HOW TO CLOSE THE LEARNING GAP WITH A REFLECTIVE DATA ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

by Robert Crowe

In this article you will learn...

- It is crucial that when teachers look at students' achievement data, they have time to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and why.
- In order to ensure learning loss recovery, teachers need a data analysis protocol that has built-in time to reflect so that they can discover why students did or did not learn what they needed to.
- A reflective data analysis protocol includes 3 steps: Identify what happened, reflect on why it happened, identify what happens next.

Categories: feature, Teaching
Tags: alignment, data protocol, learning loss recovery, reflective data analysis, reteaching

Reading Time: 6 minutes

An article for school administrators and aspiring administrators

Dear educator, you know that the focus closing gaps and elevating student achievement is more than just assessing and analyzing data for growth patterns and trends. As the school year is chugging along, how do you monitor if your students are truly learning what they need to be learning? How do you know if they are recovering what they have lost?

You and your teachers need a data analysis protocol that helps you check where students are in the process of learning. You need a data analysis protocol that does more than just look at numbers—such as percentage of students who can or can't. **You need a data analysis protocol that has built-in time to reflect so that you can discover why students did or did not learn what they needed to.**

This kind of reflection will help your teachers reteach to the specific needs of the students. This kind of reflection will ensure reteaching is efficient and effective. This kind of reflection will support your students in elevating achievement.

This is a reflective data analysis protocol and it's what you and your teachers need to support your students.

That's why we at Elevated Achievement have provided a series of articles with an in-depth look at a reflective data analysis protocol and the tools you can use to implement it in your classrooms, schools, and districts.

Why Reflect?

We know that teachers are the key to increased student achievement. But what kind of teacher? Research shows that the most effective and efficient teacher is the one who consistently reflects on their practice.

> *"In the ongoing pursuit of educational improvement and professionalization of teaching, teachers have been urged to become more reflective of their own methods and practices (e.g., Carnegie Forum, 1986; The Holmes Group, 1985; Peterson, 1988; Schon, 1987). To this end, efforts have been made to investigate teacher thinking, planning, and decision making (e.g.,*

> *Clark & Peterson, 1986). Teacher education programs, too have been designed with this goal in mind (Tom, 1985; Zeichner & Liston, 1985).*
>
> *Reflection, however, is embedded in belief systems and perceptual frameworks that are generally removed from awareness (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Those belief systems affect teachers' thinking and actions and, consequently, the actions of students. It is important, therefore, to help teachers become aware of their belief systems and how their perceptual frameworks affect their teaching roles and the roles their students play in response. Additionally, teachers need to examine whether their beliefs correspond to current knowledge of teaching and especially current knowledge of how students learn." (Marshall, 1990)*

Thus, it is crucial that when teachers look at students' achievement data, they have time to reflect and a protocol with which to do this efficiently.

What Exactly Is a Reflective Data Analysis Protocol?

Most data protocols do ask teachers to look at student data. Most data protocols do ask teachers to develop next steps for student achievement. However, the most effective data protocols have an interim step that give teachers the time to analyze why the data is the data. **In other words, the strongest protocols have teachers reflect on those decisions that were used to teach what was being assessed.**

If the data shows that students learned—what decisions led to that learning? If the data shows that students did not learn—what decisions led to that lack of learning?

A reflective data analysis protocol includes the following steps:

IDENTIFY: What Happened

- What were the students demonstrating?
- What were the students' successes and challenges?

REFLECT: Why It Happened

- How did the format impact student demonstration of learning?
- How did previous decisions in lesson design and delivery impact student demonstration of learning?

IDENTIFY: What Happens Next

- Regarding successes, how can previous decisions in lesson design and delivery be replicated to ensure continued student learning?
- Regarding challenges, how can previous decisions in lesson design and delivery be revised to ensure student learning?

A reflective data analysis protocol is more than identifying what students learned and did not learn. A reflective data analysis protocol is more than identifying what to teach and reteach. **A reflective data analysis protocol provides the time and space for teachers to analyze what is working—and what is not working—when it comes to their plan for eliminating learning gaps and elevating student achievement.** It supports teachers in honing their craft to the benefit of the students, and guides teachers in being stronger decision-makers by ensuring targeted instruction with effective techniques.

Continue the Learning

Check out these articles and resources to continue your learning about this topic...

- Our Article, "How Principals Can Support Their Teachers in Monitoring Learning Recovery"
- Our Article, "Don't Expect Learning Loss Recovery without an Aligned Plan"
- Our Downloadable Resources for a Reflective Data Analysis Protocol

The Learning Brief

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