

District Assessment and Reflection Logs

Julie Pearson
School City of Hammond

Teachers in the School City of Hammond complete monthly Assessment and Reflection Logs. These logs are used not only for teachers and administrators to monitor student progress but also to facilitate communication and continuity within schools and across the district. This paper describes the history of the development of the log system and how logs are currently being used in the Hammond school district.

In the Beginning: Indiana Mathematics Initiative Learning Logs

Several years ago, I was asked to become a member of the Indiana Mathematics Initiative (IMI). As a teacher of elementary mathematics, I was appreciative of the opportunity to improve my mathematical content, learn new strategies for teaching math, and collaborate with other teachers across the state of Indiana. I worked with districts both similar and different from my own school community in Hammond, a large urban city of approximately 90,000 people in northwest Indiana, with fourteen elementary schools, four middle schools, four high schools, and a high school vocational center, all contributing to the total population of just over 14,000 pupils. While some of the districts involved in IMI had similar demographics, others were from smaller towns or communities. No matter the size, we all came together with the goal of improving our mathematical instruction. While the benefits from being in this select cadre of mathematic educators are too numerous to mention, there are pieces of this project that stand out more than others, and one of those pieces was the early requirement of writing monthly logs. These logs were a guiding force in the development and adoption of Hammond's current District Data Assessment and Reflection Logs.

When I first joined the Indiana Mathematics Initiative, part of my requirement as a cadre member was to complete monthly online reflection logs. IMI created learning logs for members of the cadre to complete after teaching each unit of the standards-based curriculum they were piloting. The logs were different for each grade level and focused on one particular student goal for each unit, usually a "secure" or "developing/secure" goal for that unit. In the curriculum chosen by the participating districts, *Everyday Mathematics*, each unit has a number of goals that are determined as being "beginning," "beginning/developing," "developing," "developing/secure," or "secure." A beginning goal is a skill or concept that is just being introduced to students. Thus, mastery is not expected, and the benchmark for students is that they should be at a beginning level in their understanding of the concept. If it is a developing goal, students have had some exposures to the concept in the past, so the expectation is that students are developing an understanding of the concept. If a goal is secure, students have had repeated exposure and students are expected to be secure, or show mastery, of the skill.

To complete each log, teachers needed to determine how many students in their classroom had reached the benchmark for that goal, using an assessment that was provided by

IMI or one that teachers had created. For example, if the goal was *Students will know and recall basic multiplication and division facts*, a secure goal, teachers had to use the given assessment to ascertain how many students met that goal. Teachers also had to create a rubric for how they were scoring the assessment given to the students. At the end of the log, they would explain what they felt went well during the unit and what they could do to bring student scores up. After submitting the logs, a log reader from IMI would respond and offer feedback or answer questions or concerns.

The logs were a valuable tool in my early years as a cadre member, as they helped me reflect on my teaching and my students' learning, analyzing what I was using to determine where my students were and how I was addressing their needs. Over the years, the logs evolved and changes were made in how data was reported and how often cadre members needed to report. IMI staff member John LaMaster provided technical assistance with the logs and was an excellent support, answering questions and addressing issues as they came up. Eventually, the logs were phased out, as teachers became more familiar and experienced with the program and the focus of IMI changed.

Hammond Assessment Reflection Logs

Teachers and leaders from Hammond, however, saw how valuable these logs were in helping teachers analyze their data and reflect on their teaching strategies and student learning. There was also a need across the district for teachers to clarify what “beginning,” “developing,” and “secure” looked like for student work. There was not a lot of consistency in how teachers were assessing their students, and through the logs we hoped to bring dialogue and discussion to the issue. Hammond had many district-wide meetings for all math leaders at all buildings to discuss the assessment form and offer input and feedback about different designs, wanting to make it as beneficial to teachers as possible, while still easy to use. Thus, from these IMI logs, the School City of Hammond Data Assessment Reflection Logs were developed. (See Appendix 1 for a sample Assessment Reflection Log form.)

