AGILE CLASSROOMS

# PLANNING ROUTINE GUIDE

## GROWING AUTHENTIC SKILLS THROUGH AGILE LEARNING

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# Introduction

In Agile Classrooms, routines are the deliberate and repeated practices designed to cultivate essential skills such as self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability. Unlike traditional learning that often focuses solely on imparting knowledge, routines require active application and consistent practice of these skills. Skills are better caught than taught, meaning they must be actively practiced rather than solely learned through lessons. This approach ensures that students not only understand these skills intellectually but also internalize and apply them through regular engagement.

To systematically implement these routines, Agile Classrooms utilize the **Learning Sprint**, a timebox of four weeks or less during which work is planned and completed. Sprints are repeated as necessary, allowing for continuous progress toward larger learning and project goals. Think of a Learning Sprint as dividing a large project into smaller, manageable segments. The Learning Sprint comprises five self-directed learning routines:

**Refinement Routine:** Regularly reviewing and refining learning goals in the Learning Backlog.

**Planning Routine:** Setting short-term learning goals and planning how to achieve them within the Learning Sprint.

**Check-In Routine:** Monitoring progress and making adjustments during the learning process.

**Review Routine:** Demonstrating completed work, gathering feedback, and updating the Learning Backlog based on the feedback.

**Retrospective Routine:** Reflecting on the Sprint to identify what went well, what didn't, and how to improve in the next Sprint.

These routines provide specific and consistent opportunities for students to practice and develop their skills, ensuring that learning is both structured and flexible. This guide focuses on the **Planning Routine**, where we create near term plans on what and how we will learn and accomplish. Planning is the first routine, officially starting the Learning Sprint.

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# Understanding The Planning Routine

## 2.1 WHAT IS THE PLANNING ROUTINE?

The **Planning Routine** is a structured and repeatable routine where students and teachers select learning goals from the **Learning Backlog** and decide how to achieve them during the upcoming **Learning Sprint**. This plan is visualized on the **Learning Canvas**, helping everyone track and organize goals.

## 2.2 THE WHY, WHAT, AND HOW OF SPRINT PLANNING

The Planning Routine addresses:

### Why (Purpose):

Establishing the purpose via the Sprint Goal. The Sprint Goal brings cohesion to the work and ensures alignment with the overall direction of the learning or project. While the Sprint Goal is optional, it can be very helpful for focusing efforts and connecting daily tasks to larger objectives.

### What (Goals):

Selecting the goals or Learning Backlog Items to achieve by the end of the Sprint. These are the specific learning targets or outcomes students aim to accomplish.

### How (Tasks):

Identifying the tasks needed to complete each Learning Backlog Item. This involves breaking down Learning Backlog Items into manageable tasks that can be completed within the Sprint timeframe.


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# Preparation

Proper preparation is key to a productive session. In Agile Classrooms, part of that preparation involves setting up Visible Learning Artifacts, like the Learning Backlog and Learning Canvas. These tools make learning goals, progress, and tasks clear to both students and teachers, providing real-time visual feedback that helps everyone see where adjustments may be needed

Key preparation tasks include:

- [ ] **Ready Learning Backlog Items:** Ensure the Learning Backlog contains enough Learning Backlog Items that are ready to be worked on for the upcoming Sprint. The backlog should reflect prioritized learning goals that are clearly defined and actionable.
- [ ] **Learning Canvas Availability:** Set up the Learning Canvas and ensure it is accessible to all students. This visual tool will be central to mapping out the Sprint Plan and tracking progress, providing transparency on where students are in their learning journey.
- [ ] **Student Readiness:** Before planning, students should reflect on their progress from previous Sprints and consider feedback received. Reviewing their past performance helps students set realistic goals for the upcoming Sprint and make adjustments as needed.

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# Procedure

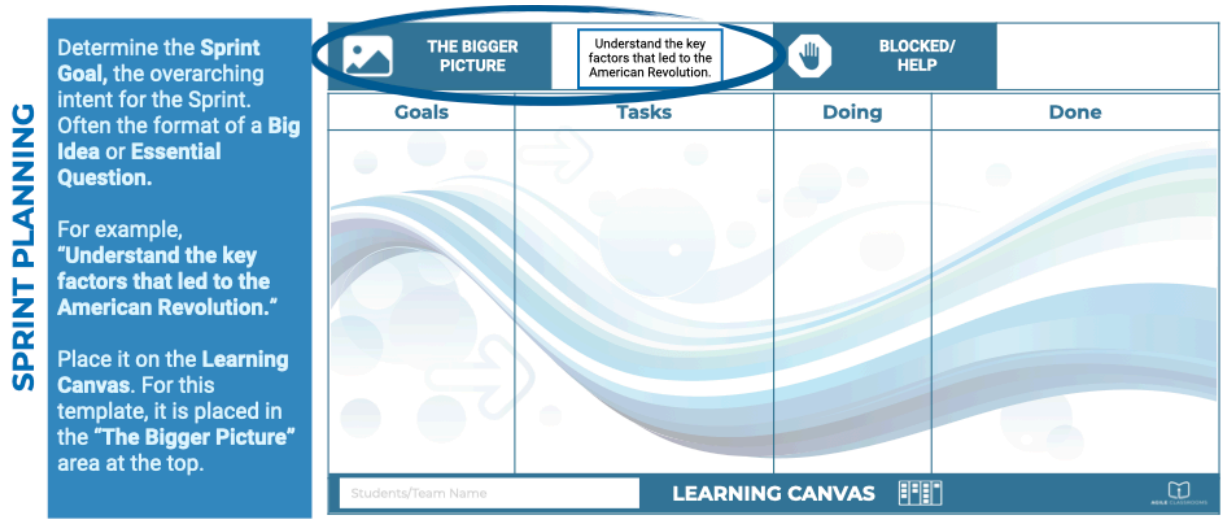
Here's a step-by-step procedure for facilitating the Planning Routine. Adjust as needed to fit your classroom dynamics.

