--|
| <p>RI.4.1, W.4.3 Lesson 9 Infer character traits from actions Activity page 9.1 Draft introductions to their personal narratives Activity pages 9.2 and 9.3</p> | <p>RI.4.1, W.4.3, L.4.5 Lesson 10 Interpret and analyze a simile or metaphor from the text Activity pages 10.2 and 10.3 Include similes or metaphors in their personal narrative Activity pages 10.4 and 10.5 Identify and explain similes and metaphors Activity page 10.1</p> | <p>RI.4.1, W.4.3, L.4.3 Lesson 11 Identify different types of detail and analyze how the text conveys meaning through cause and effect Write draft of second paragraph of their personal narratives and use an example of cause and effect Activity page 11.2 Replace nondescript verbs with vital verbs that show detail and action Activity page 11.3</p> <p><u>RI.4.1 Common formative assessment 2</u></p> |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| <p>RI.4.1, W.4.3 Lesson 12 Identify textual details and use them to read the text closely Revise their personal narrative drafts to incorporate good and varied details Use checklist to check their own personal narratives</p> | <p>RI.4.2, W.4.3 Lesson 13 Learn about strong conclusions and analyze the conclusion of "Small Steps" Activity page 13.1 Compose conclusions for their personal narrative Activity page 13.2</p> | <p>W.4.3 Lesson 14 Offer peer feedback and use feedback to revise their personal narratives Activity page 14.3 Do revisions and type up their narratives</p> |
| Day 16 | Day 17 | |
| Celebrate and share their personal narratives | <p>W.4.3 Common formative assessment: Use their personal narrative</p> <p><u>RI.4.1 Common formative assessment 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passage 1, <i>The Cat</i> • Questions to use: 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 | |

15-Day Challenge Example: Middle School World History (*The First Americans*)

See figure A.5 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for middle school World History.

Boulders (bold)

- SS.8.17 and SS.8.1:** Use historical evidence to evaluate the state of regional economies and how the physical and human characteristics influenced culture throughout American history.
- SS.8.19 and SS.8.20:** Explain how the push and pull factors contributed to immigration and migration in early American history and how it influenced global interconnections.
- SS.8.22 and SS.8.23:** Explain multiple causes and effects of social and cultural developments that changed during early American history.

Rock (underlined)

- SS.8.11: Analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at the local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Butterflies (italics)

- SS.8.9:* Present original arguments based on credible sources using a variety of media to authentic audiences.
- SS.8.13:* Explain the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts (21st century skills).

Common formative assessments and other assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|---|---|
| SS.8.22, SS.8.23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Come up with five to seven top things that have shaped American history in the past fifty years Pair share (three or four minutes) Primary and secondary worksheet using gradual release strategy Essential question: What are characteristics that make up a culture? | SS.8.22, SS.8.23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video—<i>The First Americans</i> Read and discuss pages 4-7 (large group) Exit ticket | SS.8.22, SS.8.23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Daily review 1 and 6 Online Google discussion questions done by the end of class Go over guided reading 1.1 |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| SS.8.22, SS.8.23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a nomadic hunter? (pair share elbow partner) Bell ringer: What are some of the steps along the way from being nomadic hunters to being city dwellers? Video on Inca background Over the swimming pools activity | SS.8.22, SS.8.23, SS.8.9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer IXL. R.1 (primary and secondary sources) Read section 1.2, Cities and Empires, pages 8-13 Common formative assessment | <u>SS.8.11</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Section pages 11 and page 12, geography connection Section 1.2, guided reading questions (gradual release strategy) I do, we do, you do Finish individual guided reading |

| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|--|---|---|
| SS.8.11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Page 12, geography connection Review and guided reading 1.2 using the in/out circles strategy Slides presentation | SS.8.17, SS.8.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections 1.1 and 1.2, progress check Video on northern people (museums, parks, and so on) Section 1.3, pages 14–19 | SS.8.17, SS.8.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video on northern people Go over progress check (sections 1.1 and 1.2) Refocus motivation video <i>Facing the Giants</i> |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| SS.8.17, SS.8.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Write down two important concepts from yesterday's video Partner work: What makes culture unique? Section 1.3, North American Peoples, pages 14–21 | SS.8.19, SS.8.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students work in small groups taking turns reading section 1.3 Students write down three or four main ideas in their notes Share ideas using think-pair-share | SS.8.19, SS.8.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students work in groups taking turns reading section 1.3 Write down three or four main ideas in their notes |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| SS.8.19, SS.8.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell ringer: Page 21 (timed think-pair-share) Iroquois video Interactive slide show 1.3 | SS.8.19, SS.8.20 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give students essay questions that will be on the test Progress check 1.3 Students work on essay questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go over notebooks with students Go over progress check 1.3 Stand up, hand up, pair up review of what students wrote in notebooks |
| Day 16 | Day 17 | |
| Review for tests Jeopardy | <u>Chapter 1 end-of-unit common formative assessment</u> <u>Americans test A</u> <u>Americans test B</u> | |

Source for standards: Study.com, n.d.

Source: History Department, Stevens Middle School. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.5: 15-Day Challenge for middle school world history (*The First Americans*) example.

15-Day Challenge Example: Middle School Science (Weather and Water)

See figure A.6 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for middle school science.

Boulders (bold)

- **MS-ESS3-2: Learning target 1—Analyze weather data to forecast future events.**
- **MS-ESS2-5: Learning target 2—Interpret data to determine probable weather conditions.**
- **MS-ESS2-6: Learning target 2—Develop a model to describe Earth's atmospheric and oceanic patterns.**

Rocks (underlined)

- MS-PS1-4: Learning target 1—Develop a model that describes the changes in particle motion when pressure is changed.
- MS-PS3-4: Learning target 1—Plan an investigation to determine air has mass.

Butterfly (italics)

- *MS-ESS3-2: Learning target 3—Interpret data on natural hazards to forecast future events.*

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|--|--|
| <p>MS-ESS3-2 Learning target 1 <u>Analyze weather data to forecast future events.</u> What is weather? (Quick write) Discuss definitions of weather and climate. MS-ESS3-2 Learning target 3 <i>Interpret data on natural hazards to forecast future events.</i> Severe weather videos (hurricane and tornado)</p> | <p>MS-ESS3-2 Learning target 1 Generate weather questions-student led activity. What is meteorology? (Discussion) Students come up with definitions to share. Record vocabulary for this section (in investigation guide).</p> | <p>MS-ESS3-2 Learning target 1 Bring in and review weather reports. Students generate weather report from weather station (in notebook sheet 1). Review student weather reports.</p> |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <p>MS-ESS3-2 Learning target 1 Weather versus climate quick write (stand up, hand up, pair up to share results) Record vocabulary for section. Students review notes and choose the three most important things (mix-pair-share). <u>Common formative assessment on MS-ESS3-2, learning target 1</u></p> | <p>MS-PS1-4 <u>Learning target 1</u> <u>Develop a model that describes the changes in particle motion when pressure is changed.</u> What is air? (Generate questions using a round robin.) Students explore syringe (free five minutes, then guided). NB #2 Students explore what happens to a sealed syringe of air when the air is compressed and expanded. Discuss results and vocabulary (compression, expansion, pressure).</p> | <p>MS-PS3-4 <u>Learning target 1</u> <u>Plan an investigation to determine air has mass.</u> Give basketball, air pump, and scale to prove air has mass (student-led demonstration). Students come up with lab procedure with groups then come to a consensus as a class. Record vocabulary for section. Conduct an air in a ball investigation. <u>Common formative assessment on MS-PS3-4, learning target 1</u></p> |

| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|---|--|---|
| <p>MS-ESS2-6 Learning target 2 Develop a model to describe Earth's atmospheric and oceanic patterns. Class discussion on atmosphere layers NB #3-Students answer questions. Read "What is Air?" page 20.</p> | <p>MS-ESS2-6 Learning target 2 Elevator to space activity (fill in table in notes) Discuss NB #3 answers. Record vocabulary. Common formative assessment on MS-ESS2-6, learning target 2</p> | <p><u>MS-PS1-4</u> <u>Learning target 1</u> NB #4 Pressure indicator jar activity Students see what happens to a jar with a vial of liquid inside when the jar is squeezed (homemade barometer). Discuss results (mix-pair-share).</p> |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p><u>MS-PS1-4</u> <u>Learning target 1</u> Online gas in a syringe demonstration "What is air pressure?" (Reading) NB #5 "Barometer in a Bottle" video NB #6-Response sheet Record vocabulary. Common formative assessment on MS-PS1-4, learning target 1</p> | <p>MS-ESS2-5 Learning target 2 Interpret data to determine probable weather conditions. Discuss isobars and pressure changes. Map activity, teacher models, guided practices, complete independently NB #7 Record vocabulary. Isobar labeling activity Pose questions to groups about wind patterns (such as, Where is wind strongest and weakest?) Common formative assessment on MS-ESS2-5, learning target 2</p> | Study guide work. Study guide practice in teams. |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| Review unfair game. | Summative assessment | |

