

THE RETROSPECTIVE ROUTINE GUIDE

GROWING AUTHENTIC SKILLS
THROUGH AGILE LEARNING



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The Five Self-Directed Learning Routines

In an Agile Classroom, routines are structured, repeated practices that help students develop key skills like self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability. Rather than focusing solely on content knowledge, these routines emphasize hands-on skill-building through consistent practice. This approach enables students to not only learn these skills but also to internalize and apply them in real-world contexts.

Agile Classrooms use Learning Sprints—an iterative learning cycle timeboxed to four weeks or less—to plan, achieve, and review learning goals. Each Learning Sprint serves as a feedback loop, chunking larger projects and the overall learning journey into smaller, manageable cycles. By working incrementally, students make steady progress while continuously building and learning.

Each Learning Sprint contains Five Self-Directed Learning Routines, which can be used together in a sequence or independently, depending on the learning context:

Routine	Description	Focus	Timing
1. Refinement	Revisiting and updating learning goals to keep them relevant and challenging	Future goals	Continuously, as needed
2. Planning	Defining selected goals and preparing steps to achieve them	Current goals and the action plan	Start of Learning Sprint
3. Check-In	Tracking progress and making real-time adjustments	Monitoring and adapting daily progress	Often each class period. Happens multiple times throughout the Learning Sprint.
4. Review	Presenting learning outcomes, receiving feedback, and updating goals	Learning outcomes and progress	End of Learning Sprint
5. Retrospective	Reflecting on learning methods and teamwork	Process & relationships	End of Learning Sprint, After Review

These routines can be integrated together within a Learning Sprint to create a cohesive cycle of learning. However, they are also effective when used on their own, offering the flexibility educators need to apply them in their unique contexts.

This guide focuses on the Retrospective Routine, a reflective process that encourages students to celebrate their achievements, confront challenges, gather valuable insights, and ultimately implement improvements to become more effective learners and collaborators.

Understanding the Retrospective Routine

The Retrospective Routine enables students to reflect on their work processes, identify effective strategies, and make targeted improvements. This reflection builds essential skills such as self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability, allowing students to become more agile in their learning. When using it with the Learning Sprint, the Retrospective Routine always occurs at the end of a Learning Sprint, following the Review.

Key Outcomes of the Retrospective Routine

Ultimately, the Retrospective is about continuous improvement. Through thoughtful reflection, students focus on enhancing how they learn, work, and interact in the classroom. The desired outcomes of a Retrospective are:

- 1. Refining Processes for Effective Learning and Work**
Students analyze and adjust their learning and teamwork processes, finding ways to work and learn more efficiently.
- 2. Enhancing Quality of Work**
Reflecting on their efforts, students set goals to improve the quality of their output, striving for higher standards in their work.
- 3. Intentionally Strengthening Relationships and Collaboration**
Through focused reflection, students work to improve relationships with peers, teachers, and community partners, building trust, communication, and mutual respect to enhance collaborative efforts.
- 4. Proactively Shaping a Positive Environment**
Students take active steps to make their classroom a more supportive and productive place, fostering a culture of growth and constructive feedback.

Preparation

To ensure a productive and effective Retrospective Routine, thoughtful preparation is key. The following aspects should be considered during the preparation phase:

- Determine Levels of Collaboration and Choice:**
Decide the extent to which students will lead or participate in the Retrospective Routine. Refer to the Spectrums of Collaboration and Choice, and consider the Learning Zones to adjust the level of student independence and collaboration to suit your classroom's current dynamics and goals.
- Schedule Time and Place for the Retrospective:**
Set aside specific times and designate a suitable space for conducting the Retrospective Routine. Consistent scheduling helps establish a habit of reflection and improvement, ensuring that students are prepared and engaged.
- Prepare Materials and Resources:**
Gather any materials or resources that may enhance the Retrospective Routine, such as retrospective templates, feedback tools, or digital platforms that facilitate group discussions and collaborative goal setting.

By addressing these preparation steps, educators create a conducive environment for the Retrospective Routine, maximizing its effectiveness in fostering continuous improvement in how students learn, work, and collaborate.

Procedure

A Retrospective's success lies in fostering meaningful reflection and identifying actionable improvements. While there are many effective approaches, here's a recommended framework using ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional) that helps guide teams through structured reflection and planning.

You can download various Retrospective templates at <https://learn.agileclassrooms.com/retro-sheet> to suit your classroom's specific needs. Regardless of the template you choose, the ORID flow below provides a solid foundation for structuring meaningful discussions:

1. Objective: Discuss What Happened

Begin with a factual review of the Learning Sprint. Encourage students to share specific tasks completed, milestones reached, and any challenges encountered. This step focuses on gathering the objective details of the Sprint, creating a shared understanding of what took place.

