

Examining Data Protocol

Protocol based on National School Reform Faculty's Using Data: Collaborative Inquiry for School Improvement and Doug Reeves's Data Mining for School Improvement

Purpose: This protocol guides a group through analysis of data to increase student success.

Getting started: The facilitator reminds the group of the norms, assigns roles and outlines the time limits.

For each step, individuals will first have time to record personal thinking using their *journals*. The group will then discuss using a go-around format to ensure everyone's observations and insights are honored. Cross-dialogue is allowed and encouraged after every person has had an opportunity to share.

Overview of Data (5 minutes)

The facilitator or presenting teacher gives a brief description of the particular data to be discussed and answers clarifying questions as necessary. (Clarifying questions can be answered with “yes,” “no,” or a single sentence.) The group does not see the data until Step 2. In general, the presenter can frame the question that the data was used to answer.

Step 1: Predicting the Data (5 minutes: 2 minutes silently writing individual predictions, 3 minutes discussing as a group)

The facilitator tells the group that in order to surface past experiences, preconceived ideas, and assumptions, the group will make predictions about what they believe the data will show. The facilitator reminds them to consider the following questions when making predictions:

- With what assumptions are we entering?
- What are some predictions we are making?
- What are some questions we are asking?
- What are some possibilities for learning that this experience presents us?

After 2 minutes of silent writing, the facilitator has group members share their predictions and why they believe that is what they will see.

Step 2: Observe the Data (Literal) (10 minutes: 3 minutes silently writing individual observations, 7 minutes discussion as a group)

The facilitator reminds the group that this phase is to just state what they see without reaching conclusions or making recommendations. The facilitator reminds them to consider the following when making observations:

- Note what you can see
- Note important points that “pop out”
- Look for patterns or trends that emerge
- Note surprising or unexpected data
- Stick to just the facts

After 3 minutes of writing, the facilitator has the group share their observations. If judgments or interpretations arise, the facilitator should ask the person to defer that thinking until the next step.

Step 3: Interpret Data/Develop Inferences (*10 minutes: 3 minutes silently writing individual observations, 7 minutes discussion as a group*)

The facilitator tells the group that this step is to look beyond the obvious for possible cause/effect relationships and to make inferences related to student learning. This is also the step to generate “What if?” and “Why?” questions. During this time, participants:

- Discuss inferences about the data regarding the impact on student learning
- Generate possible explanations
- Generate further questions to ask
- Generate further data needed to verify explanations

After 3 minutes of writing, the facilitator has the group share their interpretations and inferences through a go-around process. The facilitator encourages team members to support their statements with evidence from the data.

Step 4: Implications for Practice (*10 minutes: 3 minutes silently writing individual observations, 7 minutes discussion as a group*)

The facilitator tells the group that this step is designed to help answer the question, “What are the implications for teaching, learning, and increasing student success?” The group will seek to identify connections between what is missing, what needs to change, and what is working. Keep in mind the following prompts:

- Focus on practices for improving student learning
- What issues have been raised about school-wide practices/classroom practices?
- What is the first step to increase student success in this area?
- Where do you suggest we go from here?
- What are the next steps this group should take?
- Are there other data or materials we should look at?

After 3 minutes of writing, the facilitator leads the group in the discussion of what these data imply for their classroom practice. This is the action phase of the data analysis. The data for the next meeting will be identified based on the conclusions reached during Step 4.

Step 5: Reflect on the process (*5 minutes*)

The facilitator leads the group through a discussion of this protocol process using the following prompts:

- How did this protocol work for you?
- What went well? What could be improved?
- What new learning do you have?
- What changed your thinking?
- What was reinforced?