Summative Assessment Data Reflection Guide

# Overview

This guide helps classroom teachers analyze and respond to student performance in summative assessments. It is used as part of collaborative reflections on instruction in professional learning communities (PLCs). This guide is drawn from the practices at **C.E. Rose PreK-8 School** (AZ).[[1]](#footnote-2)

**Who this is for**: This tool is intended for Tier 1 classroom teachers (those responsible for delivering primary instruction to all students in a general education setting). It is also relevant for any educators seeking to enhance their teaching through data-driven insights and collaborative planning.

**When to use it**: The tool should be used after major units of learning. Given the time commitment, leaders should allow enough time to measure change and conduct adequate planning and execution between uses. It is used as part of the preparation for PLC reflections on instruction. Teachers can apply it to analyze student performance and plan for subsequent lessons**.**

**How to use it:** Tier 1 classroom teachers should review summative assessment data and identify performance trends. During PLC meetings, teachers discuss insights from the data, plan targeted interventions and scaffolds for upcoming lessons, and ensure a student-centered approach to address unfinished learning.

# Best Practices

Engaging with this tool effectively requires adopting several best practices to ensure meaningful analysis of assessment data and to inform instructional decisions, including the following:

* **Balanced focus:** Strike a balance between identifying areas of improvement and recognizing students’ strengths. Avoid overemphasizing test preparation and ensure a comprehensive understanding of student performance.
* **Data depth:** Thoroughly examine overall test components, results, and performance quartiles to gain a holistic view of student achievement levels.
* **Content analysis:** For math, scrutinize which question types that students excelled in and struggled with as a class. Focus on identifying barriers that hinder success rather than just pinpointing correct or incorrect answers. In literacy, scrutinize which texts and tasks students excelled in and struggled with as a class. Identify why: Was it knowledge/vocabulary, syntax, or format?
* **Question expansion:** Reflect on question types not currently being asked that should be included in future instruction. Ensure that questions promote critical thinking and active student engagement.
* **Planning for success:** Develop clear knowledge statements from the student’s perspective. Craft understanding and reasoning statements that align with identified knowledge gaps. Craft understanding and reasoning statements that align with areas for student growth. Choose Tier 2 vocabulary that spans subject areas and focus on opportunities for deliberate practice.[[2]](#footnote-3)
* **Just-in-time learning:** Integrate identified elements into upcoming lessons, focusing on timely and targeted instruction rather than front-loading content. Ensure students can immediately apply the knowledge and skills to grade-level tasks.

# Potential Outcomes

Reflecting on assessments in a timely manner can support some of the following outcomes:

**Targeted instruction:** Teachers can identify specific areas where students are struggling and plan targeted interventions to address those gaps. In this way, teachers can ensure that students get only the interventions they need—no more, no less—so that time isn’t wasted filling in gaps that don’t exist.

**Improved student performance:** By addressing identified unfinished learning and leveraging students' strengths, instructional adjustments can lead to improved student performance on future assessments.

**Asset-based feedback:** The ability to provide feedback that highlights both strengths and areas for growth fosters a positive learning environment, encouraging students to take ownership of their learning. Feedback should be:[[3]](#footnote-4)

* **Timely:** In the moment is best, but as close to when the learning happened as possible.
* **Specific:** Feedback is delivered with concrete examples and suggestions.
* **Constructive but not overly critical:** Assume the positive intent of the learner and point out smart thinking, even if refinement is needed.
* **Purpose/goal-driven:** Students should know how implementing this feedback will help them in the long run.
* **Forward-thinking:** What should you do **next** time instead of what happened this time/last time?
* **Metacognitive:** Feedback that prompts reflection on process orientation and thinking is key for sustainability.

**Higher-order thinking:** Expanded questioning techniques encourage students to engage in metacognition, promoting deeper understanding and application of knowledge.

# Summative Assessment Analysis Planning Protocol

The protocol has three sections: (1) Assessment Analysis, (2) Types of Questions and Student Feedback, and (3) Instructional Planning. Sections 1 and 2 guide teachers to unpack and reflect on the most recent summative assessment before moving into planning for upcoming learning. Teachers should use the reflections from sections 1 and 2 to plan for upcoming new content in section 3. Italicized sections provide advice on how to approach and support reflection.

## 1. Assessment Analysis

This section’s purpose is to use quantitative and qualitative data to gain a holistic view of student achievement with an asset-based lens. The information gathered should help identify trends in student success and the instructional decisions that led to those successes. This analysis should also support future instructional planning by naming opportunities for learning acceleration and student thinking.

### Overall Analysis of Test Results:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance | 0–25% | 26%–50% | 51%–75% | 76%–100% |
| Number of Students |  |  |  |  |
| Percent of Students | What % of your class fell in this quartile? | What % of your class fell in this quartile? | What % of your class fell in this quartile? | What % of your class fell in this quartile? |

### Analysis of Quantitative Measures:

This analysis can focus on items that can be measured quantitatively and/or with data dashboards. For example: How did students perform on constructed response questions versus multi-select multiple-choice questions versus single-select multiple-choice questions?