2. Reflective: Share Reactions

Move on to discussing how students felt during the Learning Sprint. What emotions or reactions came up? Were there moments of frustration, pride, or excitement? This step allows students to express their feelings, fostering empathy within the group and creating a safe space for honest sharing.

3. Interpretive: Identify What Worked and What Didn't

Discuss the successes and areas for improvement. What practices contributed positively, and what obstacles held them back? This stage encourages students to analyze the experience, connecting their actions with the outcomes to gain insight into effective strategies and areas for adjustment.

4. Decisional: Set an Improvement Goal

Collaborate on one specific improvement goal for the next Sprint. Based on the insights gained, what is one actionable step the team wants to take to enhance their process? This final step empowers students to take ownership of their learning process and reinforces a mindset of continuous improvement.

Quick Alternative

If you're short on time or new to Retrospectives, you can use this simplified approach instead:

- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What's one improvement for the next Sprint?

Example

Retrospective Scenario

A team of 9th-grade science students, called the "Renewable Energy Innovators," recently completed a Learning Sprint on renewable energy sources. During the Learning Sprint, they researched different energy types, created presentations, and collaborated on a group project. They selected the Glows, Grows, Go template for their Retrospective for this Learning Sprint.



Glow

**Celebrate
Successes**

- We worked well together because we split up the tasks so everyone had something they were good at.
- I think we communicated a lot better this time, which made it easier to get everything done.
- We stayed on track, and we finished the slides on time.



Grow

**Areas for
Improvement**

- We could have done a better job checking each other's work.
- Sometimes, we just trusted everyone to do their part without looking it over, and there were a few mistakes in the final presentation.
- It was hard for us to meet up outside of class because everyone had different schedules.



Go

**Improvement
Goal for Next
Sprint**

- For the next Sprint, we'll do a quick review of each other's parts before putting it all together.
- We should also try using a shared calendar to plan our work better and see if there's a time that works for everyone to meet up.



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Scaffolding Progression

Scaffolding helps teachers create a structured environment where students gradually take on more responsibility while still receiving support. In Agile Classrooms, building student agility involves two key dimensions: Choice and Collaboration, supported by the Spectrum of Choice and the Spectrum of Collaboration, which guide students to become more effective at making decisions and working as a team.

The intersection of these spectrums forms the Four Learning Zones, providing a clear framework for how Choice and Collaboration come together. These zones simplify the configuration of the learning environment based on students' current abilities, providing the right level of challenge to foster growth without causing overwhelm.

Next, we will explore each framework in detail, focusing on how they enhance reflection, collaboration, and meaningful improvement during the Retrospective Routine.

6.1 THE SPECTRUM OF CHOICE

The educator’s role in the Retrospective Routine is dynamic, shifting as students develop self-direction. Educators transition through three roles—Instructor, Mentor, and Coach—as students gain more autonomy. At each level, one role is dominant, but the others may be used as needed to support the learning process. For example, when primarily coaching, a teacher might occasionally instruct or mentor based on students’ needs. Below is an outline of each educator's role, along with example practices and language.

Choice Level	How It Looks in the Retrospective Routine	Language Examples
1: TEACHER-LED Student Choice: Low Educator Role: Instructor Student Role: Follower	The teacher leads the Retrospective Routine, modeling each step, guiding reflections, and setting improvement goals for students. Students observe and follow along, learning how to assess their own learning approaches and identify growth areas.	<i>"Here are the glows and grows of how you worked together.."</i> <i>"Let's improve this for the next Sprint."</i>
2: CO-LED Student Choice: Medium Educator Role: Mentor Student Role: Contributor	The teacher partners with students, offering advice and perspectives as they reflect on their learning processes and teamwork during the Retrospective Routine. Students actively participate, sharing observations, and together with the teacher, they decide on improvements to make in their next Sprint.	<i>"What are some effective practices you noticed in the team's collaboration? Here is what I saw to add on to your insights."</i> <i>"Let's identify one process improvement together for next Sprint—any suggestions?"</i>
3: STUDENT-LED Student Choice: High Educator Role: Coach Student Role: Leader	Students lead the Retrospective Routine, reflecting on their learning independently, setting goals, and facilitating the routine. The teacher, as a Coach, offers guidance and feedback, stepping in only when necessary to deepen student autonomy.	<i>"What did you learn about how you worked in this Learning Sprint?"</i> <i>"How will you adjust your collaboration approach for the next Sprint?"</i>

While students gain more autonomy as they progress through these levels, the educator maintains authority to overrule or veto decisions. However, this authority should be exercised sparingly, especially as students advance from Level 2 (Co-Led) to Level 3 (Student-Led). Overruling too often can undermine student agency and ownership. This measure is intended as a “break-in-case-of-emergency” option, only to be used when essential to prevent unrecoverable setbacks or ensure student safety.