## 1. CONNECT TO THE WHY - SPRINT GOAL

- **Determine the Learning Sprint Goal:** Based on the overall objectives, collaboratively establish a clear and meaningful **Sprint Goal** for the upcoming Sprint.

**QUESTION 1**

**Why** Does This Sprint Matter?




**Learning Canvas**

Makes the learning plan and progress visible

### Example Sprint Goals:

- **Big Idea:** "Investigate how ecosystems are interconnected."
- **Essential Question:** "What impact do human activities have on ecosystems?"
- **Unit Objective:** "Students will research and present findings on pollution's effects on local waterways."

## 2. THE WHAT - SELECT LEARNING BACKLOG ITEMS

### ✦ Select Learning Backlog Items (LBIs):

- **Select Items:** Collaboratively select the top items from the Learning Backlog that align with the Sprint Goal.
- **Review Success Criteria:** Examine the Success Criteria for each selected LBI.
- **Ensure Clarity:** Discuss each LBI to ensure all students have a shared understanding of what is required.
- **Assess Achievability:**
  - Determine if each LBI can be achieved by the end of the Sprint.
  - If not, discuss why and adjust accordingly (e.g., break it into smaller parts or leave it in the Learning Backlog for a future time).
- **Add to Learning Canvas:** Add each selected LBI to the Learning Canvas under the "Goals" column.

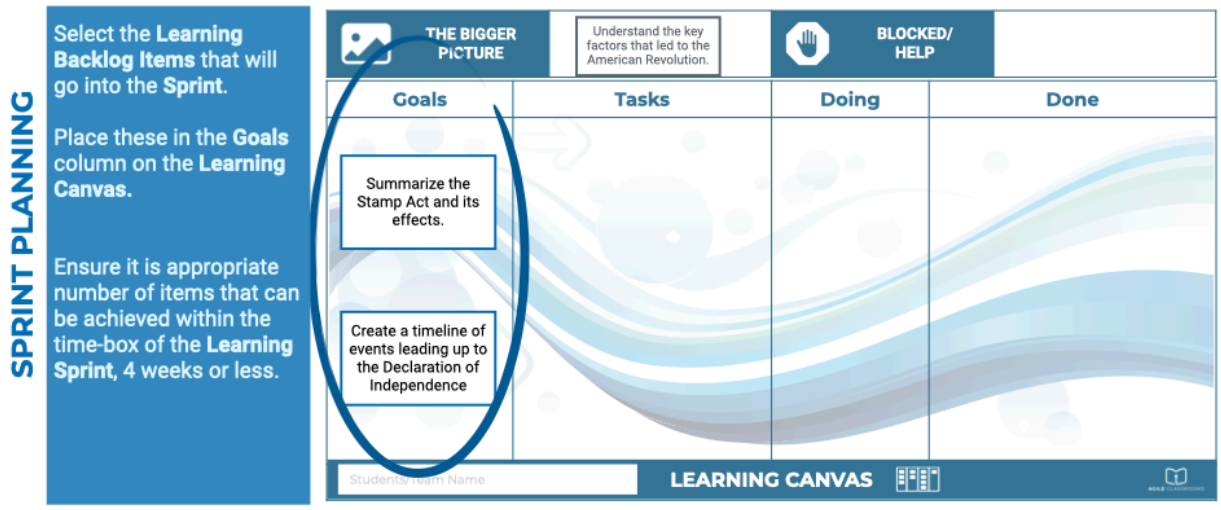
### ✦ Repeat Until Capacity is Reached:

- Continue selecting and evaluating LBIs until you student or team's capacity for the Sprint is reached.

