

Conducting an Initial Read-Through: Facilitator Explanation and How-To Guide

Overview

The initial read-through provides teachers with an opportunity for self-evaluation as a map writer as well as a collective perspective of how map readers interpret what has been recorded by the map writer. For the read-through process to be most effective, teachers must first have training, support, and practice in writing and intra-aligning the map elements. There are four goals for conducting an initial read-through:

1. To provide a beginning map writer with the experience of others reading his or her map without being present to explain the recorded data. Consistency in using each element's wording, format, and intra-alignment norms will be peer-evaluated by map readers.
2. To provide a beginning map writer with a common mapping review protocol of first individually reading and reviewing the focused-on data before attending a meeting and collaboratively discussing personal findings immediately when the meeting begins.
3. To provide a beginning map writer with the concept of collegial collaboration, both for personal and collective learning and growth since everyone participating gains insight into one another's current understanding and mental models of what constitutes a quality map.
4. To provide a beginning map writer with immediate, positive, and encouraging feedback concerning each element's wording, format, and intra-alignment so that the learning organization can establish consistency and clarity in writing quality maps.

An initial read-through review is conducted by dividing the participating faculty members into small, preplanned teams within individual school sites. All schools within a district may choose to conduct the initial read-through on the same day, or each school may designate its own day and time.

Preplanning is imperative for a successful read-through. There are strategic behind-the-scenes preparations. If you have been designated an initial read-through facilitator, you will want to familiarize yourself with both this document and the Team Member Explanation and How-To Guide (which immediately follows this guide). This secondary document is similar to the information provided here, but it does not contain the preplanning information.

After conducting the initial read-through small-group meetings, combine small-group teams or have all participants gather as one group for a debriefing time. The Initial Read-Through Card Shuffle Debrief activity may spark conversation and encourage the sharing of personal insights and benefits of participating in the initial read-through process.

Initial Read-Through Card Shuffle Debrief Preparation

To prepare for the Card Shuffle Debrief:

- Reproduce the Initial Read-Through Card Shuffle Debrief (found on the last page) either on cardstock or ordinary paper. Note: Each participant will need one set of four cards and directions slip.
- Cut each copy into the four individual cards and a direction strip; fold direction strip in half.
- Place the five pieces in a small, self-sealing plastic bag, or paper clip each set; repeat for remaining sets.

Each participant gets one set of cards. Direct everyone to separate the set of cards, read the direction strip, and personally stack the statement cards as the directions request.

When a designated person signals to flip over the first card, each person reveals his or her top-ranked card. Everyone reads each card to see the similarities and differences in choice. Open conversation ensues regarding the various perceptions of how conducting the review impacted each participant personally. When it feels natural to do so, participants reveal the next card until all cards are revealed and discussion draws to a close.

Preplanning and Preparation

The following time frame includes both preparation and implementation components. The statements preceded by an asterisk indicate facilitator or facilitators and, if including, team leaders' responsibilities.

- Forming preplanned, small-group teams—15 minutes
- Explanation of purpose, process, and expectations to teachers—15 minutes
- Collection, collation, and distribution of initial read-through packets—10–15 minutes *per team*
- Individual pre-read and review of team's initial read-through packet—25–30 minutes
- Participation in the initial read-through meeting—60–90 minutes

Forming Preplanned, Small-Group Teams

Divide participants into predetermined teams based on the following criteria:

- Assign no less than three and no more than six members per team.
- Include a variety of grade levels and content areas per team; vertical, mixed groups are preferred (e.g., Grade 2 Math, Grade 5 Math, Grade 6 Science, Art, Special Education / U.S. History teacher, Algebra II teacher, Introduction to Computer Science teacher, Grade 11 Art teacher).
- Break up cliques and naysayers.
- Consider the emotional dynamics of each planned team's members.

- If possible, pre-designate one person on each team to be the team leader. If a Curriculum Mapping Council is established at each school site, its members are often designated as team leaders. Preferably, a team leader is someone who has had adequate training in quality mapping and the mapping process.