6.2 SPECTRUM OF COLLABORATION AND GROUP DYNAMICS

The **Spectrum of Collaboration** outlines how students interact with one another during the Review Routine. As they progress from individual work to group-based and team-based collaboration, they develop essential interpersonal and teamwork skills. These skills are critical for 21st-century learning, fostering a shared responsibility for success.

Level of Collaboration	Student Interaction	Group Facilitator
1. Individual (Solo)	Students reflect individually on their approach to learning and collaboration during the Sprint. There is minimal collaboration at this level, though students may share light reflections or receive some support from peers or the teacher as needed.	<i>No facilitator is required.</i>
2. Group (Cooperative)	Students work in small groups, reflecting on their individual contributions and discussing how well they cooperated with peers. They focus on their personal roles within the group while also considering how they support one another.	<i>A student facilitator is recommended, but the teacher may also facilitate based on group needs.</i>
3. Team (Collaborative)	Students collaborate as a cohesive team, with an emphasis on reflecting together as a unit. The primary focus is on teamwork and collective processes, with individual reflections playing a supporting role to enhance the team's overall performance.	<i>A student facilitator is required to guide the team through the Retrospective Routine.</i>

6.3 THE FOUR LEARNING ZONES

Through the intersection of the Spectrum of Choice and the Spectrum of Collaboration, student agility emerges. The Four Learning Zones provide a structured path that students follow as they move toward greater self-direction and collaboration. Each zone represents a combination of levels from both spectrums and helps to scaffold student progress in a more tailored, flexible way.

	Collaboration Low-Med	Collaboration Med-High
Choice Med-High	<p>ZONE 3: INDEPENDENT LEARNERS</p> <p>Ranges from students partnering with the teacher to managing reflection and setting improvement goals independently. Students primarily focus on their own progress but may seek input from peers or the teacher if they choose.</p>	<p>ZONE 4: SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS</p> <p>This ranges from teams partnering with the teacher to taking full responsibility for the Retrospective Routine. The focus is on team-level improvements and shared goals, with some attention to individual reflections within the team context.</p>
Choice Low-Med	<p>ZONE 1: TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM</p> <p>The teacher leads individual students through reflection and goal-setting, with minimal peer interaction beyond light support or sharing. The focus is on each student's personal improvement, directed by the teacher.</p>	<p>ZONE 2: COOPERATIVE LEARNING</p> <p>Students work in groups, ranging from teacher-led to co-led reflections. The emphasis is on individual contributions within the group, with some attention to group-level improvements. Students reflect on their roles in the group and set goals that support both individual and group progress.</p>

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Evaluating Student Progress

Evaluating student competency during the Retrospective Routine is essential to track growth in self-reflection, collaboration, and accountability. Regular coaching and targeted feedback help students incrementally take ownership of their learning and improvement process.

To support this, Agile Classrooms provides three rubrics for the Retrospective Routine: a **single-point rubric** for quick, targeted feedback, a **multi-point rubric** for comprehensive evaluation, and a **student-friendly rubric** designed to empower students in self-assessment and goal-setting.



7.1 SINGLE-POINT RUBRIC FOR THE RETROSPECTIVE ROUTINE

Competency	Success Criteria
Self-Evaluation	Identifies personal strengths and areas for growth in how they learn and work with others.
Creating a Safe Environment	Contributes respectfully to discussions, ensuring feedback is shared in a way that fosters safety and respect.
Personal Responsibility	Acknowledges own role in both positive outcomes and challenges, taking ownership of actions.
Exercising Agency and Advocacy	Focuses on what is within their control and proactively seeks support for areas outside their authority.
Setting Improvement Goals	Develops clear, achievable goals for the next Sprint, with specific steps and personal responsibilities

