How Quarterly Professional Development Cycles Helped a Network Maximize Data-Driven Co-Planning for Co-Teachers

GREEN DOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EXPLORE THE COLLECTION

The practice of co-planning helps build collaboration between general and special education teams. Explore ***Opening Doors to Collaboration***.

Snapshot

WHAT IS THE PRACTICE?

The coordination and implementation of quarterly professional development days for co-teaching teams that blend professional learning with intentional co-planning time. These facilitated days create purposeful time for teams to connect, reflect on student data with a student work analysis template, expand knowledge of high-leverage co-teaching models, and design instruction using those models for the upcoming quarter.

Each day includes four core components:

- Completion of a student work analysis protocol
- Facilitated professional learning with the coach
- In-depth planning time for the co-teaching pair
- Group debrief and reflection

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Quarterly co-planning days have:

- improved the ability of co-teaching teams to use student data and high-leverage co-teaching models to effectively address student needs,
- improved the relationships between co-teachers, and
- built a school-wide perception that co-planning is a positive practice.

These factors contributed to a 25-point increase in the percentage of students with disabilities who passed every class with a C or better at Ánimo Watts College Preparatory Academy.



"[Regular quarterly co-planning days] give us time to plan in more depth and address student learning gaps that we otherwise rarely have the time to focus on."

— QUINTAN, GREEN DOT CO-TEACHER, OSCAR DE LA HOYA CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL



Co-teaching in action at Green Dot Ánimo Watts

The Challenge

How can schools best protect and use co-planning time?

Glynis, the improvement lead and instructional coach at Green Dot Public Schools in Los Angeles, CA, knew that when Green Dot's co-teaching teams were able to regularly step away from the classroom and strategically co-plan instruction, learning outcomes improved for their students with disabilities.

Despite this fact, and even though a weekly co-planning period for co-teaching teams was scheduled, it was increasingly challenging for the co-teaching teams to use the planning periods to actually plan their instruction. This was especially true during COVID-19, when new demands regularly took over planning periods and teachers no longer had the flexibility to check in informally throughout their days.

Additionally, Glynis observed that when co-teaching teams could carve out a planning period — whether a weekly planning block or quarterly planning day — the teams did not consistently use data to inform the design of instruction, leading to less effective co-teaching in the classroom.

She needed a new solution.

Glynis needed to find a way to ensure that regular planning time for co-teachers was held sacred, that co-teachers felt supported by the school in their skill development, and that co-teachers were deepening their data-driven instructional planning and co-teaching practices through bite-sized coaching.

Essential Terms

Co-teachers are collaborating teachers who plan and teach a course together. They are equally responsible for the class, whereas other collaborating teachers may support from separate spaces.

Co-planning is relevant and important whether instructional support is delivered via co-teaching, push-in, pull-out, consultant teacher support, or a combination of these services

The Practice

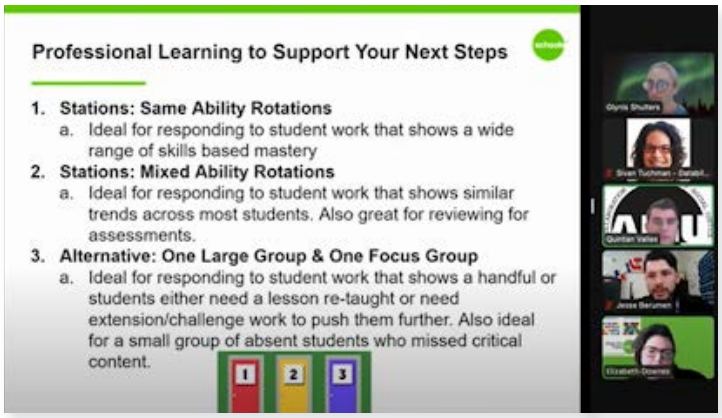
Quarterly co-planning days give teachers much-needed time to co-plan.

Green Dot's quarterly co-planning days were designed as a pilot to gather teachers for protected time for development and instructional planning. Now, after several years of implementation and revision, the practice follows a specific and targeted structure for the four components of quarterly co-planning that Glynis and the Green Dot team learned — from experience, observation, and teacher feedback — were most critical for co-teacher success:

1. **Completion of a student work analysis protocol.** The co-teaching pair starts the day together with a student work analysis facilitated by their coach (either in-person or virtually), analyzing student data to inform needs for instruction. The coach guides the teaching pair to select either the most effective model of co-teaching to meet the needs that appear in the student work analysis

session or the model most of interest to the pair for their growth and development. The pair's selection guides their instructional planning and determines the priorities for the day's professional development.