Explanation of Purpose, Process, and Expectations to Teachers

There are two phases to conducting an initial read-through meeting:

- **Phase One:** Individually and privately, team members read and review their small-group team's collection of maps and record commentaries before meeting as a small group.
- **Phase Two:** The pre-designated, small-group teams meet for collaborative dialogue based on the maps and accompanying commentaries.

Before Phase One begins, the facilitator or facilitators need to share with the entire faculty: (a) the four goals for conducting an initial read-through, (b) the two phases of conducting the initial read-through, (c) the fact that quality is based on map readers' ability to correctly interpret a map's data without the map writer present, and (d) a reminder or review of each element's wording, format, and intra-alignment norms.

Collection, Collation, and Distribution of Initial Read-Through Packets

Each member of a small-group team will receive an initial read-through packet. The packet preparation explanation below assumes that a team leader has been designated for each small-group team. If there are no team leaders, the packets will need to be collected, collated, and distributed by the facilitator or facilitators.

- Teachers are informed via e-mail or mailbox reminder slip of the due date for having the designated month's map completed in the mapping system. Each teacher in the small group is responsible for informing the team leader in writing (e-mail or note) of the course name (and depending on the mapping system used, unit name) to be printed out.
- On or soon after the predetermined date, the team leader prints out one copy of each team member's designated map month (or unit) using the mapping system's designated print-map feature. Note: The team leader must also include his or her map month.
- The team leader first collates the map month printouts into one pile. On top of this pile, the team leader places a copy of the Initial Read-Through: Collaborating to Create Quality Maps as the cover sheet (which can be found after the Team Member Explanation on the page 12). Using a copy machine, the team leader makes a single-sided, stapled packet consisting of the cover sheet and the collective maps; one copied set for each team member.
- The team leader delivers a prepared initial read-through packet and a separate copy of the Conducting an Initial Read-Through: Team Member Explanation and How-To Guide (which can be found later in this document after this guide) to each member in person or by placing the document in each team member's mailbox.

- *Optional:* If the school or district has been using a recording-the-elements reminder sheet as a resource, a copy of this may be included with the two documents in case the original may have been misplaced.
- *Optional:* The team leader provides each member with two colors of highlighters to be used during Phase One’s pre-reading and reviewing process.

Individual Pre-Read and Review of Team’s Initial Read-Through Packet

Phase One

To conduct the individual pre-reading review, each team member needs the prepared initial read-through packet, the Conducting an Initial Read-Through: Team Member Explanation and How-To Guide, and two colors of highlighters:

- One color is for highlighting positives found in each map. The other color is for highlighting concerns or needed clarifications:
 - *Positives* are examples in which the map writer’s elemental wording, format, or intra-alignment is properly incorporated. Positives are noted directly on the maps using the highlighter as well as noted using a pen or pencil textually on the cover sheet. Specific examples are critical to the review process. For example, “You did a nice job with your content listings,” is not specific. But this is: “Your first content listing, Informational Text: Current Event Magazines, is descriptive since *current event magazines* tells me the exact type of informational text the students must know for the unit of study.”
 - *Concerns* represent instances in which the map writer’s elemental wording, format, or alignment appears to be incorporated improperly or missing entirely. Specific comments are noted textually on the cover sheet.
 - *Needed clarifications* are textual visual puzzlements in which a map reader could not easily figure out what the map writer was trying to convey or that lead to confusion. These concerns are highlighted as well as noted on the cover sheet.

During the preliminary reading, the first three columns of the cover sheet are completed. During the small-group team meeting the, last column is filled in as part of the meeting process.

Phase Two

If the faculty is meeting as an entire group before separating into small groups, this is an appropriate time to model small-group meeting expectations. Many schools create and present an expectation presentation. The central cooperation theme is that all participants be kind and respectful of one another’s feelings and earnestly focus on the task of providing beneficial feedback that encourages all to write quality maps. For example, Lakeville Public Schools created a *Conducting the Initial Read-Through DVD* (www.CurriculumMapping101.com > Resources), which presents a simulation that not only conveys the desired behavior but also the potential misbehaviors that may be exhibited during a small-group meeting.