7.2 MULTI-POINT RUBRIC FOR THE RETROSPECTIVE ROUTINE

Competency	Novice	Advanced Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
Creating a Safe Environment	<p>Fearful Disengagement Avoids sharing ideas or feedback due to fear of judgment; rarely participates openly.</p>	<p>Respectful Involvement Engages respectfully but holds back vulnerability and candidness, hesitant to share openly.</p>	<p>Constructive Contribution Actively contributes ideas and feedback respectfully, showing growing comfort in expressing viewpoints.</p>	<p>Supportive Engagement Freely shares ideas and feedback, encouraging an environment of openness and respect.</p>	<p>Vulnerable Leadership Models vulnerability and fosters an environment where others feel safe to share openly and candidly.</p>
Personal Responsibility	<p>Avoids Responsibility Frequently avoids accountability and may make excuses or blame others.</p>	<p>Aware of Responsibility Begins to recognize personal responsibility but inconsistently follows through with actions.</p>	<p>Takes Ownership Takes responsibility for actions and outcomes with minimal prompting, occasionally reflecting on ways to improve.</p>	<p>Integrated Responsibility Consistently demonstrates responsibility, owning actions and outcomes and reflecting on ways to improve.</p>	<p>Inspiring Responsibility Models a deep sense of responsibility, inspiring others to take ownership and fostering a culture of accountability.</p>
Self-Evaluation	<p>Unaware Lacks awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses; does not engage in self-reflection.</p>	<p>Basic Awareness Identifies some strengths and weaknesses with prompting but often misses underlying causes.</p>	<p>Emerging Objectivity Starts to assess personal performance more accurately, beginning to recognize patterns and recurring issues.</p>	<p>Insightful Regularly assesses strengths and weaknesses objectively, identifying root causes and consistent patterns.</p>	<p>Strategic Awareness Demonstrates deep self-awareness, discerning root causes, and connects patterns to a larger vision for continuous improvement.</p>
Exercising Agency and Advocacy	<p>Passive Does not advocate for needs or take ownership of personal progress.</p>	<p>Awareness Begins to recognize areas within personal control but requires prompting to take action or seek support.</p>	<p>Proactive Takes action on what is within personal control and occasionally advocates for needs or support.</p>	<p>Empowered Regularly exercises agency and effectively advocates for support when needed.</p>	<p>Catalyst Actively takes ownership and advocates for self and others, contributing to a culture of shared responsibility and proactive problem-solving.</p>
Setting Improvement Goals	<p>Dependent: Relies on teacher to identify improvements; focuses on surface-level changes without recognizing underlying issues.</p>	<p>Assisted: Sets simple, short-term goals with guidance, addressing immediate symptoms rather than root causes.</p>	<p>Intentional: Begins setting specific, actionable goals for immediate improvement, with emerging awareness of recurring challenges and underlying causes.</p>	<p>Strategic: Identifies root causes and applies improvement interventions that address deeper, systemic issues rather than symptoms alone.</p>	<p>Transformative: Sets and pursues a larger vision of personal transformation through small, incremental improvements aligned with that vision.</p>

7.3 STUDENT-FRIENDLY RUBRIC FOR THE RETROSPECTIVE ROUTINE

This student-friendly rubric helps students self-assess during the Retrospective Routine, promoting reflection and ownership of their learning. Educators can use it to guide students in recognizing their strengths and areas for improvement.

What You're Doing	Just Starting	Getting Better	Doing Well	Nailing It	Crushing It
Self-Evaluation	You're not yet noticing your strengths or areas to improve. You wait for others to point things out.	You're starting to see some strengths and areas to work on, but you need reminders to look a bit deeper.	You're able to identify strengths and areas for growth, and you sometimes spot patterns in how you learn or work.	You regularly notice patterns in your strengths and areas for growth, and you look at what's really causing challenges.	You easily spot patterns and deeper reasons for both your strengths and areas to grow. You're aiming for big, continuous improvements.
Creating a Safe Environment	You're holding back from sharing ideas or feedback because you don't feel comfortable.	You're sharing ideas, but you hold back from speaking honestly or being open with others.	You're sharing your thoughts respectfully and starting to feel more comfortable being open in the group.	You freely share your ideas and listen to others respectfully, creating a safe space for everyone.	You set the example by being open and honest, helping everyone feel safe to share and be themselves.
Personal Responsibility	You tend to avoid taking responsibility for things that didn't go well, and you might even blame others.	You're beginning to see where you play a part in both successes and challenges but still need reminders to own it.	You take responsibility for your actions and contributions most of the time and think about how to improve.	You consistently own your actions, both the good and the bad, and regularly look for ways to improve.	You inspire others by fully owning your actions and encouraging everyone to take responsibility for their part.
Exercising Agency and Advocacy	You wait for others to decide what to do next and don't ask for help when you need it.	You're starting to recognize what you can control and are learning to ask for support when you need it.	You usually take action on things you can control and sometimes ask for help or resources.	You regularly take charge of what's within your control and confidently ask for support when needed.	You take ownership of your learning, actively seek support, and encourage others to do the same, helping everyone feel responsible.
Setting Improvement Goals	You rely on others to set your goals and mostly focus on small, quick fixes without much thought for bigger changes.	You're setting basic goals with help, focusing on immediate tasks but not yet seeing the bigger picture.	You're able to set specific goals for improvement and are starting to notice some deeper challenges to work on.	You set meaningful goals that address the root of challenges and help you make bigger improvements.	You set clear goals aligned with a bigger vision for yourself, making steady progress through small, thoughtful improvements.