In the beginning, not all schools in Hammond used these reflection logs. For a time, there were only a few schools that were mandated to use them. These were schools that had to have data for compliance with the No Child Left Behind act or for their Indiana Public Law 221 school improvement plans. Over the course of a year, teachers, principals, and administrators saw what a valuable tool they were, and, for the 2006–2007 school year, the School City of Hammond required all schools to use them. The summary forms for the pre/mid/post test (see Appendix 2) were added a year after the unit assessments. The pre/mid/post test serves to assess students as they are coming into a specific grade and to show growth throughout the year. The test is made up of all developing/secure or secure goals for a specific grade level and the expectation is that students will be able to answer at least 80% of the items correctly by the end of the school year. While some teachers unfortunately see these assessment opportunities, summary forms and logs, and collaboration as just more work, the majority see them for what they truly are, a chance to look at what is working and not working in their classrooms and to change or modify their instruction to meet the needs for the success of all students.

Currently, the assessment reflection logs are a district-wide tool used for teachers to record, discuss, and analyze their class data. There are three areas in which the district requires these data reflection logs to be completed: math, writing, and reading. In the area of math, teachers determine how many students in their class are beginning, developing, or secure for each goal for a specific unit. Additionally, three times a year teachers administer the

pre/mid/post test and reflect on that data. Teachers meet monthly as a grade-level team to discuss and analyze their data. There is also a pacing guide for teachers at each grade level that is similar to the pacing guide that comes with the curriculum, to help teachers know what units are expected to be taught each month and, thus, what unit the assessment logs will cover. Teachers have until the end of the month to finish teaching and assessing the unit(s) that match up to each month. All data and logs must be finished by the end of the first week of the next month.

Once a unit is completed, teachers meet as a grade level to discuss student progress. Before teachers attend the collaborative meeting, they organize their data on the data assessment table on the first two pages of the assessment reflection log for the specific unit they just finished. The data sheet is in a grid format and allows for teachers to also list specific names of students. Teachers determine how many of their students met or exceeded the benchmark for each goal and record the data. (When the logs were first introduced, hard copies were given to each grade-level leader. Teachers then had to hand write the information and turn in copies, which then had to be sent through mail to the district administrators. After receiving feedback from teachers, the electronic template is now available on the School City of Hammond's website, www.hammond.k12.in.us, allowing easy and available access to all teachers. They can print out the template to organize their information. However, it is now expected that all grade-level logs be submitted electronically.)

Next, teachers meet with the principal monthly to compile their individual classroom data into grade-level data. Each teacher shares his or her data with the whole group, and all the numbers are totaled. For example, for goal 1a, each teacher will share how many students are secure with that goal, then the number who are developing, and who are beginning. For the School City of Hammond, the benchmark is 80% for secure goals, meaning at least 80% of all the students in a specific grade should meet the goal.

When reflecting on the pre/mid/post test, it is not expected that 80% of the students will receive an 80% or better the first time they take it. The purpose of the pre and the mid tests is to look for areas of strength and weakness and determine areas that have been covered in class, but students are still struggling with. By the end of the year, however, the 80% benchmark is expected, as the test is designed to assess all secure goals and state standards covered through the *Everyday Math* program.

After compiling their data, teachers reflect on student learning, using the questions provided on the assessment reflection log. (See page three of the assessment reflection log in Appendix 1.) Reflections include a summary of findings, looking at overall strengths and weaknesses. After evaluating student achievement, teachers discuss what next steps they will follow in order to support the students who have not quite achieved the benchmark score and need additional help. Examples might include small group instruction on a particular skill or doing a review of a game on the next game day. The final area on the form is for principals to include what they will do to support classroom instruction.

Once the data for each unit is discussed and the logs are completed by both the teachers and the principal, the principal is responsible for submitting all grade-level data for each month to the district administrators downtown. There is a leadership cadre, made up of curriculum leaders, who review all of the data submitted and look for patterns across the district. Principals have a deadline for when all data needs to be submitted, so it is imperative that teachers stay up-to-date on turning in their grade-level work.

Finding time for teachers to collaborate and complete the assessment forms was at first a concern, but principals and teachers were creative and found different ways to find release time for grade levels. For most Title I buildings, there were funds available to hire substitutes allowing at least an hour of release time for the classroom teachers. While non-Title I schools didn't have this funding, they used creative scheduling and community resources to allow teacher time. Several schools tried to schedule all special areas for a grade level at the same time, so that everyone teaching in that grade had the same break. This worked well with small schools, where there were fewer teachers per grade level. At larger schools, principals planned whole school assemblies for the students, many of them free of cost, while grade-level teams meet. They also used all supplemental staff, such as librarians or recess aides, for classroom coverage. In short, because the school community realized the value of these assessment logs and collaboration time, they found ways to make sure it happened.