Small-group team members should sit in a cooperative-style arrangement (e.g., around a circular or rectangular table). One person needs to be designated the official timekeeper. Because everyone deserves equal time, plan on approximately 5–10 minutes per map writer. A second person needs be designated as the parking lot attendant. This person’s role it to stop any

conversation that strays from the purpose and goals for conducting the initial read-through. For example, if a conversation begins regarding “not enough time is being given to us to map,” the parking lot attendant literally calls out, “Parking lot!” This person then records the mentioned concern or concerns on note-taking paper. The small-group leader immediately gets the team focused back on the task at hand and continues the discussion focused on the wording, format, and intra-alignment of the highlighted person’s map. At the end of the meeting time the parking lot attendant’s notes may be addressed immediately or can be included in a future large-group or small-group meeting.

The designated team leader is first. (If no team leader has been designated, the team will have to select someone.) All team members focus on this member’s map and begin the collaboration by sharing positives about the map’s quality. After everyone shares a specific positive comment the focus shifts to concerns or needed clarifications. It is recommended that the full allotted time is spent on each person’s map. In other words, do not rush through each map. A critical feature of the read-through process is the conversation sparked when reviewing each map. Before moving on to the next team member, everyone records a personal, reflective comment in the last column’s cell on the cover sheet that corresponds with this team member’s map, including the writer of the focused-on map.

The following conversation features a four-member, small-group team. Barbara, the team leader, is the first to request comments from the group:

Barbara: I’ll go first.

Everyone retrieves Barbara’s map from within the packet. Team members prepare to share by using highlighted notations and summary comments.

Beth: You used a capital letter at the beginning of each word for all of the content listings.

Barbara: Thank you.

Nancy: All of the skill statements start with a measurable verb, and you included targets. For example: Differentiate in writing between special and general relativity.

Barbara: Thank you.

Andrea: I noticed when an assessment name did not provide enough information, you included the evaluation summary such as Energy Lab (Evaluation: Checklist/Journal Entry Rubric).

Barbara: Thank you.

Lisa: It was easy to follow your intra-alignment because you used the letter–number coding. (*Points to specific areas in Barbara’s map.*) I know that this content is aligned to these three skills, these two assessments, and these standards. No guesswork here.

Barbara: Thank you.

Important Note: The hardest aspect of this phase of the sharing process is for the map writer to not provide personal thoughts or comments as each person shares a

positive. Notice that Barbara simply said “thank you” each time she was given a compliment. While this may seem trite, it is not. The initial read-through’s key purpose is to encourage collaboration and trust. During the positive sharing, the map writer simply says thank you or nods in acknowledgment. When sharing concerns or needed clarifications, however, the map writer is allowed and encouraged to share personal thoughts and comments based on the team members’ comments.

Barbara: Does anyone have any concerns or needed clarifications about what I wrote?

The floor is open. Team members respectfully share personal notations. It is recommended that if a team member has more than one comment to share, he or she shares only one to begin with so that other team members can also actively participate. Since this is a time to provide constructive feedback, it is important when sharing that the map writer does not feel defensive or put on the spot.

Andrea: I noticed you did not include any resources. Is there a reason you left them out?

Barbara: Honestly, no. I know that I forgot to add them. I just figured I could add them later. Obviously with you noticing they were not there, it tells me I need to add them, for certain, when I am writing my next month’s map.

Nancy: I was a little confused by the last content–skill set. The wording is just about identical for the content and the skill. The descriptor for the content is the same wording as in the skill statement.

Barbara: *(Pauses as she reads the map entry.)* I see what you mean. I know what I was thinking. I just didn’t get it on the map! I can see revising the skill statement’s descriptor so that it lists the various types of energy pertaining to the three categories I included in the content listing. . . . This really is helping me. Is there anything else anyone noticed?

When the open-floor discussion concerning Barbara’s map naturally comes to a close (or a designated time limit is reached), all team members share a final compliment regarding Barbara’s willingness to be open to the team’s comments.

Before moving on to Nancy’s map, each member, including Barbara, writes a self-reflection note concerning the discussion of Barbara’s map in the last column’s cell that corresponds with Barbara’s map. The sharing cycle of specific positives, open-floor concerns or needed clarifications, and recording final thoughts in the last column is repeated until the remaining team members have each had a turn.