7.4 COACHING STUDENT AGILITY

As students build their skills in Retrospectives, they may need structured guidance to deepen self-reflection, foster safety, and drive continuous improvement. The **Coaching and Feedback Form** supports educators in guiding students through these key aspects, helping them assess their collaborative processes, recognize strengths, and set growth goals.

Initially, teachers may use this form to structure reflection, but as students grow more confident, they can begin using it for self-assessment. The example below illustrates how a teacher guides students through the Retrospective Routine, with flexibility for student-led use over time.

Student/Team	Team Innovators	Learning Sprint Routine	Retrospective
Competency To Improve		Current Level	Next Target Level
Creating a Safe Environment		Adv 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?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are engaging respectfully but are hesitant to be vulnerable or fully candid with one another. Limited practice in sharing honest reflections openly without fear of judgment. 		Actively contribute ideas and feedback, demonstrating a growing comfort with sharing their viewpoints openly and constructively.	

Growth Experiment	Next Improvements To Try	Progress Notes
Experiment 1 Date:	Model Respectful Openness: Teacher shares a personal reflection and invites students to discuss what makes them feel safe or hesitant in group discussions.	Students showed curiosity and began sharing small reflections. Some noted that seeing the teacher's example made it feel safer.
Experiment 2 Date:	Practice Candid Sharing: Use structured prompts like "One thing I found challenging was..." to help students voice concerns and challenges more openly.	Students started sharing challenges more openly, using the prompt to frame their thoughts. Confidence grew as they practiced.
Experiment 3 Date:	Acknowledge Constructive Feedback: Recognize when students give specific, respectful feedback to peers, highlighting how it contributes to a safe environment.	Recognition motivated students to be more constructive in their feedback. They appreciated the positive reinforcement for effort.
Experiment 4 Date:	Create Reflection Pairs: Pair students for private reflections before group sharing, allowing them to discuss insights one-on-one to build comfort with sharing openly.	Students became more open in small pairs, which translated into increased comfort during the larger group discussions.

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.

Potential Pitfalls and How to Mitigate Them

Be mindful of common challenges in the Retrospective Routine and consider strategies to address them.

Pitfall	Description	Ways to Mitigate
Mixing Content Review with Process Improvement	Combining content discussion with process reflection can blur the Retrospective's focus on improving learning approaches.	<i>Keep the Retrospective centered on improving how students learn, work, and collaborate. Reserve content-specific feedback for other routines.</i>
Ending Without a Concrete Improvement Goal	Retrospectives without clear, actionable goals can lack direction and purpose.	<i>Ensure each Retrospective concludes with a specific improvement goal for the next Sprint. Display it visibly as a reminder to encourage follow-through.</i>
Neglecting to Implement Identified Improvements	Failing to follow through on improvement goals reduces the Retrospective's impact and limits progress.	<i>Add improvement goals directly to the Learning Canvas alongside other learning goals. Track these goals during the Check-In Routine to ensure visibility and accountability.</i>
Repeating the Same Retrospective Format	Using the same format repeatedly can lead to boredom and limit new insights.	<i>Vary Retrospective formats, such as using different reflection prompts, activities, or visual aids, to keep students engaged and uncover fresh perspectives.</i>
Treating Retrospectives as Competitive Benchmarks	Focusing on comparisons between students can discourage genuine reflection and growth.	<i>Emphasize personal growth over competition by tracking individual progress, reinforcing that Retrospectives are a space for self-improvement and team collaboration.</i>
Overlooking Psychological Safety	Students may feel hesitant to share openly if a safe environment isn't prioritized.	<i>Foster a culture of respect and trust by acknowledging vulnerability, encouraging supportive listening, and recognizing open, honest sharing as valuable contributions.</i>
Overemphasis on Minor Improvements	Focusing too narrowly on small, superficial fixes can prevent students from addressing deeper challenges. These can create some quick wins but might fail to improve real capabilities.	<i>Encourage students to look for meaningful improvements that tackle root causes rather than surface-level adjustments. Guide them to identify patterns and broader growth areas.</i>

Appendix

9.1 ACTUALIZING STANDARDS

The Retrospective Routine builds essential 21st-century skills such as self-reflection, continuous improvement, and collaborative problem-solving. It aligns with and supports standards like the ISTE Standards for Students and the P21 Framework for 21st-Century Learning, making these skills actionable in a classroom setting.