Source for standards: NGSS Lead States, 2013.

Source: Michelle Walker. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.6: 15-Day Challenge for middle school science (weather and water) example.

15-Day Challenge Example: High School Integrated Mathematics

See figure A.7 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for high school integrated mathematics.

Boulders (bold)

Grade 8: Mathematics

- **8.EE.7: Solve linear equations and inequalities in one variable.**

Grade 10: Secondary Mathematics 2

- **A-CED.1: Create equations and inequalities in one variable and use them to solve problems. Include equations arising from linear and simple exponential functions.**

Grade 11: Secondary Mathematics 3

- **S-ID.4: Use the mean and standard deviation of a data set to fit it to a normal distribution and to estimate population percentages. Recognize that there are data sets for which such a procedure is not appropriate. Use calculators, spreadsheets, and tables to estimate areas under the normal curve.**

Rocks (underlined)

Grade 9: Secondary Mathematics 1

- S-ID.3: Interpret differences in shape, center, and spread in the context of the data sets, accounting for possible effects of extreme data points (outliers). Calculate the weighted average of a distribution and interpret it as a measure of center.

Grade 11: Secondary Mathematics 3

- F-BF.4: Find inverse functions.
- S-IC.1: Understand statistics as a process for making inferences about population parameters based on a random sample from that population.
- S-IC.3: Recognize the purposes of and differences among sample surveys, experiments, and observational studies; explain how randomization relates to each.

Butterflies (italics)

Grade 8: Mathematics 8

- *8.EE.5: Graph proportional relationships, interpreting the unit rate as the slope of the graph.*
- *8.EE.8: Analyze and solve pairs of simultaneous linear equations.*
 - a. Understand that solutions to a system of two linear equations in two variables correspond to points of intersection of their graphs, because points of intersection satisfy both equations simultaneously.*
 - b. Solve systems of two linear equations in two variables graphically.*

Grade 9: Secondary Mathematics 1

- *A-REI.6: Solve systems of linear equations exactly and approximately (numerically, algebraically, graphically), focusing on pairs of linear equations in two variables.*
- *S-ID.1: Represent data with plots on the real number line (dot plots, histograms, and box plots).*
- *S-ID.2: Use statistics appropriate to the shape of the data distribution to compare center (median, mean) and spread (interquartile range, standard deviation) of two or more different data sets.*

Grade 10: Secondary Mathematics 2

- *F-IF.7: Graph functions expressed symbolically and show key features of the graph, by hand in simple cases and using technology for more complicated cases.*

Common formative assessments and other assessments (bold and underlined)

Notes

- All quizzes in Canvas (<https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Basics-Guide/What-are-Quizzes/ta-p/68>) focus on what teachers taught that day. Quizzes all consist of five questions.
- All unit exams focus on the most important parts of what teachers taught during the unit.