**Tip:** Look at the number of LBIs completed in previous Sprints to gauge realistic capacity.

**QUESTION 2**

**What** Will We Do To Achieve the Sprint Goal?

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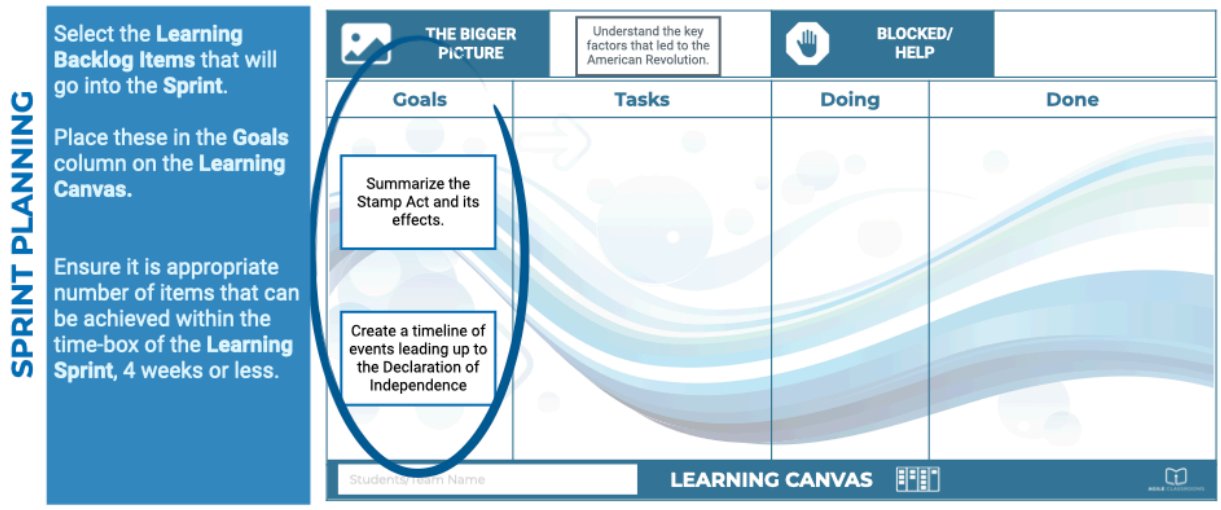



Learning Canvas

Makes the learning plan and progress visible

## 3. THE HOW - DECOMPOSE BACKLOG ITEMS INTO TASKS

### ✦ Break Down LBIs into Tasks:

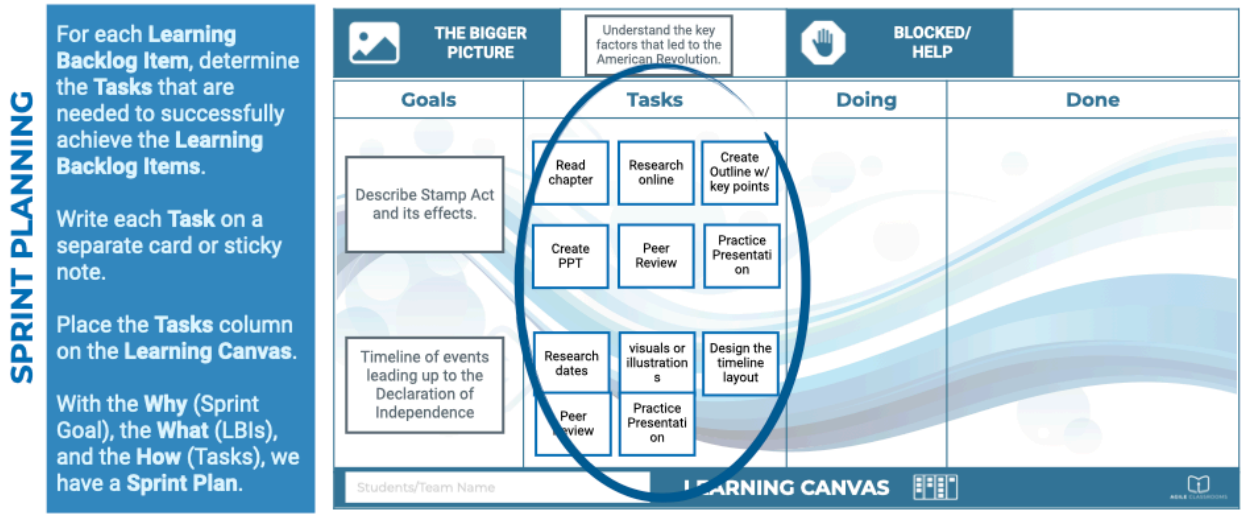
- **Collaborate on Tasks:** For each LBI on the Learning Canvas, identify all the tasks required to complete it and meet the Success Criteria.
- **Task Size:** Ensure tasks are small, actionable, and can be completed within one class period or before the next meeting.
- **Guiding Questions:**
  - "Are these tasks sufficient to demonstrate we've achieved this LBI?"
  - "Is there a way to simplify our plan? Anything we do not need?"
  - "Are we missing any work required to achieve the LBI?"

### ✦ Document Tasks:

- Write each task on its own sticky note or digital equivalent and add them to the Tasks column on the Learning Canvas.