ISTE Standards for Students

Pitfall	Description	Ways to Mitigate
1a: Empowered Learner	Students set learning goals and reflect on progress toward achieving them.	<i>During Retrospectives, students reflect on their collaborative processes and learning approaches, setting specific improvement goals to enhance future performance.</i>
1c: Empowered Learner	Students use technology to seek feedback and improve learning outcomes.	<i>Students may use digital tools like Google Docs or Padlet to document reflections and receive real-time feedback, enabling immediate adjustments and deeper insights.</i>
2a: Digital Citizen	Students practice safe, ethical behavior in online interactions.	<i>In Retrospectives, students learn to communicate openly and respectfully, especially when sharing feedback digitally, emphasizing ethical, supportive interactions.</i>
2b: Digital Citizen	Students engage in positive, safe, and legal digital behavior.	<i>Retrospectives encourage students to follow norms of respectful online interactions, especially in group settings where feedback is shared.</i>
3a: Knowledge Constructor	Students plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and resources for learning.	<i>By reflecting on and organizing insights using digital tools (if available), students synthesize what they've learned and apply it to set future goals, building meaningful connections in their learning journey.</i>
3b: Knowledge Constructor	Students evaluate the credibility and relevance of digital sources of information.	<i>In Retrospectives, students practice discernment by evaluating the relevance of feedback from peers and teachers, improving their critical thinking in processing information.</i>

ISTE Standards for Students

Pitfall	Description	Ways to Mitigate
4a: Innovative Designer	Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to solve problems.	<i>Retrospectives encourage students to evaluate and adjust their approaches to problem-solving, allowing for creative thinking and adaptability, especially when digital tools help them brainstorm or track solutions.</i>
4b: Innovative Designer	Students select digital tools to plan and manage a design process.	<i>Students may use digital tools like Trello or Miro to organize improvement plans, manage Retrospective insights, and track actionable goals.</i>
6a: Creative Communicator	Students choose appropriate digital tools to communicate ideas effectively.	<i>Students may use visual aids, digital platforms, or presentation tools to share their reflections and goals creatively, improving their ability to communicate insights during Retrospectives.</i>
6c: Creative Communicator	Students communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively through various media.	<i>Retrospectives provide opportunities for students to summarize their learning and improvement goals, using clear communication to express insights in both written and verbal formats.</i>
7a: Global Collaborator	Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich learning through collaboration.	<i>Retrospectives facilitate peer collaboration, enabling students to exchange feedback, build empathy, and work toward common goals, especially when digital tools foster wider, even virtual, collaboration.</i>
7b: Global Collaborator	Students work effectively in teams locally and globally to accomplish a common goal and assume shared responsibility.	<i>Students reflect on teamwork dynamics, assess their contributions, and set improvement goals that strengthen collaboration, fostering a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility.</i>

P21 Framework for 21st-Century Learning

P21 Standard	Standard Description	Retrospective Routine Alignment
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving	Students reason effectively and solve problems.	<i>Retrospectives encourage students to analyze their learning experiences and identify root causes for improvement, enhancing their ability to think critically and solve problems systematically.</i>
Collaboration	Students work effectively with others, demonstrating flexibility and shared responsibility.	<i>Students reflect on teamwork dynamics, assess their contributions, and set improvement goals that strengthen collaboration, fostering a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility.</i>
Communication	Students articulate thoughts clearly through various forms of communication.	<i>The Retrospective Routine enhances communication by giving students opportunities to express their thoughts, ideas, and constructive feedback in a clear and supportive manner, building their ability to communicate effectively.</i>
Creativity and Innovation	Students work creatively with others to develop new solutions.	<i>Reflecting on their approaches, students can brainstorm innovative ways to improve their processes and strategies, encouraging a mindset of creativity in approaching future learning and work.</i>
Information Literacy	Students evaluate and use information effectively.	<i>Students evaluate the information and feedback gathered during the Sprint to make informed decisions about their improvement goals, enhancing their skills in discerning relevant insights.</i>
ICT Literacy	Students use digital tools effectively.	<i>Retrospectives may involve digital tools to document reflections, gather feedback, and set goals, promoting digital literacy as students learn to use these tools for productive, reflective work.</i>
Life and Career Skills	Students develop adaptability, responsibility, and continuous improvement.	<i>The Retrospective mirrors real-world practices, reinforcing adaptability, a sense of ownership, and commitment to continuous improvement, which are essential life and career skills for a dynamic, team-based environment.</i>

9.2. RESEARCH AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

The Retrospective Routine in Agile Classrooms fosters reflection, self-assessment, continuous improvement, and psychological safety. Supported by research in psychology, neuroscience, and education, this routine emphasizes metacognition, collaborative learning, student agency, and a growth-oriented mindset.

