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Letting Data Lead: How to Design, Analyze, and Respond to Classroom Assessment

By Eileen Depka

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Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Letting Data Lead: How to Design, Analyze, and Respond to Classroom Assessment* by Eileen Depka. *Letting Data Lead* provides K–12 educators with a systematic approach to assessment design that aids in the gathering and interpretation of data, which, in turn, creates a culture of actionable results and enhanced student achievement.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

Chapter 1

Designing Assessments: Where Data Response Starts

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1. Describe the six steps of the system of assessment. When is the appropriate time to use summative assessments? When should teachers employ formative assessments?

2. How does the "nice to know" differ from the "necessary to know" in an assessment? What are some questions you can ask yourself to determine if you need to respond to a lack of understanding immediately?

3. What is the goal of assessments? Consider figure 1.3 (page 14). How is the assessment in figure 1.3 structured so that teachers can determine if students are experiencing difficulty or misunderstandings?

4. What is the best way to evaluate student assessment results? What are characteristics of effective feedback?

5. In what ways can grouping help students when misunderstandings occur? Describe long-term grouping and flexible grouping. Is one method preferred over the other? If so, why?

Chapter 2

Creating a Structure to Support Data Consistency for Common Assessments

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1. List the four steps of assessment. What is the purpose of common assessments?

2. Consider your assessment design process. What do you consider before and during the design process? Do you take into account how an assessment's format affects student performance? After viewing table 2.1 (page 26) and table 2.2 (page 27), what are some considerations that could improve your design process?

3. Why is common implementation of assessments crucial for receiving reliable results? How do written directions benefit students? How do they benefit teachers?

4. What are the benefits of using frequent, repeated assessments? How does a teacher decide how many times a student needs to repeat a performance to determine proficiency?

5. Why does team data analysis often follow school, district, and state assessments? How can teachers use these data to improve student performance?

6. In your own words, describe the pattern of assessment as illustrated in figure 2.7 (page 40).

Chapter 3

Visualizing and Interpreting Data With an Eye on Action

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1. What role do the organization and display of data have in data analysis? Brainstorm some questions that will help with analyzing results.

2. Consider figure 3.5 (page 50). What information can you gather by analyzing the data horizontally? What do the vertical data identify? Based on these results, how would you respond to any misunderstandings and errors?

3. List some ways rubrics benefit student learning and understanding. How does repeated use of a generic rubric aid both teachers and students?

4. Reflect on your classroom. Do you take the time to get to know your students? How often do you speak individually with each student? What are some ways you can record student attitudinal data?

5. Do you offer your students opportunities for reflection and self-analysis? How can responding to their own data support student learning?

Chapter 4

Responding to Data: Considerations, Practices, and Procedures

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1. Define *mistake* and *misunderstanding*. How do you determine if a response to data is necessary?

2. What are the five steps in the systematic approach to responding to data? Describe the goal or purpose of each.

3. Why should teachers identify responses prior to knowing if there is a need to respond? What are the four steps in unit lesson planning?

4. Do you structure your classroom to include time for responding to misunderstandings? Consider a lesson you teach. How might you structure the lesson so that you can observe students and respond to misunderstandings immediately?

5. Why is it important for students to take an interest in their learning? What is a strategy that teachers can use to engage students in taking an active role in the learning process?

6. How does feedback support learning? Consider table 4.2 (page 102). Can you think of any other situations that might occur that do not appear in the table? What would be the appropriate responses to these situations?

Chapter 5

Encouraging Students to Respond to Data

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1. What is the correlation between student confidence and academic performance? Consider your classroom. How do you build student confidence and encourage student involvement?

2. Why is building a classroom culture of trust and support important for analyzing student data? What type of language do you use when relaying assessment results to students?

3. Why might teachers ask their students to evaluate the confidence they have in the accuracy and quality of their responses after an assignment? How can teachers use this information to support learning? How does self-evaluation affect student confidence and learning?

4. How do student portfolios actively engage students in their learning? How can teachers ensure that students use portfolios effectively?

5. How do students take ownership of their learning by setting goals? Do you already ask your students to set goals? If not, how might you incorporate this practice into your classroom?

Chapter 6

Considering Sustainability

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1. What methods do you use to connect with parents? What other methods of contact are available to you that you could consider using?

2. How does utilizing a variety of assessment types elicit the best possible student performance? Consider the variety of assessments listed in table 6.1 (page 125). Are there any methods that you do not currently use? How might you incorporate these assessment types into your classroom?

3. What are some suggestions you have for helping students connect their learning with the real world and their lives? What are some questions you can ask students to determine the effectiveness of instructional strategies?

4. In what ways does your administrative team support teachers' efforts and student learning? Do you and other teachers in your school regularly share specific information regarding student and classroom needs with administrators?

5. What are some questions teachers and administrators should consider while creating a school learning plan? List the eight steps teachers and administrators should follow when developing goals.