

# Student Experience Assessment

## Overview

In our research, we found that school isn't setting up most students to be college and career ready by the time they graduate high school. Data about student outcomes, such as grades and test scores, can tell us part of the story

about why this is so, but often overlooked are students' day-to-day experiences at school—what they learn about in their classes, how they interact with their teachers, and how they perceive what they're learning and how they're learning it. As an administrator, it's crucial that you regularly seek out information about students' daily experiences and use what you've learned to work to provide all students with high-quality experiences in every classroom, every day.

While students' daily experiences are influenced by many factors, both within and outside school, we assessed their in-school experiences using four approaches: reviewing the assignments students were given (and how they performed on them), asking students in the moment what they thought about their classes, surveying teachers about their expectations for the students in their classes, and completing in-person observations to get a sense of the culture and instruction in classrooms.

You're likely already doing one or more of these things in your school—possibly with an eye toward supporting teachers (such as conducting observations to give feedback or reviewing assignments during PLCs to inform planning). This resource will help you develop a plan to gather information with a specific focus on students'

experiences. We've provided the tools we used, as well as guidance on how to combine assignment review, student and teacher surveys, and lesson observations to get a read on the quality of students' academic experiences across classrooms—and how to use the information you collect to make strategic decisions to improve the education students receive in your school.



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## Phase 1: Planning

The main consideration to take into account is your capacity to begin systematically conducting reviews of students’ experiences at your school. It’s a big undertaking, especially the first time you do it. Although this document provides detailed guidance, two of the biggest necessary resources reside in your school—people and time. The investment is well worth the insight into students’ experiences, but it does require a commitment that takes careful planning.

The recommendations and questions below provide a sense of the scope of the review process and can help you decide how and when to tackle this. While we share specific ideas about things like tools and timeline, you know your school’s unique context best and should tailor the process to align with the priorities and structures you already have in place. This will set you up to conduct reviews successfully so you’re able to reflect regularly on what school is like from your students’ points of view and take action to make students’ school experiences better.

Category	Recommendation	Questions for Consideration
<b>Why</b>	Conduct a school-wide review gathering multiple types of data to get a representative read on students’ academic experiences across classrooms in your school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you have a different and/or additional purpose for conducting this review that’s specific to your school context? For example, is there a school-wide initiative (such as academic discourse or culturally responsive teaching) that you want students’ perspective on? Or have you recently adopted a new curriculum and want to use the review process to norm with your staff on what strong content and instruction with the new curriculum looks like?</li> </ul>
<b>What</b>	Gather information about the content and instruction that students experience on a daily basis, how they feel about it, and the expectations their teachers have of them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you already gathering any of this information? Is there other information you want to gather in addition to or in place of that recommended by TNT (content, instruction, student perceptions, and teacher expectations)?</li> </ul>
<b>How</b>	Use high-quality tools to assess students’ experiences via assignment review, surveys, and observations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you already have tools to assess <u>assignments</u>, <u>instruction</u>, <u>student perceptions</u>, and <u>teacher expectations</u> (and anything else you want to look at), and are those tools focused on <u>students’</u> experiences? If so, do you want to use those tools or TNT’s tools for this review?</li> <li>Do you need to tweak the tools you currently use and/or TNT’s tools to gather the information you need (such as adding a survey question)? Do you need to gather</li> </ul>

		information in a totally new way (such as conducting student focus groups)?
<b>Who: Students</b>	Collect data about a representative set of students in your school. Randomly select classes based on a variety of characteristics (for example, grade level, subject, and student performance).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you want to gather information about students across your entire school, or is there a sub-population of students that you want to learn more about? For example, is there a grade level that has lower than average academic outcomes, or do you want to know more about English language learners' experiences in particular?</li> </ul>
<b>Who: Staff</b>	Pick a small team of instructional leaders to conduct the review. Take time to explain the purpose and process to all involved staff members (including the teachers whose classes you'll visit).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aside from yourself and other instructional leaders at your school, do you want any teachers or other stakeholders to participate in conducting the review?</li> <li>Will all staff members on the review team participate in each step of the process (data collection, data analysis, and planning next steps)? Or, for example, will some only review assignments and conduct observations during data collection?</li> <li>How will you ensure staff are prepared to participate in the review? For example, is it necessary to train them on using the tools beforehand?</li> </ul>
<b>When</b>	Conduct this review on a regular basis (at the least once each school year) during times when normal instruction is occurring. Each time you conduct the review, devote 2-5 days to collecting data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What frequency and timing make sense given your school's calendar and staff capacity? For example, if your school follows a trimester calendar, it may make sense to conduct the review once each trimester (avoiding weeks near the beginning or end of the trimester when classes are more likely to be engaged in special activities such as testing).</li> <li>What duration makes sense given your school's size, the daily schedule, and staff capacity? For example, if your school is small and you will conduct the review across fewer classrooms, you may be able to do so in just a couple days. Or if your school follows a block schedule, in which classes are only taught every other day, you may need to spread the review over more days to collect enough data. For a more thorough assessment, the data collection phase may extend over the course of an entire week.</li> </ul>

