

The Seven-Step Review Process

- 1. Collecting the Data
- 2. First Read-Through
- 3. Small Group Review
- 4. Large Group Comparisons
- 5. Determine Immediate Revision Points
- 6. Determine Points Requiring Research and Planning
- 7. Plan for Next Review

Jacobs, H.H. (1997). *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment K-12*. ASCD.

An important realization is that the Seven-Step Review Process is based on *five meeting principles*:

1. Based on a predetermined review focus, a large group is formed with small groups predefined within the large group.
2. Appropriate curriculum maps and other forms of data are first studied individually by each review team member. Personal notes are taken and brought to a small-group meeting.
3. Individual findings are collaboratively shared and discussed during the small-group meeting. Key discussion points, comments, and suggestions are recorded. Each small group's meeting summary is given or made available to each large-group member. Each member individually reads the collective commentaries before the large-group meeting commences.
4. The large group collaboratively discusses the data, findings, and commentaries. Decisions made are either immediately implemented or designated as needing further exploration. If exploration is necessary, the focus is revisited until decisions can be effectively made.
5. Once decisions have been made and actions taken, the large group is disbanded. The review team may someday meet again if a new or previous focus warrants participation from the same large-group members.

A second realization is that Jacobs's Review Process Model works well with, or without, the use of map data.

Before a formal review begins, *pre-planning steps* need to take place:

1. Determine the review's key focus and/or purpose (problem, issue, or concern).
2. *Based on focus/purpose*, determine who will collectively participate in the large group and how will the small groups be divided up.
3. Determine the data that needs to be collected for the given review focus/purpose. It may *take time* before the review can begin since the necessary data *may not exist* at the onset of the desire to conduct the review.

The Review Steps

Step 1: Collecting the Data

The review focus will determine the necessary data. The data may include one type of map or multiple types as well as other data sources. At times, *collecting* data may be figurative rather than literal when using various search and report features in a mapping system. Unless hard copies are personally desired or requested for the small- or large-group meetings, the data may not need to be printed out from the mapping system.

When curriculum maps are involved in the review, the mapping system's search and report features often play a role during Step 2's first read-through. Therefore, each team member must independently become familiar and comfortable with using the system's features. If there are additional sources involved in the review process, each member needs to be provided hard-copy documents or given information regarding how to personally retrieve the data prior to Step 2.

Step 2: First Read-Through

Each review team member privately reads through the designated maps and, if appropriate, other data sources. Members may choose to print out specific search and report results from the mapping system and bring them to the small-group meeting. This can be done at the discretion of the reviewer, or it can be a part of the review process. If the latter, indication of the type of report(s) needed is included in the informational or procedural packet. During this personal reflective inquiry time, each member responds in writing to the predetermined focus questions.

Step 3: Small-Group Review

A small group usually consists of two to eight members. Exceeding eight members is not recommended because it can lead to a decrease in total-group participation and interaction. A small-group leader may be preselected or designated at the onset of the meeting.

A recorder takes notes based on individual findings and collaborative comments. These notations may be recorded longhand or in an electronic format such as Microsoft Word.

If a network server is accessible to all large-group members, each small group team's electronic document may be saved to a predesignated networked file. All members can then access the file to read each small-group review team's notes. If each team's notes are recorded longhand, a hard copy needs to be distributed to each member of the large group.

The length of time for this meeting is dependent on variables such as the focus, the amount of data to be discussed, the number of and collegial abilities of team members, and the drafted timeline for the entire seven steps. Whatever time limit is established for conducting the small-group review, selecting a timekeeper is advised.

Step 4: Large-Group Comparison

All small-group review teams' notes are personally read and compared by each team member before the large-group meeting begins. If a facilitator has not already been determined, when the large group commences its meeting, a facilitator should be selected to keep the review focus in the forefront of the group conversation. A designated large-group recorder takes notes to document the conversations and decisions made or planned.

Depending on the total number of review members, everyone may be able to work together as an entire group throughout the meeting. However, if the group is quite large, when discussing specific points it may be best to subdivide into smaller groups using the same or different configurations from those used in Step 3.

Given the focus, this step is intended for the review team to determine the best solution(s) by comparing and discussing the small-group findings. If the solution(s) can be integrated straight away regarding curriculum design, instructional practice, or environmental changes, the review begins to incorporate Step 5 into the large-group meeting. If the large group determines that the focus needs further or expanded exploration before solutions can be reached, the review team first follows the procedures involved in Step 6.

Step 5: Immediate Revision

Now that the large group has collaboratively come to agreement on a solution or solutions, actions can be taken. Once everyone is clear on what those actions are, the recorder documents the decisions made. If necessary, a timeline for the actions and faculty members who will be the accountability leaders are determined. Once Step 5's discussions have been completed and actions have been documented, which may take more than one meeting, the review process moves to Step 7.

Step 6: Research and Development

As mentioned in Step 4, if the large group cannot yet come to agreement on an immediate solution or solutions, it must identify the area or areas of concern that need research and development. The large group forms a temporary task force to investigate. It may not be possible to officially determine the task force members during the large-group meeting since people who are not members of the review team may need to be invited to participate in the task force. During the large-group meeting, what can be determined are the task force's expectations, timelines, and management for disseminating new information.

The initial large-group meeting concludes by announcing the next planned large-group meeting date. All members should receive periodic research and development information from the task force via e-mail or hard copy that is they must individually read before attending any new meetings.