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 |
|--|--|--|--|
| Introduction to Mathematics 3 Class disclosure Introduce class to Canvas course Opening day Activities | <p>Standard: 8.EE.7</p> <p>1-1: Solving linear equations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over how to group like terms together. • Show students what opposite operations are in solving. • Show students what multiplying by the reciprocal is. • Go over how to solve an inequality. • Review what happens when you multiply or divide by a negative. <p>1-1: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Standards: 8.EE.5, 8.EE.8, F-IF.7, A-REI.6</p> <p>1-2: Graph linear equations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review y intercept, slope, and how to graph with students. • Graph an equation of a line with students. • Show students three different ways to solve a system of equations. Let students choose which one they like best. The three ways are (1) graphing, (2) substitution, and (3) elimination. <p>1-2: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Standard: A-CED.1</p> <p>1-3: Writing linear equations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go over different word meanings (that is, <i>difference</i>, <i>sum</i>, and so on). • Break down a mathematical sentence for students. • Explain what each part means. • Show students two, then have them try two. <p>1-3: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> |
| Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 | Day 8 |
| <p>Standard: F-BF.4</p> <p>1-4: Inverses of linear functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define an inverse. • Break down the two steps of finding an inverse function. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switch x and y places. • Solve for y. • Show students how inverse functions are reflections about $y = x$ when they are graphed on the same graph. <p>1-4: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Review</p> <p>Use in-class checks today to determine readiness for common formative assessment.</p> <p>Focus on the following sections: 1-1, 1-3, and 1-4.</p> | <p>Common formative assessment</p> | <p>Standard: S-IC.1</p> <p>2-1: Population and samples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students give examples of statistical questions. • Class discussion to analyze the following: population, parameter, sample, statistic. • Discuss different types of variables. <p>2-1: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> |

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010b.

Source: Sadie Nielsen, Caden Burrell, and Jeff Rawlins, Box Elder High School. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.7: 15-Day Challenge for high school integrated mathematics example.

continued ►

| Day 9 | Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Standard: <u>S-ID.3</u></p> <p><u>2-2: Random sampling and bias</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present students with different ways to collect data. • Fair versus unfair • Discuss different ways bias can be presented. <p>2-2: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Standards: <u>S-ID.1, S-ID.2</u></p> <p><u>2-3: Histograms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class makes a histogram with student data. • Discuss left endpoint rule. • Interpret histograms and analyze the data. <p>2-3: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Standard: <u>S-ID.3</u></p> <p><u>2-4: Center and spread</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion about what standard deviation is. • Students learn the algorithm to find the standard deviation by hand and with a calculator. • Students analyze true/false statements. <p>2-4: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> | <p>Standard: <u>S-ID.4</u></p> <p><u>2-5: Normal curve</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn about the purpose of the normal curve. • Answer questions in context of the data set. <p>2-5: Check for understanding on Canvas.</p> |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 | |
| <p>Review unit 2</p> <p>Use in-class checks to determine when to move on to other material.</p> <p>Focus on the following sections: 2-1, 2-2, and 2-5.</p> | <p>Unit 2 test</p> <p><u>Summative exam</u></p> | | |

15-Day Challenge Example: High School Literature (*Hamlet*)

See figure A.8 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for high school literature.

| |
|---|
| <p>Boulders (bold)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence • RL.11-12.2: Two or more themes (interact, connect, develop) • RL.11-12.3: How characters are developed • W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning • W.11-12.9: Evidence to support analysis <p>Rocks (underlined)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>W.11-12.1A: Claims, counterclaims</u> • <u>RL.11-12.7: Multiple interpretations</u> • <u>W.11-12.1E: Concluding statement</u> • <u>SL.11-12.1: Range of discussions</u> • <u>SL.11-12.1A: Come to discussions prepared</u> • <u>L.11-12.4A: Determine meaning of word using context</u> • <u>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence (summarizing focus piece separately)</u> <p>Butterfly (italics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RL.11-12.5: Structure parts of text (tragic resolution)</i> <p>Yearlong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL.11-12.10: Read and comprehend at grade level • W.11-12.10: Write routinely over extended time frames, range of tasks, purposes, audiences • L.11-12.6: Academic and domain-specific vocabulary • L.11-12.2: Command of capitalization, punctuation, spelling while writing <p>Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)</p> |
|---|