## Phase 2: Data Collection

In our research study, we gathered information about students' daily academic experiences by reviewing their daily assignments (and how they performed on them), giving students in-the-moment surveys about what they thought about their classes, giving teachers a one-time survey about their expectations for students, and completing in- person observations to get a sense of the culture and instruction in classrooms. Below is more guidance on how to do each of those things.

### Class Assignments

Considerations	Recommendations and Guidance
<p><b>What assignments should be collected?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each participating class, collect <i>all</i> assignments from the entire class period for all the days in your review window to gain a holistic perspective on what students are working on.</li> <li>Clearly define what constitutes an “assignment.” In our study, we collected everything that students worked on and turned in during class, including Do Nows, worksheets, and exit tickets. Depending on the purpose of your review and your capacity to evaluate assignments, you may choose to define “assignment” more broadly or narrowly. For example, you might only collect the main assignment that students spent the majority of time working on each day.</li> <li>Keep in mind that the number of assignments per class period likely varies by grade band. Students in many elementary classes work on multiple assignments per class period, while students in middle or high school classes may work on the same assignment across multiple class periods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What should be included with each assignment?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect as much information as possible about each assignment. In addition to the assignment itself, collect directions or prompts (if separate from the assignment), the names or copies of any texts used with the assignment, any grading rubrics or answer keys, and multiple pieces* of student work.</li> <li>Direct teachers to select a handful of students* in their class (ideally from a representative range of achievement levels) and submit work from those same students for every assignment.</li> <li>You may also ask teachers to grade the student work before submitting it, provided this is a feasible request given your timeline for collecting assignments. (This is not a necessary step but could save you time during the assignment review process.)</li> </ul> <p>*In our study, we collected six samples of student work for each assignment. Depending on the class sizes in your school and your capacity to review assignments, you may choose to collect a smaller number of samples (although we recommend collecting more than one for each assignment).</p>

<b>How should assignments be collected?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are observing a lesson, it is likely easiest to collect the assignments for that class at the end of the period. Otherwise, collect assignments from each participating class at the end of each day within your review window to allow for easier tracking and organization.</li><li>• Provide teachers with an envelope or folder in which to place the completed assignments and direct them to keep it in the same place each day so assignments may be easily collected even if the teacher is not in the classroom.</li></ul>
<b>How and when should assignments be reviewed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use <a href="#">TNTP's Assignment Review Protocols (available in ELA, Social Studies, Science, and Math)</a> or the assignment review tool you've selected to assess the quality of each assignment and how students performed on them.</li><li>• Ensure all reviewers have access to the relevant grade-level/subject college- and career-ready standards to assess the content of each assignment. For assignments involving literature or informational text(s), reviewers will also need access to <a href="#">tools to assess quantitative and qualitative text complexity</a>.</li><li>• Determine when your team will review assignments. This takes time! Assignments can be reviewed the same day they are collected or at a later time. No matter when you do it, to maximize efficiency, set aside uninterrupted blocks of time to review multiple assignments rather than reviewing individual assignments at different times. You may also consider tasking one or more instructional leaders with solely reviewing assignments even if they are not conducting observations (although it may be more efficient to have observers review the assignments for the classes they observed).</li><li>• Create a system for keeping track of assignment reviews. The tracker should include basic information about the assignment (date, grade level, subject, teacher, student) and ratings for the categories in the review tool (for example, content, practice, relevance, and student performance in the TNTP tools).</li></ul>