Conclusion

After everyone has received feedback, conclude the initial read-through small-group or large-group meeting by conducting the Initial Read-Through Card Shuffle Debrief or other type of closure activity.

A question that often comes up during the debriefing time is: “Do we have to go back and revise the already passed month(s) we recorded so that they are of better quality?” The answer needs to be based on where teachers are in the map-writing process. If the initial read-through is conducted after teachers have mapped all the elements at once for one or two months, revising the months will aid in synthesizing the learning from the initial read-through. If the teachers have mapped one or two elements per month, some teachers prefer to revise previous months’ existing elements, whereas others prefer to simply move forward and focus on mapping the upcoming months using all five elements. If the read-through is part of a Projected Map summer workshop, element revision in all the months is part of the workshop process.

Plan to conclude the review process with a celebration. Food always works well! Creative ideas I have seen include giving everyone a miniature empty chair to remember that doing what is in the students’ best interest includes learning to write quality maps, handing out compact mirrors to reflect on the fact that teachers are learners, too, and handing out a school bus pin or tie tack representing the commitment of getting on the bus and moving forward to reach the goal of a vertical, teacher-designed, dynamic curriculum.

An Optional Second Round

Most teachers still want and appreciate additional feedback after recording the next month’s map. Conducting a second initial read-through round focuses on the same goals, but is accomplished using 21st-century technology. The entire process is accomplished via cyberspace using the mapping system and e-mail.

Procedure

The second round is an excellent opportunity for teachers to be placed in small-group teams comprising of teachers throughout the district since no one has to actually meet in person. This is accomplished by creating new small-group teams using the same criteria as for the original initial read-through, but with a twist.

1. Choose a team leader for each new small group formed. Each team leader acts as a communicator and liaison for one small group’s team members and provides the following information to members via e-mail:
 - who is in the small-group team, which includes the team leader
 - the due date for completion of the designated month’s map in the mapping system
 - a reminder that each member needs to personally e-mail each team member with the course name (and depending on the mapping system, the unit name) of the map to be reviewed
 - the ending date for individually contacting each team member via e-mail to share positives and concerns or needed clarifications about his or her reviewed map.
2. After the ending date of the second-round experience, a read-through facilitator or facilitators conduct an online or e-mail survey asking all participants to comment on what they learned from participating in the second read-through as well as what professional development or additional support they need or desire. After receiving the completed surveys, the facilitator or facilitators share via e-mail the collective survey results.

3. Celebrate the end of second round, too. One way may be to ask a local business to donate free passes or a special coupon for all participants—sent via e-mail to continue the message that much of the mapping process can be conducted online.

Closure

Please be aware that the initial read-through process is designed to focus only on quality map element writing norms. The initial read-through is not meant to be officially conducted *more than two times*. This provides ample opportunity for teachers to collaboratively focus on the mechanics of writing a quality map.

If a learning organization gets stuck in a rut of just focusing on writing a quality map, there is a high probability that momentum for teachers seeing the full value of mapping will be lost. Teachers must start using the maps via the mapping system's search and report features to conduct curriculum reviews. As maps are used while conducting various reviews teachers will naturally continue to improve the quality of the map elements.

The informational handout is an excerpt from, *A Guide to Curriculum Mapping: Planning, Implementing, and Sustaining the Process*.
Hale, 2008. Corwin Press.

Initial Read-Through Card Shuffle Debrief

Directions: Rank statements by stacking the four cards: top card represents the *most important* comment regarding the initial read-through experience; bottom card represents the *least important* comment. Do not allow team members to see your card ranking until signaled to reveal *one card at a time* starting with the most important comment.

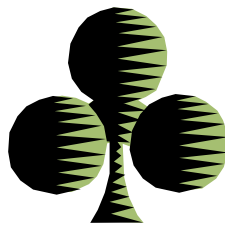
Striving for quality map wording, format, and intra-alignment is important since we will be reading maps *without the map writers present.*



Collaboration and curricular dialogue adds depth to *needed communication* regarding our students' learning continuum.



I am not the only one struggling with *doing this right.* Having an opportunity to assist one other in writing quality maps is helpful.



Having to first individually read and review the map data *before* attending added an important reflective dimension to our collaboration.

