

Asset-Focused Co-Noticing Tool: Huddling Primer

Teacher noticing is central to equity-oriented mathematics teaching because what teachers attend to and how they *interpret* what they notice, shapes the instructional decisions they make (e.g., Louie et al., 2021; van Es et al., 2021). Principled noticing and responding in-the-moment is complex and requires ongoing learning and refinement. This can be difficult to “practice” because classrooms are complex and fast-moving. Furthermore, noticing is largely invisible work. You cannot observe a lesson and “see” when, what or how another teacher is noticing.

The Asset-Focused Co-Noticing Tool (ACT): Huddling is a protocol designed to create intentional opportunities for teachers to collaboratively practice asset-focused noticing during instruction. The tool guides teachers to pause in the moment, reflect on what they are noticing, and consider the implications in relation to students’ mathematical learning, participation and identities. The goal is to make teachers’ in-the-moment thinking visible to one another and open up space for collective inquiry and learning about students, teaching, and equity as the lesson unfolds in order to support more intentional decision-making.

The tool has three parts:

- **Part 1, Prepare to Co-Learn:** The MT and TC select an equity-specific lens for noticing during the lesson and make plans for when they will meet up to “huddle” during the lesson.
- **Part 2, Huddle During Instruction:** The MT and TC meet up to “huddle” at various points during the lesson to share observations and make instructional decisions.
- **Part 3, Debrief:** The MT and TC debrief to reflect on how their noticing and decision making related to their equity goals.

An Example:

Part 1: Prepare to Co-Learn (~7-10 min)

TC Christy and MT Robin sit side by side with a copy of *ACT: Huddling* between them to plan for their co-learning. They are working on making tens with their first graders. Students will be shown different “trains” (i.e., lengths) of 6, 9 & 4 Unifix cubes under the document camera and then be asked: “How many more do I need to make a ten?”

Part 1 (Before Instruction)

Choose a focal question & plan for huddles



STEP 1

Choose a focal question to support your co-noticing during the lesson. Use this question to challenge your assumptions and biases about students and the mathematical ideas you privilege.

- Who is expressing their ideas? What are they sharing? Whose ideas are not being heard? Why?
- How are students interacting with one another? Who is included? Who is excluded? Why?
- What partial understandings do students offer? How are these ideas mathematically rich and relevant?
- What divergent or creative approaches do students offer? How might these contributions support the group's collective learning?

STEP 2

Plan for in-the-moment huddles

- Given our focal question, are there any specific patterns related to students' racial, socio-economic, gender and/or linguistic identities we want to pay attention to?
- How will we capture what we're noticing? What, if any information do we want to collect?
- When during the lesson will we huddle to check-in and share what we're noticing?
- What kinds of decision(s) could we make based on our noticing to leverage the assets of students often excluded or marginalized in math classrooms?



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MT Robin and TC Christy decide they are interested in co-noticing around focal question d: *“What divergent or creative approaches do students offer? How might these contributions support the group’s collective learning?”* They are hoping this lens will support them in bringing new voices into class discussions.

They spend some time anticipating student strategies. Then, they make a plan for when they will meet up to huddle:

MT Robin: Let’s meet up right after the first “6 train.”

TC Christy: Okay, and then if we need to, we can meet up again after they try 9 cubes to share if we’re seeing anything else.

MT Robin: Okay, sounds good.

Part 2: Co-Notice *During Instruction* (~ 1-2 min)

TC Christy and MT Robin circulate around the classroom as students work on the number train tasks. After the 6 train, they meet up to share what they are noticing about students’ strategies.

MT Robin: I saw Bea used the fingers down strategy, which I’d like to have her share.

TC Christy: Oh, nice! Rose used a strategy of counting on from the bigger number, so I’d like to share that one, too. Um, Claire is still counting by ones, but it was more efficient this time. It was faster.

MT Robin: Same with Izzy and I wonder if using the unifix cubes next time will help her be able to touch them and group them.

TC Christy: Yep. Yeah, okay. Here we go--let’s check in again after the next problem.



Part 3: Debrief (~7-10)

TC Christy and MT Robin meet during their planning period to debrief what they learned about students from their noticing and what they plan to do in the future.



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TC Christy: So, I checked in with Izzy again. She was looking at the cubes up on the doc cam, and getting frustrated. So, I just brought over some unifix cubes. And I was like- same thing you were saying- 'How many unifix cubes do you see? What is the number?' And she used a known fact. 'I know there's five and four, and that makes nine.'

MT Robin: Oh great! We were wondering about that.

TC Christy: It was incredible. And then I posed to her, 'How many more to make 10?' she giggled. She's like, 'Haha, that's one.'

MT Robin: It's interesting that there- she was having a difficult time accessing when it was projected. But it came so quickly when she had, when she had the cubes in front of her.

TC Christy: She just touched it and looked at it for maybe like 10 seconds and was like, 'This is five plus four.'

MT Robin: So the next step for us would probably be knowing- having that experience with her- does she need to have that moment of struggle without the tool? Or is that a tool that we just provide to immediately give her access?

TC Christy: Yeah. It's interesting--because I feel like she often says to herself, 'This is challenging for me. I'm not going to try it.'

MT Robin: Right. So maybe, until she builds that confidence in her thinking and has practice with this, we just keep providing manipulatives.

Part 3 (After Instruction)

Reflect on what happened and make new plans



Directions: Use the prompts below to debrief your co-learning. Challenge yourselves to use specific evidence from the lesson to support your reflections and ideas.

Reflect on Huddles and Decision Making in this Lesson:

- Discuss our huddles and what we noticed related to our focal question(s).
- How were our assumptions and biases about students' participation and/or mathematical ideas challenged by what we noticed? What surprised us? Why?
- What decisions did we make based on what we noticed? How did these decisions support students' learning?

Identify Insights to Build on in Future Lessons:

- How did our focal questions support our noticing? What might we focus on next?
- What do we want to try next to leverage and center students' mathematical assets?
- What new ideas or questions do we have about equity-oriented instruction?

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For more information about our co-learning tools including related resources and publications, please visit our website: www.colearnemt.org

References

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