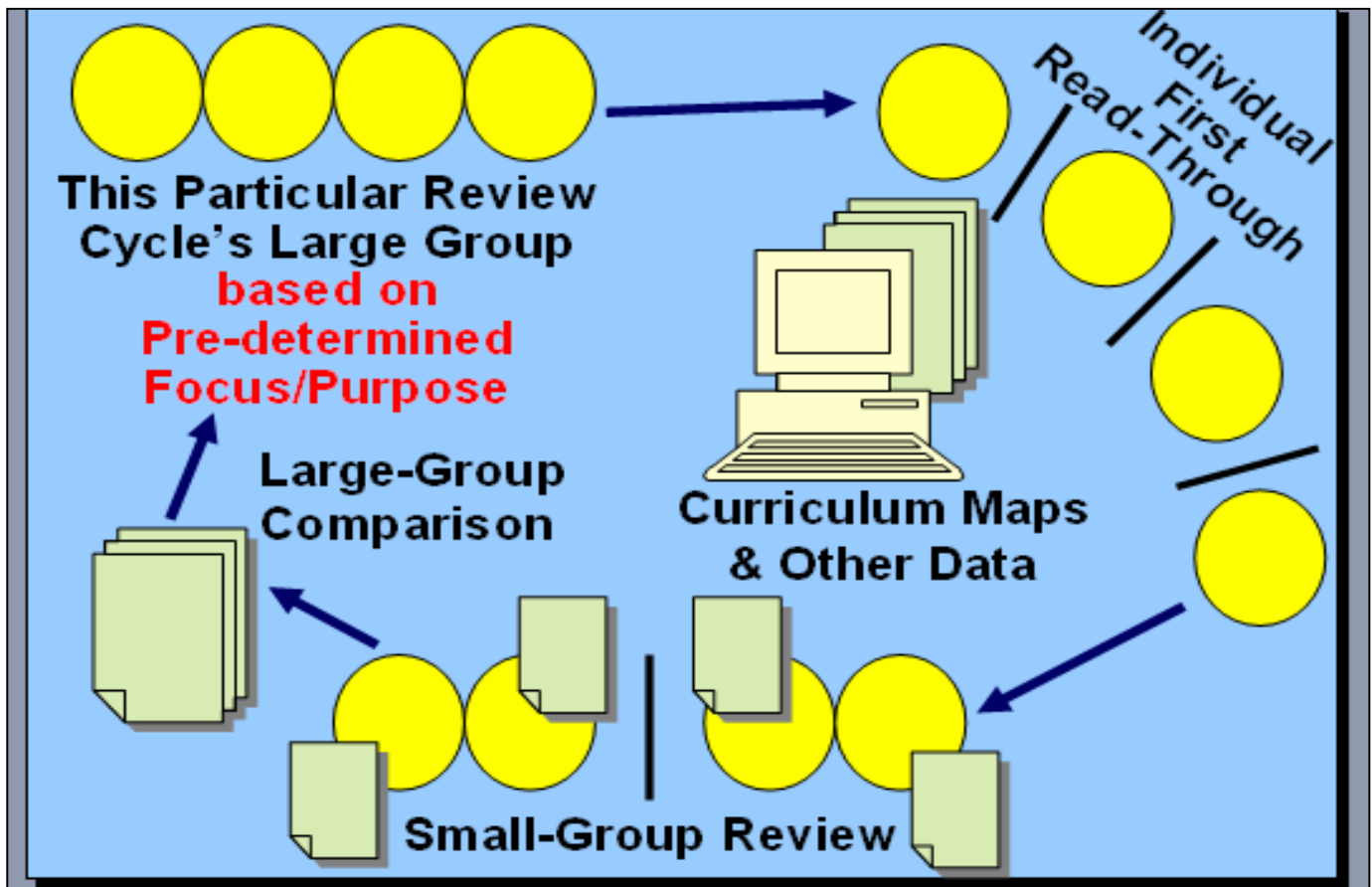
Step 6 may take a few meetings or longer, depending on the depth of the task force's assignment, before the large group is able to reach a final solution or solutions. When finally accomplished, procedures in Step 5 are carried out and the review proceeds to Step 7.

Step 7: New Review Considerations

There are no long-term committees in curriculum mapping. The right people meet for the right reason at the right time (Jacobs 1997, 2004b). Therefore, once the problem, issue, or concern has been resolved and appropriate actions have been carried out, the large-group review team is disbanded. The same is true for a task force that may have been formed during Step 6. This is not to say that a large group or a task force will never meet again. A future problem, issue, or concern may warrant the same people being involved in another review. Likewise, the same large group may need to reconvene to revisit an earlier review focus.

Review Steps are an excerpt from, *A Guide to Curriculum Mapping: Planning, Implementing, and Sustaining the Process*. Hale, 2008. Corwin Press.

Visual Model of the Review Process Concept



Seven-Step Review Process Planning Sheet

Review Process Steps	Timeline/Dates
Pre-Determined Focus <i>(Specific Problem, Issue, Concern)</i>	
Large-Group Team Members <i>(Specific Names and Roles)</i>	
Small-Group Team Configurations <i>(*Facilitator / **Recorder—Electronic/Handout?)</i>	
Step 1: Collect the Data <i>(What is strategically needed?)</i>	
Step 2: First Read-Through <i>(What directions/recording sheets needed?)</i>	
Step 3: Small-Group Review <i>(Where is each small-group team meeting? Meeting time limit?)</i>	
Step 4: Large-Group Comparison / Step 5: Immediate Revision Points <i>(Where is meeting being held? Meeting time limit? Facilitator/Recorder)</i>	
Step 6: Research and Development Task Force <i>(Necessity to be determined during Step 4)</i>	
Step 7: Plan for a Next Review <i>Celebrate!</i>	