## Student Surveys

Considerations	Recommendations and Guidance
<p><b>Which students should be surveyed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give all students in participating classes the chance to complete the survey (students may decline to do so if they wish).</li> <li>• In our study, we only surveyed students in grades 3-12. Determine if you will survey students in grades K-2 (if applicable), keeping in mind that the survey process is more time-intensive for younger students (see more details below).</li> <li>• To protect student confidentiality, do not ask students to write their names or provide any other identifying information on the survey.</li> <li>• Determine if you want to collect demographic information about students on their surveys. If you do, make sure the survey you are using includes this information or adapt the survey to include questions about demographic information such as race or ethnicity, so you have the option of analyzing survey responses for disparities by subgroup (although keep in mind that you should do so in a way that still protects student confidentiality).</li> </ul>
<p><b>How and when should students be surveyed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For students in grades 3-12:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use <a href="#">TNTP's Student Engagement Survey</a> or the student survey you've selected to assess students' feelings and perceptions about their classes.</li> <li>○ Survey students on the same day(s) that you collect assignments from their class. Students can complete the survey in the last five minutes of class each day.</li> <li>○ Ask the teachers in each participating class to proctor the survey. On the first day of survey administration, the teacher should explain the survey's purpose and let students know their responses are confidential.</li> <li>○ If needed in younger grades, the teacher can read the survey questions aloud as students complete the survey.</li> <li>○ If you have the technology resources, you may consider having students complete the survey online. (This will require more work up front to enter the survey into an online form but will make collecting and reviewing students responses easier.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>For students in grades K-2 (if you choose to survey them):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use an age-appropriate survey to ask students about their feelings and perceptions about their classes (for example, students circling happy or sad faces to express their opinions).</li> <li>○ Rather than completing the survey independently, students should be surveyed one-on-one or in small groups in an interview-style format</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>with an adult reading the survey questions, prompting students to talk about their answers, and helping them complete the survey on paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Because the survey process is more time-intensive, the teacher may not be able to proctor the surveys without significantly interrupting regular instruction. Determine whether the teacher or another adult will serve as proctor and when individual or small groups of students will be pulled to complete the survey during class.</li> <li>○ On the first day of survey administration, the proctor should explain the survey's purpose and let students know their responses are confidential.</li> <li>○ Survey students on the same day(s) that you collect assignments from their class. Because the survey process is more time-intensive, you may want to consider only administering the surveys on one or two days even if your review window is longer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How should surveys be collected?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To protect student confidentiality, direct students to place their completed surveys in a neutral location instead of handing them to the proctor.</li> <li>● If you are observing a lesson, it is likely easiest to collect the surveys for that class at the end of the period. Otherwise, collect completed surveys from each participating class at the end of each day within your review window to allow for easier tracking and organization.</li> <li>● Provide teachers with an envelope or folder in which to place the completed surveys and direct them to keep it in the same place each day so that surveys may be easily collected even if the teacher is not in the classroom.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How and when should survey responses be recorded?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create a system for keeping track of survey responses. The tracker should include basic information about the survey administration (date, grade level, subject, teacher) and the content of student responses.</li> <li>● If using paper surveys, delegate the task of entering student responses into your tracking system. Depending on the schedule of the person doing the data entry and your timeline for reviewing the data, survey responses could be entered in the tracking system on a daily basis or at a later point.</li> </ul>



## Teacher Surveys

Considerations	Recommendations and Guidance
<b>Which teachers should be surveyed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the teachers selected to participate in the review to complete the survey. You may also opt to ask all of your teachers, regardless of review participation, to complete the survey if you wish to have data about teacher expectations for your entire school.</li> <li>• To protect teacher confidentiality, do not ask teachers to write their names or provide any other identifying information on the survey.</li> <li>• Determine if you want to collect any other information in the teacher surveys (for example, grade level or department). If you do, make sure the survey you are using includes this information or adapt the survey to include such questions to be able to analyze survey responses by subgroup (although keep in mind that you should do so in a way that still protects teacher confidentiality).</li> </ul>
<b>How and when should teachers be surveyed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use <a href="#">TNTP's Teachers' Expectations Survey</a> or the teacher survey you've selected to assess teachers' expectations for their students.</li> <li>• You should survey teachers once or twice per year using this instrument. If you opt to give the survey to all teachers in your school, pick a time for them to complete it before or during your first review window. If you will only survey teachers who are participating in the review process, ask them to complete the survey during their review window (noting that any teachers who participate in multiple reviews during the same year only have to complete the survey once).</li> <li>• Determine exactly when you will ask teachers to complete the survey based on your school schedule. For example, you may provide time for teachers to complete the survey during a faculty meeting or you may ask them to complete it on their own time.</li> <li>• If you have the technology resources, you may consider having teachers complete the survey online. (This will require more work up front to enter the survey into an online form but will make collecting and reviewing teacher responses easier.)</li> </ul>
<b>How should surveys be collected?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will depend on how and when you direct teachers to complete the survey. If teachers will complete the survey on their own time, provide a location where completed surveys should be turned in.</li> </ul>