**QUESTION 3**

**How** Will Each Learning Backlog Item Be Achieved?




**Learning Canvas**

Makes the learning plan and progress visible

### Example Tasks:

- ✦ Identify three credible sources on water pollution.
- ✦ Create a slide on the effects of plastic on marine life.
- ✦ Draft an outline for the presentation.

## 4. ALIGN ON THE PLAN

✦ **Ensure Understanding:**

- Confirm that everyone agrees the plan is sufficient to begin working, recognizing that it may evolve during the Sprint.
  - **In Lower Levels of Student Choice:** The teacher checks for understanding to ensure alignment.
  - **In Higher Levels of Student Choice:** Students reach consensus using techniques like **Roman Voting** or **Fist to Five.**

### Flexibility in Structure

While the above procedure is a good approach, it can be adapted based on the teacher's style and classroom needs, as long as the aim of the Planning Routine is met.

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# The Learning Zones Framework and Scaffolding Progression

The Learning Zones Framework for the Planning Routine outlines how students progress from teacher-directed planning toward more self-directed and collaborative Sprint Planning. This framework scaffolds both choice (self-direction) and collaboration, allowing teachers to adjust their support based on students' readiness for autonomy and peer interaction. By gradually increasing both choice and collaboration, the framework helps manage cognitive load and supports students as they develop these competencies over time.

As students advance through the zones, they take on more responsibility for setting goals and planning tasks. The teacher's role shifts from direct instruction and leadership in the earlier zones to facilitation and coaching in the later zones. This scaffolding process ensures that decision-making and task management move from teacher to student, fostering independent and collaborative learning as students become more adept at managing their learning goals.

## LEARNING ZONES TABLE

| | **Collaboration** Low - Medium | **Collaboration** Medium - High |
|---|---|---|
| **Choice** Medium - High | **ZONE 3: INDEPENDENT LEARNERS**<br><br>**Choice:** Students follow the teacher's direction, providing limited input.<br><br>**Collaboration:** Low – Students work independently, fostering self-direction and personal responsibility.<br><br>**Learning Canvas:** Individual students select their own topics and manage their personalized Learning Canvas. | **ZONE 4: SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS**<br><br>**Choice:** High – Teams plan and execute tasks with high autonomy.<br><br>**Collaboration:** High – Teams collaborate fully, making collective decisions on project direction.<br><br>**Learning Canvas:** Teams use a shared Learning Canvas to collaboratively manage their project tasks. |
| **Choice** Low - Medium | **ZONE 1: TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM**<br><br>**Choice:** Low – Teacher-centered, with students following the teacher's direction.<br><br>**Collaboration:** Low – Students work individually with minimal peer interaction.<br><br>**Learning Canvas:** Teacher uses a classroom-wide Learning Canvas to track tasks. | **ZONE 2: COOPERATIVE LEARNING**<br><br>**Choice:** Low – Teacher assigns tasks, but students contribute.<br><br>**Collaboration:** High – Students collaborate in structured group activities.<br><br>**Learning Canvas:** Each group has a shared Learning Canvas, with students contributing to group tasks. |

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more details about the levels of **Choice** and **Collaboration**, please refer to the **Spectrums of Choice and Collaboration** section. The **Learning Zones Framework** is positioned at the intersection of these two spectrums, creating four distinct learning environments that cater to varying degrees of student autonomy and teamwork.

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# Evaluating Student Progress

Evaluating student competency during any of the Learning Sprint Routines are crucial for understanding their growth in self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability. Regular coaching with targeted feedback enables students to incrementally take on more responsibility for their learning.

To facilitate this process, Agile Classrooms provides two rubrics: a single-point rubric for quick, targeted feedback, and a multi-point rubric for a more comprehensive evaluation of student progression.

## 6.1 SINGLE-POINT RUBRIC FOR THE PLANNING ROUTINE

| COMPETENCY | SUCCESS CRITERIA |
|---|---|
| **Define a Clear Sprint Goal** | An overarching Sprint Goal is established, bringing cohesion to the work and aligning with overall learning objectives or project outcomes. |
| **Select Appropriate Learning Backlog Items** | Learning Backlog Items are chosen that align with the Sprint Goal and are achievable within the Sprint timeframe. |
| **Break Down Items into Manageable Tasks** | Each Learning Backlog Item is broken down into small, actionable tasks necessary and sufficient to complete it successfully. |
| **Choose an Appropriate Amount of Work** | The workload for the Sprint is realistic and sustainable, determined by considering the number of Learning Backlog Items completed in past Sprints to gauge capacity. |