Theory/Research	Key Concepts	Retrospective Routine Alignment
Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan)	Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential for intrinsic motivation.	<i>The Retrospective Routine enhances autonomy by enabling students to set and reflect on improvement goals. Competence is reinforced through self-assessment and feedback on personal growth, while relatedness is cultivated through supportive teacher and peer feedback, creating a collaborative learning environment (Deci & Ryan, 2000).</i>
Goal-Setting and Feedback (Locke & Latham)	Clear, specific, and challenging goals enhance performance.	<i>Retrospectives encourage students to evaluate their learning processes and establish short-term improvement goals. They apply feedback from peers and teachers to refine their strategies, aligning with effective goal-setting principles and continuous adjustment based on feedback (Locke & Latham, 2002).</i>
Psychological Safety (Amy Edmondson)	Psychological safety encourages open communication, vulnerability, and collaborative problem-solving.	<i>The Retrospective Routine fosters psychological safety by creating an environment where students feel comfortable sharing feedback and discussing areas for improvement. This culture of trust and respect is essential for students to engage in honest reflection and collaboratively set improvement goals, supporting Edmondson's work on team learning and psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018).</i>
Agency and Responsibility (Albert Bandura)	Developing personal agency involves taking ownership and acting within one's sphere of control.	<i>The Retrospective Routine promotes student agency by encouraging them to take responsibility for their growth and advocate for support when needed. This aligns with Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, as students learn to exert control over their learning process and develop a proactive stance in collaborative problem-solving (Bandura, 1977).</i>
Reflective Practice (Donald Schön)	Reflecting in and on action enables individuals to improve their approach over time.	<i>In Retrospectives, students reflect on their learning experiences, identifying strengths and areas for growth. This process aligns with Schön's concept of reflective practice, as students refine their learning strategies through structured reflection and feedback, fostering a continuous improvement mindset.</i>

Theory/Research	Key Concepts	Retrospective Routine Alignment
Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning (Flavell, Zimmerman)	Developing awareness, planning, and self-regulation skills.	<i>Retrospectives promote metacognitive skills as students reflect on their approaches to learning, monitor their progress, and evaluate strategies based on feedback. This cycle of planning, monitoring, and evaluating supports lifelong self-regulation (Flavell, 1979; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).</i>
Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky)	Teacher and peer support within a student's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).	<i>The Retrospective Routine scaffolds learning by gradually transferring responsibility from teacher-led to student-led reflections. The Spectrum of Choice and Spectrum of Collaboration allow students to engage within their ZPD, where teacher and peer feedback help them develop more complex reflective skills over time (Vygotsky, 1978).</i>
Formative Assessment and Feedback Loops (Black & Wiliam; Hattie & Timperley)	Low-stakes, continuous feedback is essential for growth.	<i>Retrospectives serve as formative assessments, where students review their experiences and receive structured, actionable feedback from peers and teachers. This regular feedback fosters iterative improvement and drives meaningful change in learning approaches (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).</i>
Collaborative Learning and Peer Assessment (Bandura)	Peer feedback fosters academic and social-emotional growth.	<i>The Retrospective Routine encourages peer feedback, enabling students to learn from each other's experiences and build collaborative skills. Peer assessments in Retrospectives promote a shared responsibility for learning and cultivate social skills that contribute to a supportive classroom culture (Bandura, 1977).</i>
Neuroplasticity and Reflection (Michael Merzenich)	The brain reorganizes itself through reflection, reinforcing learning through neural connections.	<i>By engaging in regular reflection and goal setting in Retrospectives, students reinforce neural pathways that support self-assessment, feedback integration, and improvement. This process leverages neuroplasticity, helping students internalize reflective practices that drive lasting changes in their learning approaches.</i>



9.3 TOOLS FOR THE RETROSPECTIVE ROUTINE

The Retrospective Routine in Agile Classrooms uses specific tools to facilitate structured reflection, goal setting, and collaborative improvement. These tools promote transparency, accountability, and an engaging reflection experience. Below are some commonly used tools for effective Retrospectives:

Tool	Description
Digital Whiteboards	Digital whiteboards like Miro and FigJam, and Retrospective apps like Retromat and FunRetrospectives, are optional tools that can enhance the Retrospective Routine. These tools can be adapted to the resources available in the classroom, providing flexibility for teachers who may not have access to digital platforms.
Retrospective Apps	Tools like Retromat (https://retromat.org) and FunRetro (https://www.funretrospectives.com) provide a variety of Retrospective formats and activities. These apps keep Retrospectives dynamic and customizable, with pre-built templates that support different reflection goals and group needs.
Retrospective Sheets	Retrospective sheets (available for download at https://learn.agileclassrooms.com/retro-sheets) contain prompts to guide students through the reflection process. Questions like “What went well?” and “What can be improved?” help structure student reflections, making it easier for them to identify specific areas for growth.