2. **Facilitated professional development.** After the co-teaching pair selects an area of focus for their professional learning, the coach facilitates a mini-lesson to deliver the content. This content comes from the **coach's prepared, on-demand instruction** playlist designed to build co-teachers' skill and knowledge in **high-leverage co-teaching models**, which they can immediately plan into their upcoming lessons.
3. **In-depth planning time.** Following the professional learning time, the teaching pair has more than half of the day set aside for in-depth planning. During this time, the pair works together in a predesignated space that is distraction-free and held sacred for their focused planning. Their coach is available to join them to answer questions or guide them through challenges they may face.
4. **Group reflection and debrief.** At the end of the day, the pair meets again with their coach to share progress, reflect on their takeaways, and debrief the day. The pair can elect to share an artifact from their planning day, such as a unit or lesson plan they have developed. Finally, they complete an exit survey to share feedback on the day's process for continuous improvement.



Green Dot co-teachers select a co-teaching model to guide their professional development and instructional planning, with guidance from Glynis, their instructional coach.

Green Dot's Co-Planning Day Structure

8:00 a.m.–9:15 a.m.
Partner Set Up Time

Partners use this time to take care of any needs in regard to sub plans, student needs, gathering and organizing co-planning materials, collecting and organizing student work samples, and conducting any individual planning or organizing that is needed to ensure success of the day.

9:15 a.m.–10:15 a.m.
Co-teachers Meet with Glynis Virtually on Zoom

This time focuses on using a student work analysis protocol to analyze the most recent formative or summative assessment data and using this data talk to inform what co-teaching model to choose to focus on to address the needs identified in student work. This time is designed to be customized to meet the specific needs of the co-teaching pair.

10:15 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
Co-Plan with Partner

Take lunch and breaks as needed in this block.

3:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Closing with Glynis on Zoom

This is a time for sharing reflections, discussing next steps, and completing an exit slip.

How Green Dot Implemented the Practice

Creating a Schedule

To begin the pilot, Glynis first tackled scheduling. She collaborated with school leaders to confirm that co-teachers had common planning days in the school calendar. To ensure co-teaching teams had the coverage needed to consistently attend quarterly, full-day co-planning, school leadership worked closely with Green Dot network staff to build a large substitute teacher pool.

Later, with learning from the pilot, Glynis created a systemized process for scheduling co-planning days that has become part of the infrastructure for the practice. The process requires close collaboration with school leadership and co-teachers to schedule the days well in advance. It has five basic steps:

Green Dot's Scheduling of Co-Planning Days

Step 1: Coach sends scheduling options to school site administrators.

Between August and September, Glynis sends site administrators a list of options for co-planning days for each quarter. The options are based on coach availability, school vacations, other school and network events, and school culture (for example, Mondays are avoided in order to keep a consistent schedule for students).

Step 2: Site administrators confirm dates.

The site administrators confirm whether the list of optional dates will work for their sites in two waves: by late August for the first quarter and by mid-September for quarters 2–4.

Step 3: Teachers sign up for co-planning days.

Teachers receive the list of options for co-planning days and select their preferred dates via a Signup Genius. If the available dates do not work for a teaching pair, they can email the coach directly, who will coordinate a separate date with the co-teachers and their administrator.

Step 4: Teachers request substitute teacher coverage.

After selecting their preferred dates, co-teachers email their school's office manager to inform them of the upcoming co-planning professional development days. The office manager then coordinates with substitute teaching agencies to secure coverage.

Step 5: Teachers craft coverage plans.

Finally, co-teachers craft coverage plans for any classes they will be missing and reserve a private space in which to work together during their planning day.