## 6.2 MULTI-POINT RUBRIC FOR THE PLANNING ROUTINE

| COMPETENCY INDICATOR | NOVICE | ADVANCED BEGINNER | COMPETENT | PROFICIENT | EXPERT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Define a Clear Sprint Goal** | Relies on teacher to define the Sprint Goal. | Contributes ideas with significant guidance; may lack clarity. | Sprint Goal is defined with occasional support; generally aligns with objectives. | Sprint Goal is defined independently and is clear and specific. | Consistently defines insightful and measurable Sprint Goals independently. |
| **Select Appropriate Learning Backlog Items** | Relies on teacher to select Learning Backlog Items. | Selects items with significant guidance; alignment may be weak. | Items are selected with occasional support; generally achievable within Sprint. | Items are selected independently, aligning well with the Sprint Goal and timeframe. | Consistently and effectively selects optimal items independently, ensuring strong alignment with Sprint Goal. |
| **Break Down Items into Manageable Tasks** | Relies on teacher to break down items. | Breaks down items with significant prompting; tasks may be too large or vague. | Items are broken down with occasional support; tasks are generally manageable. | Items are broken down into clear, actionable tasks independently. | Consistently and effectively breaks down items into optimally sized tasks independently. |
| **Choose an Appropriate Amount of Work** | Overestimates or underestimates workload; relies on teacher to adjust. | Assesses workload with significant prompting; may misjudge capacity. | Workload is assessed with occasional support; begins to match capacity. | Workload is assessed accurately and adjusted accordingly independently. | Consistently optimizes workload to match capacity independently, enhancing productivity. |

## 6.3 COACHING STUDENT AGILITY

As students develop their ability to effectively plan their Learning Sprints, additional guidance and feedback may be needed. To help classrooms grow their competency in self-direction and collaboration, the Coaching and Feedback Form provides structured support. This tool allows educators to guide students through key aspects of Sprint Planning, helping them set realistic goals, break down learning tasks, and collaborate effectively with their peers. The example below shows how a teacher uses the form to coach students in the Sprint Planning Routine, with the option to gradually release control for students to take ownership of the process as they grow in confidence.

| **Student/Team** | Team Innovators | **Learning Sprint Routine** | Planning |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Competency To Improve** | | **Current Level** | **Next Target Level** |
| Choose an Appropriate Amount of Work | | Advanced Beginner | Competent |
| **Causes:** What are the factors influencing the current level of performance? | | **Growth Goal:** What is the desired future state of performance? What does better look like? | |
| ✦ Overestimating the amount of work that can be completed within the Sprint.<br>✦ Not reflecting on past Sprint outcomes to inform planning.<br>✦ Lack of consideration for task complexity and time requirements. | | Better estimate how much time and effort each task will take, ensuring the work can be completed with the time and resources available, while considering uncertainty and complexity of the work | |

| Growth Experiment | Next Improvements To Try | Progress Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Experiment 1 Date:** | Reflect on Past Performance: Before planning, review the number of Learning Backlog Items completed in previous Sprints to inform realistic workload selection. | Students showed improvement in selecting fewer Learning Backlog Items after reviewing previous Sprints, but some still wanted to bring in more. |
| **Experiment 2 Date:** | Estimate the time each task will take in hours and add them up. Compare the total to the available time in the sprint to see if it's manageable, and adjust as needed to match actual capacity. | Team us starting to use time estimation more regularly, though some teams are overly optimistic about how long a task will take. |
| **Experiment 3 Date:** | Adjust the task time estimates by adding 20% to each task's original estimate to account for over-optimism. | The 20% buffer made things more realistic. It worked well, but a few tasks still needed some tweaking. Overall, their estimates fit the sprint better this time. |
| **Experiment 4 Date:** | **They are now at the Competent level of proficiency. Yay!** | |

Download the full Student Growth and Feedback Form and instructions as part of the Agile Classrooms at [learn.agileclassrooms.com/CoachingStudentAgility](learn.agileclassrooms.com/CoachingStudentAgility).

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# Potential Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

Be mindful of common challenges and strategies to overcome them.

| Pitfall | Description | Ways to Mitigate It |
|---|---|---|
| **Over Planning** | Excessive time on planning delays task execution. | **Timebox Planning:** Limit planning sessions to a specific duration (e.g., 15–30 minutes). |
| **Under Planning** | Insufficient planning leads to confusion. | **Ensure Clarity:** Allocate adequate time to outline clear Learning Backlog Items and tasks. |
| **Overloading the Sprint** | Selecting too many Learning Backlog Items causes missed goals. | **Reflect on Capacity:** Use past Sprint data to set realistic expectations for the team's workload. Aim to plan for approximately 10% less than the team's perceived capacity. If all work is completed before the Sprint ends, additional items can always be pulled from the backlog. This approach reduces the risk of overcommitting and allows for more flexibility. |
| **Tasks Too Large** | Tasks are unmanageable within the timeframe. | **Break Down Tasks:** Divide tasks into smaller pieces that can be completed within a class period or before the next meeting. |
| **Lack of Alignment** | Difficulty agreeing on the plan. | **Facilitate Consensus:** Use techniques like **Fist to Five**, **Consent-based Decision Making**, or **Roman Voting** to achieve alignment. |
| **Analysis Paralysis** | Overthinking prevents action. | **Emphasize Progress:** Encourage starting with a "good enough" plan and adjusting as needed. One does not need all the details upfront, as, those are revealed as we do the work. |
| **Wrong Level Of Choice** | Too much or too little autonomy overwhelms or disengages students. | **Adjust Using Frameworks:** Utilize the **Spectrum of Choice** to calibrate the appropriate level of autonomy during Sprint Planning. One can shift up or down the spectrum to find the appropriate level. |

