



Data Driven Dialogue

Data Meeting Protocol for Examining National, State, and Longitudinal Data

**Developed based on Using Data: Collaborative Inquiry for School Improvement, Nancy Love's Data Coach, Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman's Data Team Work, and National School Reform Faculty.*

Purpose: *This protocol is for a team facilitator to guide a group through an analysis of student achievement data. This can be used as a starting point to increase educator awareness of potential areas of strengths and improvement and to generate questions that lead to the examination of other data.*

This protocol can be used each time NECAP, SBAC, local benchmark assessments, or longitudinal data are reviewed. It can also be used for other forms of data, such as demographic, questionnaires, and process.

It can continue to be used with teams that are still developing expertise (and comfort) around data analysis. It can be used after long periods of data review and analysis inactivity (i.e. at the beginning of a new school year).

Getting Started

- a. Define the Purpose and the desired outcome of the session. (e.g., Purpose: "To identify students in need of additional support in reading based on the fall NWEA benchmark."
Outcome: "Establish cross-classroom reading groups for the next 6-week intervention block.")
- b. The facilitator goes over the group norms, assigns roles, and outlines the time limits for each part of the analysis process.

Sample Norms of Collaborative Work:

- Pose questions
- Put ideas on the table
- Provide data
- Pay attention to self and others
- Presume positive intentions

Sample Roles:

- Facilitator
- Timekeeper
- Recorder
- Process observer

- c. Facilitator provides the group with the annotated version of the Norms of Collaboration. The group discusses one or two norms to pay particular attention to during the work session. The norm(s) the group agrees to monitor should be posted in the room where all can see them.

For each step, the individuals will be given time to record personal thinking. The group will then share what they've recorded individually in a round-robin format. It is okay to pass. Everyone should listen carefully to the sharing.

The recorder will use the chart paper, white board, or other method to document and display the group's thinking through the steps.

- d. Facilitator introduces a warm-up activity for the group to come together and "ease" their way into examining data. This is a particularly helpful beginning step for teams new to looking at data or for ones that have reservations about using data or if the facilitator is new to the school or district team.

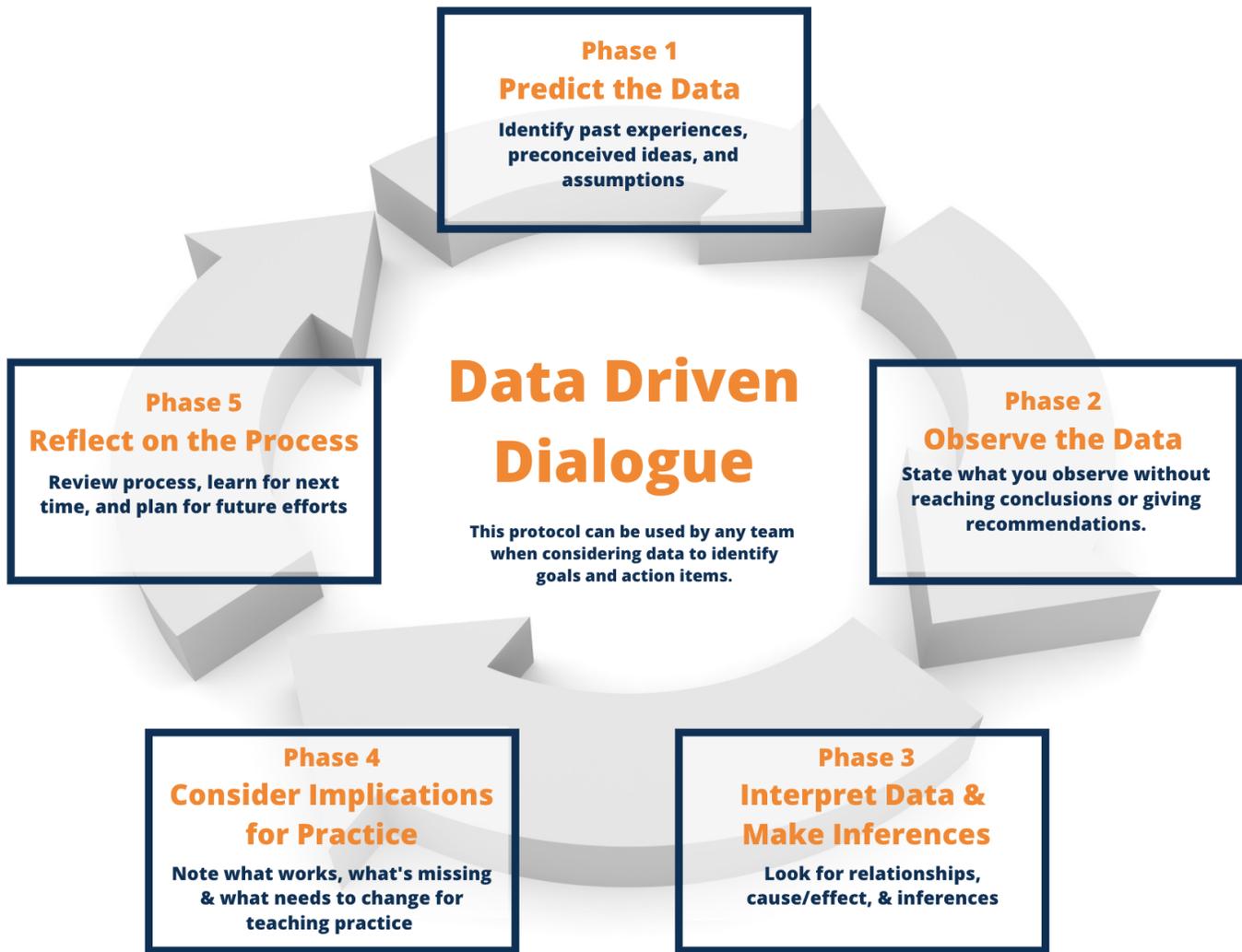
Example warm-up exercise: "Are You a Data Lova or Data Hata?"