Co-teacher Summer	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Day 1: • Content and planning time (teacher led sessions offered) **Day 2:** • Facilitated Co-planning Day	**AM** • Overview/ framing • Strong start partner check in • Goal setting • Overview of SWA and how to use through the year **AM-PM** • Co-planning block with your partner **PM** • Reflection	**AM** • Student work analysis • Co-teaching Model Self Selection & mini professional development **AM-PM** • Co-planning block with your partner **PM** • Reflection	**AM** • Student work analysis • Co-teaching Model Self Selection & mini professional development **AM-PM** • Co-planning block with your partner **PM** • Reflection	**AM** • Student work analysis • Co-teaching Model Self Selection & mini professional development **AM-PM** • Co-planning block with your partner **PM** • Reflection

Green Dot's 2023–24 Quarterly Co-Planning Day Calendar Overview

Strategic Scheduling Considerations

When scheduling co-planning days, plan around school events to ensure teachers can make use of a full release day for collaborative planning and development. Consider the weekly school calendar for shortened days, such as early-release collaboration days. Avoid irregular calendar weeks, such as interim or state assessment weeks or parent-teacher conference weeks. Finally, plan around the school calendar for major activities and field trips.

Refining the Co-Planning Day Structure

In their third year using the practice, and with the new scheduling system in place, Glynis turned her attention to fine-tuning structures to help co-teachers build their data-driven instructional planning practices. The Green Dot team had previously identified a bright spot in student grades at Ánimo Watts College Preparatory Academy, which, once investigated, appeared to be connected to the development and integration of a **student work analysis protocol** with school-level teams. Glynis adapted the pilot quarterly co-planning day structure and coaching agenda to integrate the student work analysis protocol so that co-teachers could drive instructional planning from that data. Glynis also added a mini-lesson component to her morning sessions with co-teachers that allowed teams to choose to learn more about an instructional practice they wanted to build. These changes meant that the professional development provided by co-planning days aligned to school-level tools and routines, reinforcing their standard use across teams, and remained highly informed by and tailored to the unique needs of each co-teaching pair. Co-teaching teams then worked to design lessons using the new practice during their co-planning time later in the day.

How the Student Work Analysis Protocol is Embedded in the Co-Planning Day

- **Step 1:** Teachers select recent student work representative of all student subgroups, such as recent exit tickets, quizzes, or assessments.
- **Step 2:** Teachers describe the work sample, the context behind the work, and the standards they aimed to address in their instruction.
- **Step 3:** Teacher teams review the work samples and descriptions to identify what they "notice" and "wonder" about the student work.
- **Step 4:** Teacher teams select a high-leverage **co-teaching model** that addresses the needs identified in the student work analysis, and the coach delivers a targeted, on-demand mini-lesson on the selected model to deepen co-teachers' understanding and to help ensure effective implementation.
- **Step 5:** Utilizing the selected co-teaching model, teacher teams plan instruction and/or interventions to address the identified student needs.
- **Step 6 [Optional]:** Teacher teams create an artifact that represents their instructional plans, which they can use for reflection with their coach later in the day.

For more information on the practice of student work analysis, see ***A Collaborative Approach to Student Work Analysis***.

Evaluating the Practice for Continuous Improvement

Throughout Green Dot's implementation of quarterly co-planning days — from the pilot to the present — Glynis and the team have gathered feedback and data to monitor effectiveness and improve the development of the practice. Feedback collected from co-teaching pairs focuses on three key areas: **Use of Time, Impact of Time,** and **Ideas for Improvement.**

To collect this feedback, Glynis provides teams with an exit ticket survey at the end of each co-planning day. The survey contains a rating scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) and open-ended questions such as the following:

USE OF TIME	IMPACT OF TIME	IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
• The morning framing and goal-setting session was helpful in guiding our co-planning session focus today. • Our time co-planning as a pair was a productive use of our time. • My relationship with my co-teacher was enhanced by today's session.	• How did today's co-planning day impact your planning for your classroom? • What will be different in your class this week due to today's facilitated co-planning day?	• What could be changed or improved to enhance your experience? • What topics do you need support with for future planning?

The Impact: Spreading Within and Beyond Green Dot California

The practice of quarterly co-planning days, with embedded student work analysis and customized professional development, has been a huge success. **Since its implementation, class passage rates of a C+ or higher nearly tripled for students with disabilities.**

Further, recent survey results show teachers value the practice. **One hundred percent of the participating co-teachers stated that the day was a constructive use of their time.** Additionally, 100% of the co-teachers noted that the co-planning day improved their relationship with their co-teacher.

Glynis has continued to facilitate quarterly co-planning days to a growing positive reception. One participant described co-planning days' many benefits:



"We are able to be much more intentional with our planning. [It's] really helpful to have actual sit-down time to strategize and reflect on student learning. With dealing with new curriculum and new grading practices and policies, it helps to have a thought partner in how to approach student learning, what to cut, what to include, and how to include reteach opportunities in the class."