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# Appendix

## 8.1 ALIGNING WITH EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Sprint Planning cultivates essential 21st-century skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and self-direction. It aligns with and makes actionable standards such as the **ISTE Standards for Students**, promoting empowered learning, innovation, and computational thinking, as well as the **P21 Framework for 21st-Century Learning.**

### 8.1.1 ISTE Standards for Students

| ISTE/P21 Standard | Standard Description | the Planning Routine |
|---|---|---|
| **1a: Empowered Learner** | Students articulate and set personal learning goals, develop strategies leveraging technology to achieve them, and reflect on the learning process to improve learning outcomes. | Students actively participate in setting Sprint Goals and planning how to achieve them, fostering ownership of their learning. |
| **1c: Empowered Learner** | Students use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. | Students use tools like the Learning Canvas to plan and track progress, incorporating feedback to adjust plans as needed. |
| **4a: Innovative Designer** | Students know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovative artifacts, or solving authentic problems. | Students engage in planning and managing tasks to develop solutions to problems, using design thinking in their planning process. |
| **6a: Creative Communicator** | Students choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication. | Students select tools and platforms to articulate their Sprint Plans and communicate their goals and progress effectively. |

### 8.1.2 P21 Framework for 21st-Century Learning

| P21 Skill | Skill Description | the Planning Routine |
|---|---|---|
| **Critical Thinking** | Exercising sound reasoning and understanding, making complex choices, and solving problems. | Students analyze tasks, plan strategically, and make informed decisions during the planning process. |
| **Collaboration** | Working effectively and respectfully with diverse teams, exercising flexibility, and sharing responsibility. | Students collaborate in planning, especially in higher Learning Zones, enhancing teamwork and shared goal-setting. |
| **Communication** | Articulating thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills. | Students communicate their plans and progress clearly, using tools like the Learning Canvas to express their ideas. |
| **Self-Direction** | Monitoring one's own understanding and learning needs, locating appropriate resources, and transferring learning from one domain to another. | Students take initiative in setting goals, planning tasks, and adjusting their plans based on reflection and feedback. |

## 8.2 SPECTRUMS OF CHOICE AND COLLABORATION

Scaffolding is an essential component of effective teaching, providing the necessary support for students as they develop autonomy and collaborative skills. This section outlines the **Spectrums of Choice and Collaboration**, a framework designed to guide the progression of student responsibility and delineate the corresponding roles of educators. By understanding and implementing this spectrum, teachers can create a dynamic learning environment that fosters self-direction, critical thinking, and effective teamwork.

### 8.2.1 Spectrum of Choice

The **Spectrum of Choice** shows the shift from teacher-led to student-driven planning. Students start by observing and following the teacher's lead, gradually taking more control of setting goals and planning their tasks. At the highest level, students fully own the planning process, with the teacher stepping in only for feedback and guidance.

| Level | Student Choice | Teacher Choice | Teacher Role |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Observing & Demonstrating** | **Observes** and follows instructions. | Makes all decisions, directs and **demonstrates** the entire the Planning Routine routine, ensuring students understand the process by modeling every step. | **Instructor** |
| **2. Participating & Modeling** | **Participates** and provides feedback. | Offers choices to students but makes final decisions with their input. **Models** the Planning Routine, explaining why they are using the process and reasons for the teacher's decisions. | |
| **3. Contributing & Facilitating** | Suggests options and gives feedback | Teacher considers options andinput from students, butthe teacher decides. **Facilitates** the Planning Routine, encouraging students to **contribute**. | **Co-Leader** |
| **4. Choosing & Coaching** | Students **choose** from options provided by both the teacher and themselves. Updates the Learning Canvas with minimal support | The teacher guides by asking reflective questions, prompting students to think critically and explore options. While students make the decisions, the teacher **coaches** and provides feedback to deepen their understanding and ownership of the planning process. Teacher may provide options along with the student provided options. | **Coach** |
| **5. Creating & Supporting** | Identifies options, makes independent choices, and facilitates their own the Planning Routine. | Students manage their planning independently, seeking teacher support as needed. The teacher acts as a supportive coach, offering wisdom and guidance when requested, focusing on big-picture growth rather than immediate decisions. | |

### 8.2.2 The Dynamic Role of the Agile Educator

The Agile Educator's role is dynamic and shifts as students grow in self-direction, transitioning through three roles: Instructor, Co-Leader, and Coach. At each level, one role is dominant, serving as the center of gravity, while the other roles may still be used in a supporting capacity. For example, when primarily coaching, a teacher may occasionally need to instruct or co-lead based on students' needs. The table below provides detailed descriptions of each educator role, including their practices and example language they might use.