Uses of the Assessment Reflection Logs

The Assessment Reflection Logs are used for several different purposes, not all of which are necessarily understood by *all* the teachers in the district. Most, however, understand that the central purposes are to increase student learning and to guide teacher instruction and future professional development. District administrators also look at this data closely, as improving state test scores is always a goal. District-wide professional development is planned according to data received from the logs, as well as teacher feedback. The IMI select cadre team in Hammond has provided several workshops, offered for all teachers in the district, based on the logs. However, the logs have also served to promote reflection and communication and to provide continuity across the district, and they have brought up the issue of assessing special needs students.

Promoting Reflection, Communication, and Dialogue

Prior to meeting as a whole group, teachers look over their class data, assessing the students' strengths and weaknesses in the different areas. It's an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and look for patterns within the student data. As a teacher, if I have 85% of my students unable to solve multi-digit addition problems, a secure goal, I need to look at how I taught that concept and reflect on what I could do differently to address that issue. Collaboration time with other teachers at the same grade level provides the opportunity to talk with peers about what they are doing in the classroom and discuss possible strategies that they are utilizing that would also benefit my students.

When teachers meet monthly to discuss the data, each person presents his or her data to the group. This is where teachers have the opportunity to really talk about what they are doing in their classroom that is working or isn't working and share ideas and strategies with their peers. The purpose of this collaboration is to offer support and to benefit from each others' strengths. This type of sharing can be daunting to some teachers, especially if it is a unit in which students didn't perform particularly well. In a profession that historically had teachers closing their doors and doing their own thing, it can be uncomfortable discussing personal performance.

Unfortunately, because of this issue, there is sometimes the problem of teachers not providing accurate data. This happens more when there isn't open communication and trust in a teacher's grade-level team, principal, or district administrator. No one likes to be put on the spot, and some teachers feel that if their data doesn't show students at the benchmark level in all areas, they will be criticized. In cases where peers or principals question the accuracy of the data, it is

necessary to delve deeper in discussion to determine how that person assessed his or her students and look at actual student work, which also serves to encourage the teacher to truly reflect upon the student learning in his or her classroom. This problem needs to be resolved at the beginning of the year, as not addressing the issue will only result in negative feelings among each other and make it difficult for teachers to collaborate.

Even when grade level teachers team teach, classroom results will vary, depending on the individual needs of the students in each classroom and the teachers' different instructional styles. When teachers are looking at data and see differences in results for each class, it also opens the door for discussion. If there is a class that has almost all students secure in a particular goal, the other teachers should be looking to that teacher to share her teaching strategies and discuss what she did with her students to get them at benchmark. Similarly, if every teacher in the grade level did not have 80% of students meeting the benchmark for a particular goal, the discussion needs to focus on what they can change or do to meet the needs of the students. This again promotes teachers' reflection upon their math instruction and teaching strategies and allows them to take more ownership of what they do in the classroom. Teachers use this dialogue to develop ways that they could address the needs of the students based on the data presented. Teachers plan small group instruction based on needs determined from the data and look at ways to reteach certain skills or provide enrichment opportunities for the students who are above the benchmark.

Providing Continuity Across Hammond

While creating dialogue and reflection were key purposes, providing continuity across the district in terms of pacing, recording or data, and scoring, were also foremost. Through district-wide workshops and grade-level meetings, it was clear that the same standards were not being used when assessing student work, nor were the assessments even the same. Some teachers were still using only one type of assessment for scoring, while others were using a variety of assessment pieces as opportunities to determine student progress. There were also discrepancies between what student work looked like at each of the levels. The assessment reflection logs encourage teachers to use more than just one way to determine student progress. At the top of the page, teachers check off the type of assessments they used when determining what level they were at for each goal.

Including a place on the form for the type of assessments used was added a year after teachers from the IMI cadre in Hammond worked on an assessment piece, aligning assessment opportunities with each goal. The assessment opportunities listed on the reflection log include the end-of-unit assessments, along with oral assessments, slate assessments (done in class using individual wipe boards), daily written work, and alternative assessments, like exit slips or game recording sheets. The hope was to move teachers forward from looking at only the end-of-the-unit test to determining the developmental level of the students. Doing this opened up a door to further dialogue, going deeper into how teachers were arriving at student achievement levels.