**How and when should survey responses be recorded?**

- Create a system for keeping track of survey responses. The tracker should include basic information about the survey administration (for example, date and grade level or department, assuming that information does not violate teacher confidentiality) and the content of teacher responses.
- If using paper surveys, delegate the task of entering teacher responses into your tracking system. Depending on the schedule of the person doing the data entry and your timeline for reviewing the data, survey responses could be entered in the tracking system on a daily basis or at a later point.



## Classroom Observations

Considerations	Recommendations and Guidance
<b>Which classes should be observed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ideally you would have determined which teachers and subjects/class periods to observe during the planning phase (based on a representative sample of classes across your school or a targeted subset of classes related to your purpose for conducting the review).</li></ul>
<b>How and when should classroom observations be conducted?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observe one or two classes for each of your selected teachers during the review window. Observe one or two subjects in self-contained classrooms (we recommend math and ELA) and one or two class periods in departmentalized classrooms. Pick which subjects/periods to observe based on what makes sense given your schedule and your purpose for conducting the review.</li><li>• Direct observers to take notes during each observation. Whether or not you provide a standardized observation template, ensure the notes include basic information about the observation (date, grade level, subject, period, teacher), any relevant information about the content of the lesson (for example, texts students were reading or problems students were working on), and teacher and student actions.</li></ul>
<b>How and when should observations be assessed?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use <a href="#">TNTP's Classroom Observation Protocols (available for Literacy (used in English Language Arts and Social Studies, Math, and Science) or the observation protocol you've selected to assess the culture and instruction in each observed lesson.</a></li><li>• Ensure all observers have access to the relevant grade-level/subject college- and career-ready standards to assess the content of each lesson. For lessons involving literature or informational text(s), observers will also need access to <a href="#">tools to assess quantitative and qualitative text complexity.</a></li><li>• Create a system for keeping track of observations. The tracker should include basic information about the observation (date, grade level, subject, period, teacher) and ratings for the categories in the observation protocol (for example, culture of learning, content, instructional practices, and student ownership in TNTP's tool).</li><li>• Determine if you also want to collect observation notes. It may not be necessary to enter these into your tracking system, but they could provide useful qualitative evidence.</li></ul>



## Phase 3: Data Analysis and Next Steps

Once your data collection window is over and all of the data have been entered into your tracking systems, it's time to take a closer look at what you found out about students' experiences. There is no one right way to analyze your data, and how you do so will depend on the specific tools you used and resulting types of information gathered. Here are some action steps and guiding questions to consider, using TNTP's tools as a reference point.

Data Source	Action Steps and Questions for Consideration
Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What percentage of assignments provided students <u>sufficient</u> opportunities to work with grade-level standards (<i>content</i>), engage with subject-specific critical practices (<i>practice</i>), and connect academic work to real-world issues or contexts (<i>relevance</i>)?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What percentage of assignments provided <u>no</u> or <u>minimal</u> opportunities in each of those three areas? How do the sub-ratings in specific areas provide insight into what these assignments were lacking?</li></ul></li><li>• What percentage of students met the expectations of their assignments? What percentage met the expectations of the target standard(s)? How do these two percentages compare?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Within individual classes, are the same students consistently meeting or not meeting expectations? Are there any trends in who those students are?</li></ul></li><li>• How does your overall school-wide data compare with that of individual classes and teachers?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are there any trends across grade levels, subjects, class level (for example, honors or Advanced Placement (AP)), or anything else?</li><li>○ Which students are in the classes with the highest- or lowest-quality assignments? Are any sub-groups of students consistently receiving different types of assignments?</li></ul></li></ul>