In addition, quarterly co-planning days have positively influenced the culture across the Green Dot network. At the end of the 2022–23 school year, staff, administrators, and teachers shared, via survey results, that co-planning days are considered to be highly valuable and that co-planning is a positive practice.

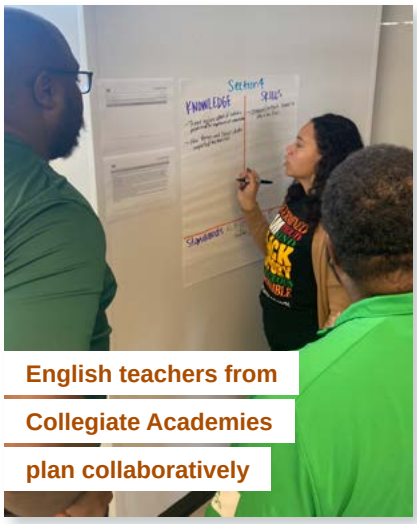
This may be because, as Glynis and the co-teachers have observed, the quarterly co-planning days provide a different type of professional development than what teachers had previously received from their coaches and administrators, all of whom have different expertise, passions, and needs. Because co-planning during the week can often be cut short by the length of prep periods or competing priorities, the quarterly co-planning days provide the teachers with deep, focused practice and support for using the student work analysis protocol that they may not otherwise receive. Teachers also appreciated the extent to which their needs and preferences drove the focus of the professional development provided within their co-planning days, rather than it being directed solely by Glynis.



Co-teaching in action at Green Dot Ánimo Watts

Based on this success, Green Dot will continue to build the culture of co-planning across the network. In the 2023–24 school year, Green Dot will spread the practice of co-planning with student work analysis to two more campuses, increasing the number of co-teaching pairs from 10 to 18. Additional co-teachers will try using student work analysis protocols on a more frequent, biweekly basis. Finally, Glynis will work to determine the most aligned measurement of efficacy between co-planning days and student learning outcomes.

The practice is also spreading to other school districts within the Networked Improvement Community (NIC). **Collegiate Academies** in Louisiana adopted co-planning days for the 2023–24 school year after collaborating with Green Dot and the NIC co-teaching professional learning community. The academic program team at Collegiate adapted the practice of co-planning days to convene co-teachers two weeks before the launch of a new unit, starting with six courses of focus: Algebra I, Geometry, English I, English II, Biology, and US History. The co-planning day takes a course-level approach to both content standards and curriculum, as well as planning for accessibility of diverse learners in the way co-teachers apply Universal Design for Learning, specially designed instruction, high-impact co-teaching models, and student accommodations. The **agenda** includes morning sessions focused on data reflection and the modeling of exemplary co-teaching using an upcoming course unit. Later, co-teaching teams have dedicated time to apply the content to their **co-planning and practice**. The Collegiate team continues to build out their implementation with tools and coaching resources, including the **co-teaching scope and sequence and co-teaching vignettes** to illustrate models of strong co-teaching.



English teachers from Collegiate Academies plan collaboratively

The impact of the offsite days has been seen in strong increases in teacher's execution of co-teaching models and in the frequency of co-planning. In addition, as of December 2023, student achievement data was pacing 30% ahead compared to the same week of instruction a year prior, putting Collegiate on track to exceed their annual goal for the academic performance (measured by GPA and course mastery) of students with disabilities and English language learners.

FURTHER LEARNING

Example Co-Planning Day Training Deck

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Green Dot Student Work Analysis Template

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Example English I and II Training Deck

COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES

To learn more about how collaborative teaming structures can help you improve learning outcomes for students with disabilities and develop your teachers, see *Opening Doors to Collaboration*.

Green Dot Public Schools California *serves approximately 10,000 students in grades 6–12 across Los Angeles, CA. Focal schools for the practice included Ánimo Watts College Preparatory Academy and Ánimo Mae Jemison Charter Middle School.*

Green Dot Public Schools is a part of the ***Marshall Street Networked Improvement Community,*** *a three-year intentional community of 10 public charter school networks nationwide aiming to make dramatic gains for Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty. Collectively, the 10 networks identified over 20 best practices that improve learning outcomes and school culture for students positioned furthest from opportunity. Learn more here.*