*Be careful with this section during implementation. Too much focus on this section can turn into heavy test preparation. We want to ensure our students are prepared for exams, but we don’t want to focus only on that. Our goal is to identify if there are barriers in the types of questions that are keeping students from demonstrating success. This is also an opportunity to name an area of improvement and what specific instructional moves led to the growth seen.*

### Analysis of Qualitative Measures of Complexity:

This analysis is meant to look beyond the data dashboards and shift from analysis to planning future instruction. To complete this section, you will need to have a copy of the assessment and may also have multiple examples of student work to support your analysis of student thinking.

* For literacy, analyze the text(s) used within the assessment in order to identify elements of grade-level text complexity (text structure, language features, knowledge demands) and how those elements of [complexity](https://achievethecore.org/page/2725/text-complexity) impacted student performance.
* When analyzing complexity in math, it is best to go beyond just an analysis by standard. You want to review how the complexity of mathematics shifts/grows throughout the assessment and then how students responded to the different levels of complexity. Analysis of student understanding within the different levels of complexity may include specific strategies, models, or representations. It may also include overall strengths or areas of opportunity aligned with conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and/or application of mathematical ideas.

What trends do you notice? Look for both strengths and weaknesses in responses. It can be easy to focus on where students struggled, but knowing what they did well helps identify their strengths and helps you reflect on what you may spend more/less time on during instruction.

* For literacy, identify which elements of grade-level text complexity are impacting the performance on item types above.
* When identifying trends in math, it is best to begin at the cluster or domain level and then analyze standards within that set. The standards within a domain or cluster often shed light on different representations or complexity that could be a strength or weakness in student understanding. Taking this approach alongside a task analysis can shed additional light on what students know and can do and what they are still learning.

## 2. Types of Questions and Student Feedback

The purpose of this section is to focus on feedback. Information should help teachers keep an asset-based mindset for themselves and their students and focus on how information gleaned from the assessment analysis can be used to identify both areas of growth and areas for future improvements.

### What types of questions am I *not* asking that I need to intentionally and overtly express in future related instruction? How am I making sure students are doing the thinking?

*Careful here. We do not want to shift our instruction to focus on item types alone. Use this as an opportunity to review. Do your questions set students up to experience grade-level rigor with the content? Are students owning the thinking? Our goal is to implement our curriculum but make sure our students have access and exposure over time to all the possible ways they may be asked to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.*

### When and how will I provide constructive performance assessment feedback so that students are equipped to review and/or refine their learning strategies/schemas?

*Be sure that all feedback you share with students pairs a positive trend with an area of improvement. Ideally, the area of strength could be leveraged to improve the area of growth. Because sharing feedback allows students to understand where they need to be and how they are going to get there with your support, you want to ensure your feedback is specific and actionable. The focus on an asset-based approach combined with collaborative and actionable feedback ensures the student understands their learning and empowers them to own the learning as they work to improve their areas of growth*

## 3. Instructional Planning

The purpose of this section is to use the analysis and reflections from previous sections to capture information needed to improve future instruction. Planning should maximize coherence between units and identify learning acceleration opportunities as early as possible when planning future units and/or lessons.

# What do I need to plan for?

Complete the following chart with the four sections explained below. Connections between concepts, knowledge, and understanding and reasoning should be clear when the chart is completed.

* Knowledge

*What knowledge do students need to have to be successful on this assessment and as complexity grows in aligned future units of instruction?*

* Vocabulary

*Rather than identifying all words that must be taught in isolation, this should capture vocabulary that advances efforts to accelerate learning and close knowledge gaps for students.*

* Understanding and Reasoning

*What processes should students demonstrate to show understanding of the content? What evidence shows that students can use reasoning to understand future aligned instruction?*

* Concepts

*What concepts connect to the identified knowledge and allow for learning acceleration in future units of instruction?*

## Knowledge

Knowledge statements are best written from the student’s perspective rather than just breaking down the standard(s). This supports future instruction because a teacher can use these statements for models for instruction or exemplary answers for a check for understanding. Examples could include:

* I can count to help me solve addition and subtraction equations mentally.
* I can decompose a two-digit number into tens and ones with a number bond to help me make an easier problem to count on.
* When I see an addition or subtraction equation, I should think about what is the whole and what is the part that I know. This will help me make a problem easier.

## Understanding and Reasoning

Understanding and reasoning statements are best written from the teacher’s perspective. The focus is not on “steps” or procedures a student should memorize. Instead, they should capture different levels of complexity with a standard, problem, or text that may require additional support. These statements should align with the knowledge statements above. Examples could include:

* Solve an addition equation where one addend is a multiple of 10 using the number bond or the arrow way to model mental strategies.
* Solve a subtraction equation where the subtrahend is a multiple of 10 using the number bond or the arrow way to model mental strategies
* Solve an addition equation with a missing addend or a subtraction equation with a missing subtrahend by analyzing the equation to identify the total and the part known in order to use the number bond or the arrow way to solve.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary should consist of words that could be easily spiraled into the upcoming unit of instruction. For math, this could be terms that align between units. For literacy, this could be Tier 2 vocabulary that transcends texts. Examples could include tens, ones, units, number bond, arrow way, equation, part, whole.