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|---|---|
| <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence RL.11-12.3: How characters are developed <u>L.11-12.4A: Determine meaning of word using context</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up and prereading activity • Shakespeare's language • Distribute books • Go over how to cite Shakespeare • Read Act 1, Scenes 1 and 2 in class • Students fill in the tracking Hamlet character chart • Homework: Finish reading Act 1 | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing piece • Group summarizing activity • Act 1 brief formative quiz, universal theme • Begin reading Act 2 individually as you finish the quiz • Homework (can begin in class): Read Act 2. Complete Act 2 paragraph: Based on the theme you identified on your quiz, write one paragraph explaining how the theme is developed in the story. Include two pieces of evidence in which you provide two or three sentences of analysis after each piece. Your complete product should be a seven- to nine-sentence paragraph. | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence RL.11-12.3: How characters are developed W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning <u>W.11-12.1A: Claims, counterclaims</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing drama and <i>Introducing the Tragic Hero</i> slide show • Debate; Have students review Polonius's claim that Hamlet is mad (2.2.223–223). Divide the class in half; have one-half select textual evidence for the claim and the other half against it (from Acts 1 and 2 only). Prepare an informal debate for students to complete during the next class. • Homework: Make sure your group is prepared for the debate next class |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence <u>W.11-12.1A: Claims, counterclaims</u> <u>W.11-12.1E: Concluding statement</u> <u>RL.11-12.7: Multiple interpretations</u> Informal debate Briefly discuss Act 3, Scene 1 as a class <u>Common formative assessment on text evidence</u> (Breaking down "To Be or Not To Be" soliloquy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be or not to be activity: Distribute tracking chart. Watch different versions of the soliloquy on YouTube (https://youtube.com) and Benedict Cumberbatch version. After watching the clips, host a discussion analyzing which scenes are strongest. Use a tracking chart organizer to guide the discussion. At the end, students make an argumentative claim, defend with evidence and reasoning (page 14 at the bottom) • With any remaining time, discuss the rest of 3.1. Hamlet is really harsh toward Ophelia. This builds toward her insanity. • Also King and Polonius surveillance of the couple during this scene • Homework: Read Act 3, Scene 2 | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence <u>RL.11-12.7: Multiple interpretations</u></p> <p>If unable to during the last class, discuss the rest of Scene 1. Hamlet's actions toward Ophelia are important to be aware of when thinking about today's scene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read—Act 3, Scene 2 • Distribute worksheet. Each number corresponds to a group. Students will answer the questions while they watch, read together, and discuss in their groups. • Give each student a physical copy of the questions (or maybe just their group's questions). After students independently answer, discuss as a class. Students could complete one single document that the class has access to when answering the questions. • Watch Act 3, Scene 2 • Breakdown questions doc • Homework: Read Act 3, Scenes 3–4 in groups aloud (groups decide who is reading for each character) | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence <u>RL.11-12.7: Multiple interpretations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up activity: Close read Claudius' soliloquy 3.3 • Modernize: Divide into sections • After modernizing, each group will read their section in succession • Summarize and discuss as a class Act 3, Scene 4 <p>Common formative assessment on theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After common formative assessment, read Act 4, Scenes 1–4; do Scene 4 activity • Homework: Complete Act 4, Scenes 1–4 (if didn't finish during class) |

Source for standards: NGA & CCSSO, 2010a.

Source: Kendra Barrera, Marysville Charter Academy for the Arts. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.8: 15-Day Challenge for a high school literature (*Hamlet*) example.

continued ►

| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|--|---|---|
| <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning W.11-12.9: Evidence to support analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm-up: Summarize Act 4, Scenes 1-4 (give groups different scenes) Theme activity plus poster presentation Theme topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Betrayal Hate Madness, insanity Parents Revenge Gossip Corruption Death, mortality Religion Read Act 4, Scene 5 in class Homework: Finish Act 4 | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer revise: Theme statements and evidence <p><u>Common formative assessment on poster presentation</u></p> | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence RL.11-12.2: Two or more themes (interact, connect, develop) W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Act 5—Finish play in class Character list (slide 34) Foils instruction and activity <p><u>Common formative assessment on theme:</u> Give students twenty minutes to find evidence and work on explanation.</p> |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence <u>RL.11-12.7: Multiple interpretations</u> <u>SL.11-12.1: Range of discussions</u> <u>SL.11-12.1A: Come to discussions prepared</u> RL.11-12.5: Structure parts of text (tragic resolution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warm up: Discuss end of <i>Hamlet</i> Watch <i>Hamlet</i> in class | Flex day | <p>RL.11-12.1: Textual evidence RL.11-12.2: Two or more themes (interact, connect, develop) RL.11-12.3: How characters are developed W.11-12.1C: Words, phrases, and clauses to link major sections between claim, evidence, and reasoning W.11-12.9: Evidence to support analysis</p> <p><u>End-of-unit assessment</u></p> |

15-Day Challenge Example: High School Career and Technical Education (Introduction to Floral Design; Safety and Tools)

See figure A.9 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for high school Career and Technical Education.