| Teacher Role | Description | Language Examples |
|---|---|---|
| **Instructor** | ✦ **Direct Instruction:** Provides clear, structured lessons with specific objectives.<br>✦ **Modeling:** Demonstrates tasks and processes for students to emulate.<br>✦ **Step-by-Step Guidance:** Breaks down complex tasks into manageable steps.<br>✦ **Clear Instructions:** Uses phrases like "Follow these steps..." and "Watch how I do this..." to ensure understanding.<br>✦ **Immediate Feedback:** Offers prompt and specific feedback to reinforce learning. | ✦ "Follow these steps..."<br>✦ "Watch how I do this..."<br>✦ "Did you see how I did..." |
| **Co-Leader** | ✦ **Collaborative Discussions:** Engages students in conversations to explore ideas and options.<br>✦ **Guidance and Counsel:** Offers suggestions and supports students in decision-making.<br>✦ **Facilitation:** Encourages student contributions without imposing final decisions.<br>✦ **Encouraging Exploration:** Uses phrases like "Consider trying..." and "What do you think about..." to support student choices.<br>✦ **Resource Recommendation:** Suggests tools, strategies, or resources to aid student progress. | ✦ "Consider trying..."<br>✦ "What do you think about..."<br>✦ "Have you thought about using...?" |
| **Coach** | ✦ **Powerful Questioning:** Uses open-ended questions to promote critical thinking and self-discovery.<br>✦ **Facilitating Autonomy:** Encourages students to take ownership of their learning and decision-making.<br>✦ **Feedback for Growth:** Provides constructive feedback aimed at deepening understanding and fostering improvement.<br>✦ **Collaborative Problem-Solving:** Guides students in finding their own solutions through partnership.<br>✦ **Fostering Collaboration:** Uses language such as "Let's explore..." and "How can we work together to..." to enhance teamwork and coordination. | ✦ "How do you feel about your approach?"<br>✦ "What might be another way to tackle this problem?"<br>✦ "Have you explored different options?." |

### 8.2.3 Spectrum of Collaboration

The Spectrum of Choice lays out incremental progression from working individually to collaborating in teams. Initially, students work alone or with minimal peer interaction. Over time, they move toward working in teams, eventually leading coordinated planning efforts across multiple groups, learning to align personal and team goals.

| Level of Collaboration | Student Interaction | Student Facilitator | Learning Canvas Use |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1: Solo Learners** | Work individually with minimal peer interaction. | No student facilitator needed. | Individual Learning Canvas for personal tasks. |
| **2: Supportive Partners** | Occasionally partner with peers; help with feedback or support. | No student facilitator needed. | Individual Learning Canvas, with peers helping in Feedback or Support sections. |
| **3: Cooperative Groups** | Collaborate in temporary groups on specific tasks. | May have a student facilitator, butnot required. | Shared Learning Canvas for group tasks. |
| **4: Collaborative Teams** | Work in stable, long-term teams; plan and execute together. | Student facilitates the team. | Shared Team Learning Canvas for coordinated efforts. |
| **5: Collaborative Classroom** | Multiple teams coordinate towards common goals. Joint Sprint Planning. | Team facilitators manage cross-team collaboration and their own team. | Team Learning Canvases integrated to support class-wide objectives. |

## 8.3 EVIDENCE-BASED IMPACT ON LEARNING

the Planning Routine is supported by evidence from research in education and psychology. These approaches foster student agency, critical thinking, and sustained engagement through goal-setting, feedback, and collaboration.

**Goal-Setting and Feedback (Locke & Latham):** According to Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory, clear and challenging goals significantly improve performance. Sprint Planning provides a structured approach for setting precise goals and breaking them into manageable tasks. The feedback loops built into the Sprint process help students continuously improve and adjust their learning paths.

**Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan):** Sprint Planning fosters autonomy by allowing students to take control of their learning, competence by breaking goals into achievable tasks, and relatedness by incorporating feedback from peers and teachers. These three elements—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—are the core drivers of intrinsic motivation, which leads to deeper engagement and sustained effort in learning.

**Self-Regulation (Schunk & Zimmerman):** Sprint Planning encourages students to engage in goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflection, which are essential components of self-regulated learning. By planning their Learning Sprints, students practice self-regulation, which has been shown to improve academic performance and foster a deeper understanding of learning tasks.

**Scaffolding and Constructivist Learning (Vygotsky):** Sprint Planning integrates scaffolding principles, where students gradually take more responsibility for their learning. Based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Sprint Planning helps students operate just beyond their current skill level, with teachers providing support until they are ready to manage their learning independently. This supports constructivist learning, where students actively construct knowledge by engaging with tasks and reflecting on their progress.

**Flow State Theory (Csikszentmihalyi):** In Sprint Planning, students are encouraged to choose tasks that strike a balance between challenge and their perceived capacity. This mirrors the concept of flow, where students are fully engaged in tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult. When the challenge is appropriate, students can enter a flow state, where their concentration deepens, and they achieve a high level of productivity and enjoyment.

**Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky):** The Spectrum of Choice and Spectrum of Collaboration are designed to help students find the sweet spot in their learning process. By providing just enough challenge to stretch students' abilities without overwhelming them, the teacher ensures that students are operating within their Zone of Proximal Development—where optimal learning occurs. Sprint Planning helps students gauge their capacity and choose what and how much to take on during a Sprint, aiming to stay within this productive zone.

**Agile Methodologies and 21st-Century Skills:** Research indicates that Sprint Planning and other Agile methodologies can foster essential 21st-century skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and adaptability (Mahnič & Čančer, 2012; Layton & Lona, 2019). These skills are crucial for preparing students to succeed in modern academic and professional environments.

## 8.4 TOOLS FOR THE PLANNING ROUTINE

The tools used in the **Planning Routine** are designed to promote visibility and accessibility, helping students track their tasks and goals in real-time. These tools act as **visible learning radiators**, making the process and progress transparent and engaging for students. Below are some of the commonly used tools:

- **Learning Canvas:** A visual learning artifact used to organize and track the Learning Backlog Items (LBIs) and tasks selected for the current Sprint. It helps students map out their goals and monitor progress, making their plans clear and visible to themselves and others. Download several formats of the Learning Canvas from https://learn.agileclassrooms.com/agile-learning-canvas.

- **Sticky Notes or Index Cards on a Board:** These can be physically moved and rearranged, serving as simple, tactile tools for planning and tracking progress. They can be posted in a visible area for the whole class to see, allowing for easy updates and adjustments.

- **Digital Tools (e.g., Trello, Miro):** Online collaboration platforms such as Trello and Miro provide digital boards where students can track their Sprint tasks, update progress, and collaborate with peers remotely. These tools are particularly helpful in team-based learning settings.

- **Agile Learning Heads Up Display (HUD):** A physical trifold board that keeps the Learning Canvas and other Agile Classrooms Learning Artifacts visible . It allows them to physically interact with their plan, making abstract goals more concrete through movement and manipulation of tasks on the board. Article on setting up a student HUD is at https://methodsmentor.substack.com/p/heads-up-display.

## 8.5 GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

- **Agile Classrooms Framework:** A 21st-century skills development framework that applies Agile methodologies to enhance student engagement, self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability in learning.

- **Learner Agility:** In the context of education, Learner Agility refers to a set of skills aimed at helping students adapt to changing, uncertain, and complex environments and challenges. The two critical skills developed to foster this agility are self-direction and collaboration, with adaptability being the essential outcome of the intersection of these two skills..

- **Learning Backlog:** A prioritized list of learning goals or objectives (Learning Backlog Items) that students aim to achieve over time.

- **Learning Backlog Items:** Specific learning goals, objectives, or outcomes selected from the Learning Backlog for completion during a Learning Sprint.

- **Learning Sprint:** A short, time-boxed period (four weeks or less) during which students focus on completing specific learning goals. The Learning Sprint is composed of five self-directed learning routines.

- **Learning Canvas:** A visual tool used to map out the Sprint Plan, track tasks, and monitor progress throughout the Learning Sprint.

- **Sprint Goal:** An overarching objective for the Learning Sprint that aligns with broader learning outcomes, such as unit objectives or project visions.

- **Task:** A specific, actionable step that needs to be completed to achieve a Learning Backlog Item or goal.

- **Learning Zones:** a 2x2 matrix model that categorizes classroom environments based on two key dimensions: student Choice (ranging from low to high autonomy) and student Collaboration (ranging from low to high teamwork). By intersecting these dimensions, the framework identifies four distinct Learning Zones, each representing a unique combination of student agency and cooperative engagement. This model assists educators in scaffolding and balancing individual autonomy with group collaboration to create diverse and effective learning experiences.

- **Spectrum of Choice:** A framework scaffolding the progressive levels of student autonomy in decision-making.

- **Spectrum of Collaboration:** A framework scaffolding the progression from individual work to complex team-based collaboration.

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# Further Learning and Final Thoughts

## Want To Learn More?

Elevate your teaching practice with our immersive workshop designed for educators ready to integrate Agile methodologies into their classrooms. Gain hands-on experience and personalized coaching to implement Agile strategies effectively.

- **Explore Workshops**: https://learn.agileclassrooms.com/act
- **Access Resources**: https://learn.agileclassrooms.com/resources-agile-edu

## Thank You Dear Educator,

I'm thrilled to see you embracing Agile methodologies in your classroom. As the founder of Agile Classrooms, I've witnessed the transformative impact of these practices on student engagement and learning. By fostering a culture of collaboration, adaptability, and continuous improvement, you're empowering your students to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Remember, Agile Classrooms is a flexible framework designed to adapt to your unique context. Don't hesitate to experiment and innovate as you embark on this journey.

Thank you for your dedication to education. Together, we're shaping the future one Agile classroom at a time.

Warm regards,


**John Miller**

Founder, Agile Classrooms

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# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is a resource to inspire and support your teaching practice. Feel free to use it as is, modify it, or adapt parts to suit your classroom needs.

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