## Concepts

Concept statements should capture broad topics, models, and strategies that could help teachers identify ways to accelerate learning outside of vocabulary instruction. Examples could include:

* Using a number bond to decompose a number into place value units.
* Using a number bond within an addition equation modeling the make-10 or make-100 strategy to solve.
* Using a number bond to identify the parts and whole of a problem, including leaving a portion of the number bond empty to show the unknown.

## Do my upcoming lessons already address this?

If yes, which ones?

*If upcoming lessons within your unit already have the content within the curriculum, you do not need to plan additional lessons. Instead, identify the lesson and whetheryou will need to provide any additional scaffolding or support to ensure students are able to access the content.*

If no, which ones can I build into the teaching opportunity?

*If not, identify where in the curriculum they would need access or exposure to the identified information before the lesson. Build in an acceleration opportunity there. These opportunities can be aligned with any of the sections outlined above (vocabulary, concepts, knowledge, or understanding and reasoning.) This is not about ensuring all this information is simply front-loaded for students at the beginning of our unit; not only does this impact our pacing but it also doesn’t “stick” as well for students. This is about having a just-in-time access or exposure opportunity so that students can quickly use that knowledge as they engage in grade-level or more complex work. This approach is more likely to be committed to memory and applied to learning.*

Summative Assessment Planning Tool in Action

This is a fictional composite of a meeting using the Summative Assessment Planning Tool.

## Participants:

* Emily: Sixth-Grade Reading Language Arts Teacher
* Elih: Sixth-Grade Reading Language Arts Teacher

In the campus PLC room, Emily and Elih prepare to dive into planning for an upcoming unit. They have given their curriculum-based unit assessment and are using the tool to reflect on student learning and to identify additional support or consideration needed.

While they quickly review where their students perform overall, they don’t spend much time on that, as they want to get into the meat of the planning, which is the analysis of complexity. During the **quantitative measure** component, they look at how students did on types of questions.

Emily: “How’d your students do? It looks like mine struggled on the constructed response component of the exam. I am thinking about how often the tasks we assigned them asked them to respond like this. I do a lot of quick checks that are multiple choice, and the curriculum doesn’t always ask them to write a ton, so I am wondering if maybe one of the reasons they didn’t perform so well here is because this isn’t something we’ve exposed them to in our instruction.”

Elih: “Yeah, I see the same thing for my students, and I think we should make a note, but I don’t think we need to make massive changes. I also want to look at the complexity of texts and what tasks we have coming up. We’ve focused a lot on using our curriculum, and I don’t want to get settled on planning for just our assessments.”

Emily: “Agree, but I also want to make sure they are prepared for their end-of-year exams.”

During the **qualitative analysis**, Emily and Elih look at the exam texts and student responses and are surprised students did not do well. The text complexity is no surprise, but they notice that students don’t seem to answer the questions fully. The responses don’t seem to address the depth of what the questions are asking them, which leads them to think about how this has looked in instruction.

Elih: “As I am reading the student responses, I am quickly realizing how connected this is to my last round of observation feedback. Ms. Hammond noted that I wasn’t pushing students to use evidence in their responses unless the answer they gave me was wrong. These responses don’t show me that my students are going back to the text to answer the question.

I think this might need to be an intentional area I plan. This addresses the next phase about student questions and feedback, too. I don’t need to make major changes to my questions. Instead, I need to make sure I am holding students accountable in using the text to answer and justify their answers, and I need to do it for all answers, correct or incorrect.”

Emily: “That sounds right. Let’s also not forget about the feedback we’re giving them in the moment. We need to make sure we give it to them in the moment and that we’re careful not to lead them to the answer. We have to consistently hold the expectation and tell them why strong readers go back to the text to answer questions. I’m curious, though, how much of our curriculum will already support us with this and what we’ll need to think about in planning.”

Summative Assessment Planning Template

This is a customizable template for summative assessment planning. Here’s what it does:

* It provides a structured approach to reflect on instruction prior to a data meeting or a PLC centered in data.
* It supports a teacher’s ability to analyze performance and plan for subsequent lessons focusing on addressing gaps and misconceptions.

## Section 1: Assessment Analysis of Overall Test Results

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Item Type 1 | % Correct | Item Type 2 | % Correct |
| Item Type Strength |  |  |  |  |
| Item Type Weakness |  |  |  |  |

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

* What item type did students do well and/or struggle with as a class?
* What trends, based on question type, do you notice?

## Section 2: Types of Question and Student Feedback

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

* What types of questions am I not asking that I need to intentionally and overtly express in future instruction?
* How am I making sure students are doing the thinking?
* When and how will I provide constructive performance assessment feedback so that students are equipped to review and/or refine their learning strategies/schemas?

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2. Isabel Beck defines Tier 2 vocabulary as words that are high frequency in written and academic text but are not common in everyday language. Beck, I. L. (2013). *Bringing Words to Life, Second Edition: Robust Vocabulary Instruction. Guilford Publications, Incorporated.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research, 77(1), 81-112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)