

A Roadmap for Planning Inclusive and Equitable Academic Discourse

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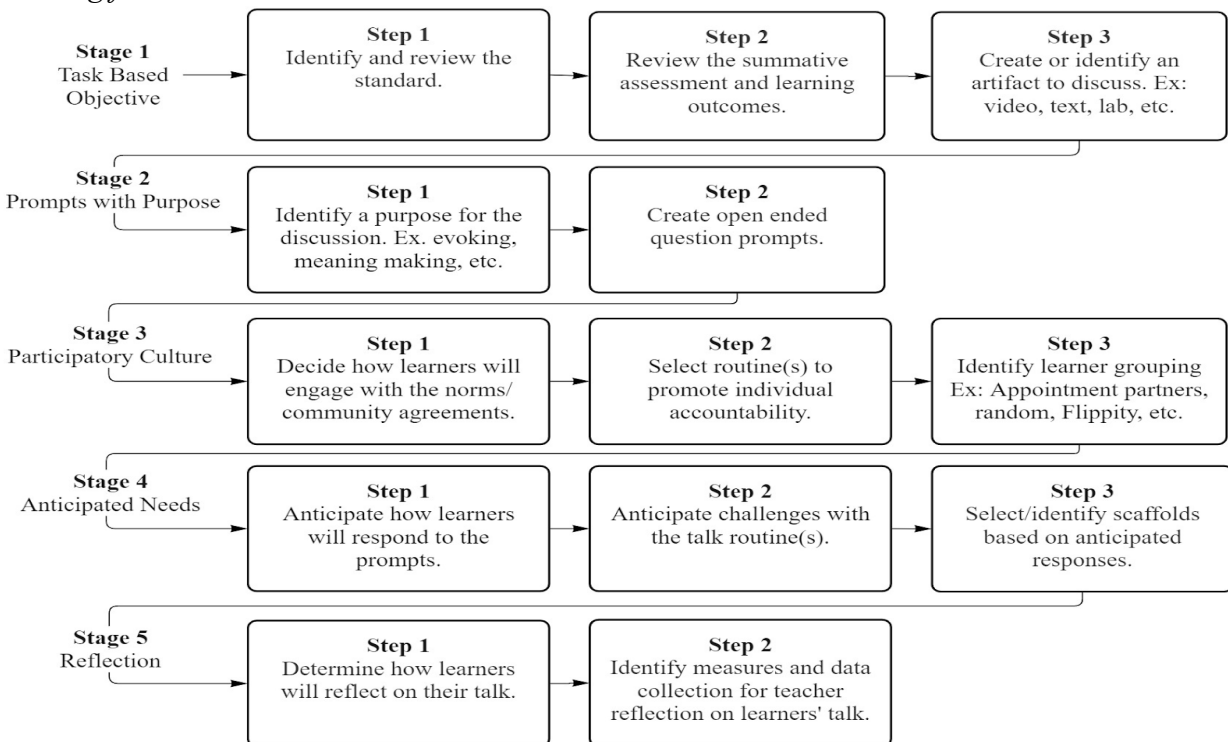
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Introduction/Need for innovation

According to Hattie (2012), the influence of classroom discussion has an effect size of 0.82 on student achievement, ranking it in the top ten influences. Considering individual learners, those who actively engage in talk focused on reasoning are shown to experience stronger academic outcomes (Sedova, 2019). At a piloting school site, secondary educators (n=23) were observed using low depth of knowledge prompts and allowing students to opt out of participation in discussions. Investigators developed the *Planning for Academic Discourse Process* (PADP) to address the learning question of how can the PADP support secondary teachers' planning for equitable and inclusive high cognitive demand discourse? The need aligns with American Association for Agricultural Education's Research Priority four, meaningful and engaged learning environments (Edgar et al., 2016). The innovation represents a coalescence of several areas of literature relevant to student learning including learner accountability (Kagan, 1994; Wolf et al. 2005), talk as a tool for learning (Cartier et al., 2013; Hammond, 2015; Windschitl et al., 2018), culturally responsive pedagogy (Hammond, 2015; Michaels et al, 2008; Windschitl et al., 2018; The National Equity Project, n.d.), and continuous improvement (Bryk et al., 2015; CAST, 2018; The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014; Windschitl et al., 2018).

The PADP (Figure 1) is a process map, intended to be used by educators as they plan lessons to consider the lens of student discourse. Applications include practicing secondary teachers, teaching credential candidates, and teacher preparation coursework that includes lesson design.

Figure 1
Planning for Academic Discourse Process



How it works

Figure 1 outlines five stages of the PADP. In the first stage, users identify an artifact that will foster discussion supportive of the learning outcome. In the second stage, they develop their prompt(s) based on the purpose of the discussion. In the third stage, users identify talk routines that promote individual accountability, this includes identifying the number of students in each group and the structure in which they will interact. Additionally, they outline clear student roles and how group members will be selected. In the fourth stage of the PADP, users anticipate learners' responses and then identify and plan for any support(s) necessary for learner success. In the final stage, users determine how learners and the educator will reflect on the discussion.

Results to date/Implications

In the piloting district qualitative data was collected from teachers (n=23). Themes of PADP field test users included (1) teachers did not have a repeatable process for planning academic discourse, and (2) teachers felt more confident in their ability to plan for discourse as a result of using the PADP. One participant wrote, "I really valued the ideas and the structure on how to go through planning a lesson with academic discourse. I learned ideas that can bring out academic discourse in ways that will help me evaluate students and how to push them academically." When asked about next steps, a third theme of wanting more time to practice using the PADP in their content area teams emerged. Based on the field tests, practitioners should practice using the PADP as an individual and collaboratively. Researchers should explore the effects of using the PADP on outcome measures, especially for traditionally marginalized learners. They should also consider to what extent PADP may be applicable for elementary grades and adult learners. Finally, researchers should leverage feedback to refine and update the PADP.

Future plans/Advice

Practitioners should identify indicators of high cognitive demand discourse, and processes for collecting and analyzing the data associated with the indicators (Jensen et al., 2021). Further, while the PADP creates a plan for classroom talk, educators will likely need additional support in their use of talk moves to facilitate the discussion in real time (Wolf et al. 2005; Windschitl et al., 2018). This might take the form of networking, professional learning sessions, teaching demonstrations, lesson studies, and/or coaching support (Irby et al., 2012; Ray, 2019). Researchers should consider the need for supporting teachers' skills around planning and facilitating with talk moves, and where talk moves could be included in the PADP. Exploring the idea of *back pocket questions* may address this barrier to implementation (Ambitious Science Teaching, n.d). Further, to support educators in their growth, researchers should develop rubrics to promote self-reflection and peer feedback (Jensen et al., 2021).

Costs/Resources

Experienced educators may be able to implement PADP with limited guidance, and therefore no costs. For those needing support, direct costs may be associated with substitute teacher(s) (varies by district), as well as professional learning facilitator(s) (\$1500-2,500 per day). Indirect costs might include the time for staff to explore the applicability of the tool in their context.

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