Student Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After you've entered all student survey responses into your tracking system, you'll need to score each survey to assess students' <u>engagement</u> in and <u>perceived worth</u> of their classes. If you used <a href="#">TNTP's Student Engagement Survey</a>, please consult our <a href="#">scoring guidance</a>.</li><li>• Once you've scored engagement and worth, consider the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What percentage of students were engaged or perceived class to be worthwhile in each lesson? In all lessons in a particular subject/period for an individual teacher? In all lessons for an individual teacher (across multiple subjects/periods)? In each grade level or subject across multiple teachers? In your entire school?</li><li>○ How did student engagement and perceived worth vary in classrooms over time (from day to day within a particular review window, or across a longer period of time between reviews)?</li><li>○ How does your overall school-wide data compare with that of individual classes and teachers?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there any trends across grade levels, subjects, class level (for example, honors or AP), or anything else?</li><li>▪ Which students are in the classes with the highest or lowest engagement and perceived worth? Are any sub-groups of students consistently more or less engaged, or finding their classes more or less worthwhile?</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
Teacher Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After you've entered all teacher survey responses into your tracking system, you'll need to score each survey to assess teachers' <u>academic expectations</u> for their students. If you used <a href="#">TNTP's Teachers' Expectations Survey</a>, please consult our <a href="#">scoring guidance</a>.</li><li>• Once you've scored teachers' expectations, consider the following questions:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What percentage of teachers hold high expectations for students?</li><li>○ Of the teachers whose survey scores did not indicate high expectations, how close was their score to the cutoff for high expectations (a total score of 11)? Which survey question(s) contributed most heavily to their lower score?</li><li>○ How does your overall school-wide data compare with that of individual teachers?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Are there any trends across teacher background and/or the types of classes and students that teachers work with (grade levels, subjects, special education classes, honors or AP classes, etc.)?</li><li>▪ Which students are in the classes with the highest and lowest teacher expectations? Are any sub-groups of students consistently held to higher or <u>lower than average expectations</u>?</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>

<p>Observations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what percentage of lessons were <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> students engaged in learning (culture of learning) and responsible for doing the thinking (student ownership)?</li> <li>• <b>Literacy (including English Language Arts and Social Studies):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What percentage of lessons focused on a high-quality text?</li> <li>○ If applicable: What percentage of lessons provided <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> students with the opportunity to master foundational skills?</li> <li>○ In what percentage of lessons did the teacher employ instructional practices that allowed <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> students to learn the content of the lesson?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Math:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What percentage of lessons reflected the key instructional shifts required by college- and career-ready math standards?</li> <li>○ In what percentage of lessons did the teacher employ instructional practices that allowed <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> students to learn the content of the lesson?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Science:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What percentage of lessons focused on a high-quality text and/or focused on building grade-appropriate science process skills?</li> <li>○ In what percentage of lessons did the teacher employ instructional practices that allowed <u>all</u> or <u>most</u> students to learn the content of the lesson?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For lessons with ratings of “not yet” or “somewhat” in any part of the observation protocol, do you have any qualitative evidence from the observation notes that provides insight into the primary causes?</li> <li>• How does your overall school-wide data compare with that of individual classes and teachers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are there any trends across grade levels, subjects, class level (for example, honors or AP), or anything else?</li> <li>○ Which students are in the classes with the highest- or lowest-quality culture and instruction? Are any sub-groups of students consistently receiving different in-class experiences?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the data from all sources (assignments, surveys, and observations) paint a comprehensive picture of students’ experiences in each classroom?</li> <li>• Can I place each class into a small number of profiles (for example, high engagement with low- quality content) to better understand students’ experiences?</li> <li>• Are any sub-groups of students receiving lower-quality assignments or instruction, reporting lower rates of engagement and perceived worth, or in classes with teachers who have lower expectations for them?</li> </ul>



TNTP

- What stands out as the biggest strengths and priorities at the school-wide level?
- Which classes and/or teachers stand out as “bright spots” or priorities?
- Am I missing any information? Do I need to collect more data and/or do so in a different way (for example, student focus groups) to fill in gaps or answer any additional questions I have?



## Next Steps

After analyzing your data, you and your instructional team should decide what to prioritize and what actions to take to improve students' experiences across your school and within individual classrooms. This will vary for each review you conduct based on what the data shows.

- Determine a manageable number of priorities and create an action plan to address each priority over a specific window of time. For some priorities, you may plan short-term interventions that can be immediately implemented, while others may require more time and resources.
- Include in your action plan ways to leverage the strengths you identified in the review. For example, how can “bright spot” classrooms or teachers be used as models for others?
- Include in your action plan checkpoints to monitor progress, including continuing to talk to students and assess their daily classroom experiences.
- Share your findings from the review with your staff. Call out strengths and progress made in specific areas, and explicitly name gaps and priorities.

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