1. Give Participants a moment to jot down where they land on the data-relationship spectrum.
2. Ask them to share this with a partner.
3. Ask for a few volunteers to share with the whole group either something they or their partner said.
4. Provide everyone with a blank index card, and ask participants to spend 3 minutes using one side of the card to explain why they are "data lova or hata."
5. Ask everyone to find a partner and spend 5 minutes taking turns (2 ½ minutes each) sharing their feelings about and associations with data.
6. Have everyone record on the blank side of the index card points their partner made.
7. Reconvene the whole group and ask for a handful of participants to share either something they said or something they heard from their partner.

Another warm-up exercise: "Data Identifier"

1. Table groups will be provided with postcards or pictures of famous people.
2. They are then given 7 minutes to choose one of the pictures and discuss how the person is like or unlike using data. Responses can include feelings associated with using data, how the person's profession connects with using data, etc.
3. Each group reports out the following to the whole group:
 - a. person they selected
 - b. why they chose this person
 - c. how the person is like or connects to using data, and how they are unlike or don't connect to using data





Overview of Data (5 minutes)

Prior to the session, the facilitator and school leader or data leadership team agree on what data will be examined to suit the purpose and desired outcomes.

- a. The facilitator shares a sample data report, chart, or document that resembles the data the participants are about to see. This can be shared through a PowerPoint presentation slide or a handout.
- b. The facilitator reviews parts of the sample data to model how participants can interact with the data and use the protocol.
- c. The participants can then review the sample data with a partner to discuss the components within the sample for greater understanding.
- d. The facilitator finalizes the review of the sample document by asking, “Is there anything about this sample data that you need more clarity on?”
- e. The facilitator gives each participant a copy of the data driven dialogue diagram.
- f. Facilitator gives each group (if working in small groups) or a few people “No because” cards, which will be used to remind the group to only observe the data instead of providing explanations for the data.

Important note: The group does not see the actual data report for the day’s session until Step 2. Overview of the Process

Phase 1: Predict the Data

5 minutes:

2 minutes writing individual predictions

3 minutes discussing as a group

The facilitator tells the group that in order to reveal past experiences, preconceived ideas, and assumptions, the group will make predictions about what they believe the data will show.

The group should reflect on the following questions:

- What are your starting assumptions?
- What do you predict the data will show?
- What are some of your questions?
- What do you hope to learn from this data?

After two minutes of silent writing, the facilitator invites the group to share their predictions and explain them.