9.4 SCRUM ROOTS AND INSPIRATION

The Retrospective Routine in Agile Classrooms draws inspiration from the Sprint Retrospective in Scrum, an Agile framework widely used in professional settings. While the purpose of reflection and continuous improvement remains consistent, this routine has been adapted to meet the developmental needs of K12 students. Below is a comparison of key differences:

Aspect	Sprint Retrospective (Professionals)	Retrospective Routine (K12 Education)
Duration	Timeboxed to a maximum of 3 hours for a one-month Sprint.	<i>Generally 10–20 minutes, adjusted to fit within classroom time constraints.</i>
Collaboration & Participants	Team-based, with shared ownership of processes and outcomes, involving the whole Scrum team.	<i>Can range from individual to team-based reflection, involving a single student, a student team, or the whole class. The Spectrum of Collaboration supports progression toward more team-based reflection as students build collaboration skills.</i>
Autonomy/Choice	Scrum teams are self-managing and fully own the Retrospective process.	<i>Students may start with more guidance from teachers but gradually develop autonomy through the Spectrum of Choice, taking greater ownership of the Retrospective Routine over time.</i>
Role of Facilitator	The Scrum Master may facilitate but aims to empower the team to self-facilitate.	<i>Teachers typically facilitate initially, with the goal for students to eventually lead Retrospectives, fostering self-management, reflection, and goal setting.</i>
Choice of Routines	All Scrum events are mandatory in each Sprint, following a specific sequence.	<i>Retrospectives are not mandatory in Agile Classrooms and can be adapted, modified, or used independently to fit the classroom's needs, offering flexibility while promoting reflective learning.</i>

9.5 GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

The Retrospective Routine in Agile Classrooms draws inspiration from the Sprint Retrospective in Scrum, an Agile framework widely used in professional settings. While the purpose of reflection and continuous improvement remains consistent, this routine has been adapted to meet the developmental needs of K12 students. Below is a comparison of key differences:

Term	Definition
Agile	In the context of education, Agile refers to a set of practices and principles that promote adaptability, collaboration, and continuous improvement. It emphasizes flexibility in response to changing needs, self-directed learning, and regular reflection to enhance learning outcomes.
Agile Classrooms Framework	A 21st-century skills development framework that applies Agile methodologies to enhance student engagement, self-direction, collaboration, and adaptability in learning.
Agency	The capacity for students to take intentional action in areas within their control, taking ownership of their learning and decisions during the Retrospective.
Advocacy	The act of seeking support or resources for areas outside of one's control, enabling students to communicate needs effectively during the Retrospective Routine.
Learning Sprint	A time-bound period in which students work on their goals, engaging in routines like Check-In, Review, and Retrospective to continuously improve.
Learning Zones	The Learning Zones framework consists of four zones that guide students toward greater responsibility and collaborative decision-making in their learning. Each zone represents a level of student choice and collaboration, gradually supporting the development of self-directed learning and teamwork skills.
Retrospective Routine	A structured reflection process focused on improving how students work and learn together. During the Retrospective, students examine their collaboration, processes, and strategies, aiming to identify improvements for the next Sprint.
Scaffolding	The gradual release of responsibility from teacher to student, allowing students to take more ownership of learning tasks as they build competency. This concept is embedded in the Spectrum of Choice and Spectrum of Collaboration.
Self-Directed Learning Routines	Structured, repeatable processes in Agile Classrooms that foster self-direction. Routines include Backlog Refinement, Planning, Check-In, Review, and Retrospective, supporting continuous student improvement and self-management. Each routine can be used independently or within a Learning Sprint.
Spectrum of Choice	A framework that guides the progression of student autonomy, moving from teacher-led activities to student-led ownership. In Retrospective Routines, students gradually take more responsibility for reflection and goal-setting.
Spectrum of Collaboration	A framework that outlines the development of collaborative skills, starting from individual reflection and moving towards team-based Retrospectives. This spectrum encourages collective responsibility and shared learning goals.

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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

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