Boulder (bold)

Content Standard-F11.1: Demonstrate the use of plant materials and tools.

Rock (underlined)

Agriculture Anchor Standard-6.6: Maintain a safe and healthful working environment.

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Class: Floral Design | | |
| Introduction Unit: Safety and Tools | | |
| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
| <u>6.6: Floral safety</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation and notes • Poster project • Floral safety presentation | <u>6.6: Floral safety</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete floral safety poster project and present to class | <u>Common formative assessment on floral safety</u> |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common tools and materials lesson and notes • Tools gallery walk activity • Common tools and materials presentation | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of flowers lesson and notes • Introduction to floral tape demonstration • Student practice with floral tape • Types of flowers in floral design presentation | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower pen lab • Additional practice time for students to properly use floral tape on various gauges of wire |
| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
| F11.1 <u>Common formative assessment on floral tape (skill-based assessment)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will show proficiency applying floral tape to two different gauges of wire • Prep for first floral arrangement | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floral arrangement 1 • Students will complete a simple floral foam arrangement | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floral wiring lesson, notes, and demonstration • Students will practice three different wiring techniques on a flower and leaf • Wire in floral design presentation |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| F11.1 <u>Common formative assessment on boutonniere</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will create a boutonniere by demonstrating skills in both wiring and taping | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parts of the flower lesson, notes and vocabulary assignment • Parts of the flower presentation | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flower dissection lab |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaf nomenclature lesson, notes, and leaf-rubbing activity • Leaf nomenclature presentation | F11.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for unit assessment | <u>Unit 1 assessment</u> |

Source for standards: California Department of Education, 2017.

Source: Chloe Smith. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.9: 15-Day Challenge on high school Career Technical Education (Introduction to Floral Design, Safety and Tools) example.

15-Day Challenge Example: High School Physical Education (Line Dance)

See figure A.10 for a sample 15-Day Challenge for high school physical education.

Boulders (bold)

- **1.1: Combine and apply movement patterns, simple to complex, in aquatic, rhythms and dance, and individual and dual activities.**
- **1.2: Demonstrate proficient movement skills in aquatic, rhythms and dance, and individual and dual sports.**
- **1.12: Demonstrate independent learning of movement skills.**
- **2.1: Participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity at least four days each week. (Every day)**

Rocks (underlined)

- 2.2: Participate in enjoyable and challenging physical activities that develop and maintain the five components of physical fitness.
- 3.1: Accept personal responsibility to create and maintain a physically and emotionally safe and nonthreatening environment for physical activity.
- 3.2: Act independently of negative peer pressure during physical activity. (Every day)

Common formative assessments (bold and underlined)

| Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give information about unit. • Introduce dance vocabulary and steps used consistently through the unit. | <u>Emphasis: 2.2</u> Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review vocabulary • Practice steps • Introduce and demonstrate the Electric Slide • Practice the Electric Slide • Introduce and demonstrate the two-step | <u>Emphasis: 1.2, 2.2</u> Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and dance Electric Slide • Demonstrate and practice the two-step <u>Common formative assessment on the Electric Slide</u> |
| Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 |
| <u>Emphasis: 1.2</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dress • Warm-up, review, makeup Electric Slide assessment <u>Common formative assessment on two-step</u> | <u>Emphasis: 2.2</u> Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance two-step • Vocabulary for Boot Scootin' Boogie • Introduction to Boot Scootin' Boogie • Practice steps on Boot Scootin' Boogie Tuesday flex time: Electric Slide and two-step | <u>Emphasis: 1.2, 2.2</u> Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up dance • Review Boot Scootin' Boogie <u>Common formative assessment on Boot Scootin' Boogie</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and demonstration of Honky Tonk Twist |