Phase 2: Observe the Data

10 minutes:

3 minutes writing individual observations

7 minutes discussing as a group

The facilitator explains that this phase is to capture what is observed without reaching conclusions or making recommendations. In other words, don't follow your observations with a "because . . .".

As individuals observe, they should do the following:

- Focus on the facts.
- Take note of important points.
- Look for patterns or trends.
- Notice surprising or unexpected data.
- Identify items to explore further.

After three minutes of writing, the facilitator asks the group to share their observations. The recorder will document the group's observations on something like chart paper or white board.

If someone presents a judgment, rationalization, or excuse, the facilitator asks the person to hold that thinking until the next step. The process observer may also raise the "No, because" card and remind the person that this stage excludes this kind of commentary.

Phase 2a: Refine Observations

15 minutes:

3 minutes silently writing individual inferences

5 minutes share revisions with a partner and get feedback

7 minutes discuss as a group

Vague language (e.g., "Students did bad on . . .") can make it hard for data teams to examine the root cause(s) of an identified issue or to know where to intervene within the system. This can create false starts, confusion, anxiety, and frustration. To avoid this, teams need to make their observations more precise and quantitative (e.g., "20% of students performed poorly on . . .").

The facilitator explains that when looking at data and observation statements, we need to quantify our statements to determine potential points of leverage that will accelerate improvement of the school's/district's learning system, including students learning, teacher satisfaction, and community and culture improvement.

The facilitator can model for the group how a single observation statement can benefit from greater clarity. Here's an example: "Most students' reading scores improved over time." To help the group make this statement more defined, ask questions like, "What is meant by 'most'?", "What is the time period?", and "What is the percentage of growth for that time period?" Then rework the statement with the whole group to provide an example of a stronger statement. (Note: the revision may result in several statements.)



Examples:

Original Statement	Revised Statements
Most students' reading scores increased over time.	Grade 5 reading scores increased 36% in a six year period from spring 2014 to spring of 2020.
	Grade 4 reading scores increased by 42% in a six year period from spring 2014 to spring of 2020.
	Grade 4 reading scores decreased by 3% points from spring 2019-2020.

Phase 3: Interpret Data & Make Inferences

10 minutes:

3 minutes writing individual inferences;

7 minutes discussing as a group

The facilitator explains that this step is to go beyond the obvious and look for relationships, causal correlations, and to make inferences related to student learning. This is also the step to generate *what if* and *why* questions.

The group should use the following to prompt their thinking:

- Draw supportable inferences.
- Generate possible explanations.
- Ask further questions.
- Find data needed to verify explanations.
- Share what you can infer from the data regarding the impact on student learning.

After 3 minutes of writing, the facilitator asks the group to share their inferences and support their statements with evidence from the data. The recorder will document the ideas on chart paper, white board, etc.

Phase 4: Consider Implications for Practice

10 minutes:

3 minutes silently writing individual ideas for practice

7 minutes for group discussion

The facilitator explains that this step is designed to help answer the question, “What do the data suggest is working and not working for our students?” The group will seek to identify connections between what is working, what needs to change, and what is missing.

The group should use the following prompts to reflect on practices for improving student learning:

- What issues have been raised about the school-wide & 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?
- Is there other data or material we should look at?

After 3 minutes of writing, the facilitator leads the group in the discussion of what this data implies for their classroom practice. This is the action phase of the data analysis. The group will design an action plan that might outline changes in instructional practice, analysis of textbook alignment, or a new unit organization. The data for the next meeting will be identified based on the conclusions reached during Step 4. The recorder will document the next step from the group on the Data Team Feedback Sheet.

Phase 5: Reflect on the Process

5 minutes

The facilitator explains that this step is to review the process, learn for next time, and plan for the future. Taking the time to reflect is an important part of the process. It helps the team improve their data analysis process.

The facilitator guides a discussion of this protocol process using the following prompts:

- Did the protocol help you better meet your desired goal(s)?
- What went well? What could be improved?
- What new learning do you have?
- What changed in your thinking?
- How will you use this information to improve your practice?

The recorder completes the Data Team Feedback Sheet for the group and returns it to the administrator. A new facilitator may be selected for the next meeting. Roles should be rotated regularly to share the responsibility.