| Day 7 | Day 8 | Day 9 |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Emphasis: 1.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dress • Warm-up and review <p>Common formative assessment on the Honky Tonk Twist</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>2.2</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance Honky Tonk Twist • Vocabulary for Watermelon Crawl • Introduction to Watermelon Crawl • Practice steps <p>Tuesday flex time: Electric Slide, two-step, Boot Scootin' Boogie, Honky Tonk Twist</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>1.2, 2.2</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up dance • Review and practice Watermelon Crawl • Introduce and demonstrate Shotgun Jenny |
| Day 10 | Day 11 | Day 12 |
| <p>Emphasis: 1.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dress • Warm-up and review Watermelon Crawl <p>Common formative assessment on Watermelon Crawl</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>1.1, 2.1, 3.2</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up dance • Review Shotgun Jenny • Practice Shotgun Jenny • Introduce Slappin' Leather <p>Tuesday flex time: Electric Slide, two-step, Boot Scootin' Boogie, Honky Tonk Twist, Watermelon Crawl</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>1.1, 2.1, 3.2</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up dance <p>Common formative assessment on Shotgun Jenny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and practice Slappin Leather |
| Day 13 | Day 14 | Day 15 |
| <p>Emphasis: 1.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not dress • Warm-up and review Slappin' Leather <p>Common formative assessment on Slappin' Leather</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>1.12, 3.1</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness (8-10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce final and explain instructions • Form groups for final • Begin working on final (select and approve music by end of period) <p>Tuesday flex time: Electric Slide, two-step, Boot Scootin' Boogie, Honky Tonk Twist, Watermelon Crawl, Shotgun Jenny, Slappin' Leather</p> | <p>Emphasis: <u>1.12, 3.1</u></p> <p>Warm-up and fitness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue work on final • Complete final and rehearse to prepare for presentations |
| Day 16 | | |
| <p>Finals day</p> <p>Groups present</p> <p>End-of-Unit Assessment</p> | | |

Source for standards: Bolsa Grande High School, n.d.

Source: Agnie Marino, Brad DalBon, and Guy Greever. Used with permission.

FIGURE A.10: 15-Day Challenge for high school physical education (line dance) example.



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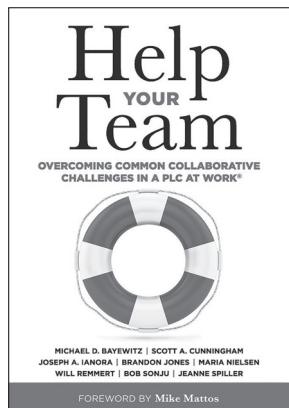
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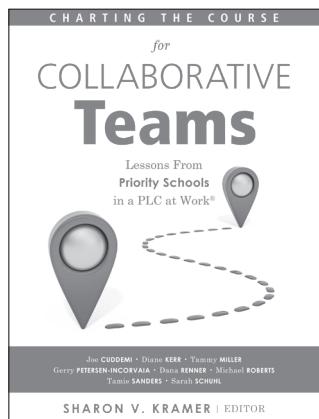


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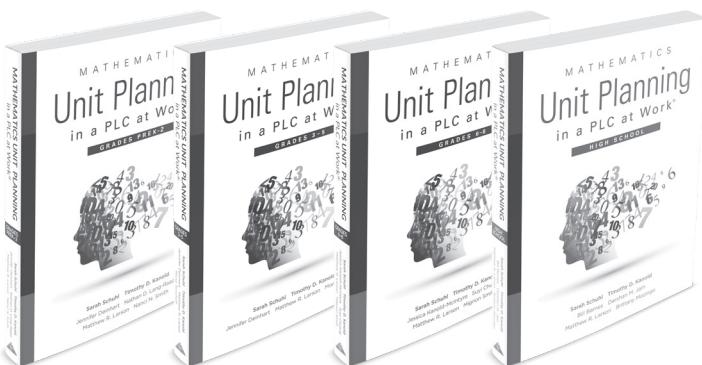


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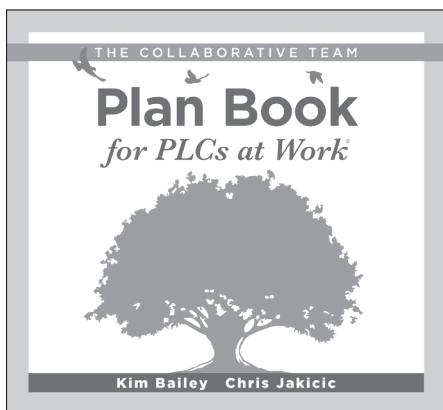


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