It is expected that when teachers are meeting to go over the grade-level summary forms, they will bring student work that exemplifies the different levels. Teachers then trade student work and discuss how they would determine whether it is secure, developing, or beginning work. Teachers have the opportunity to explain their reasoning and come to an agreement on what each level looks like for a specific goal. This has helped greatly to create more continuity in individual schools, but there is still a need for it to be addressed across the district.

Also providing continuity to all schools in Hammond is the pacing guide which is attached to the assessment logs. For most grade levels, the pacing guide from the curriculum

was adopted. Some grade levels chose to modify it slightly, based on teacher input. There has been a concern by some teachers, especially ones new to the program, about keeping up with the pacing guide. Of course, it is not expected that all teachers in Hammond will be on the same lesson on any given day. The pacing guide is merely a tool to keep teachers moving and staying in pace with their peers. Hammond has a lot of student transiency within the district, and it is expected that when a child moves from one school to another school in Hammond, the teachers should be at about the same place.

Administrators and cadre members chose to keep the pacing guide with the assessment summaries and reflections, because without it teachers would not have to stay on schedule, and it would make reflecting on unit data very difficult. With the pacing guide, teachers know they need to stay up to speed with the program, and if they fall behind, the entire grade level will not be able to collaborate.

Assessing Students with Special Needs

Using the assessment reflection logs district-wide brought another issue of continuity across the district to the forefront: how special need student assessments are scored. Many of the students receiving services are pulled from their regular general education class for mathematics to a self-contained special education classroom. Instruction is given at their instructional level, which is usually below their grade level. Thus, in most pull-out programs, students are working on different goals. However, special education teachers are expected to meet with grade-level teams to discuss their students' levels of achievement and expectations. Similarly, even if a student is pulled out or receiving services, that child is still recorded with the rest of the class for the homeroom grade-level teacher.

It was decided by the district that these children would be included in the regular classroom reflections because the students should be working on the same goals, with modifications as required by their IEP. Whether students are part of a pull-out program or receive support in their general education classroom, they should still be working on the same goals. The problem arises from the fact that each school addresses the needs of its special education students differently. The summary forms have helped bring light to this problem, and principals and administrators are actively engaged in dialogue to try and create some continuity across the district.

The pre/mid/post test is a different story. Because all children in Indiana, including those identified with special needs, are required to take the state test at their grade level, regardless of the instructional level in their Individual Education Programs, the same rules apply to our district test. Students take the tests at their grade level and their data is included with the regular classroom teacher. This data is used at the end of each school year to predict how students will do on the state test. After looking at the results of both assessments over two years, we found a direct correlation between student results. Most schools now use the data from the post test logs to determine which students are referred for remediation over the summer.

Concluding Thoughts

It has been incredible to watch how the assessment summary forms and reflection logs have evolved over the past few years. Through teacher and principal feedback, we have worked to create documents that have become essential to student success through teacher reflection and collaboration on student data. As curriculum, districts, and state and federal laws shift, so will

the different pieces of this project. Its main goal will continue to be supporting and sustaining student success. A crucial element for that success has been, and will continue to be, our district assessment reflection logs.

Contact info: Julie Pearson
School City of Hammond
3211 165th St.
Hammond, IN 46323
(219) 989-7351
japearson@hammond.k12.in.us

APPENDIX 1

MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS GRADE LEVEL SUMMARY FORM - UNIT 1 – FOURTH GRADE

School _____

Date Completed _____

Please indicate with an “X” the assessments that were used to determine the developmental level of the students:

Checking Progress Slate Assessments Alternative Assessments (Please list below)
 Oral Assessments Math Boxes _____

- In the table below, the **** indicates the benchmark level for the Learning Goal
- Indicate in each cell of the table below the number of students at that level

	1a Use compass & straightedge to construct geometric figures	1b Identify properties of polygons	1c Classify quadrangles according to side & angle properties	1d Name, draw, & label line segments, lines, and rays
S				
D/S				****
D		****	****	
B/D				
B	****			

Indicate the # of students at benchmark or above / the total number of students:

____/____ ____/____ ____/____ ____/____

Indicate % at Benchmark or Above:

_____% _____% _____% _____%

MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS GRADE LEVEL SUMMARY FORM - UNIT 1 – FOURTH GRADE

School _____

Date Completed _____

Please indicate with an “X” the assessments that were used to determine the developmental level of the students:

Checking Progress Slate Assessments Alternative Assessments (Please list below)
 Oral Assessments Math Boxes _____

- In the table below, the **** indicates the benchmark level for the Learning Goal
- Indicate in each cell of the table below the number of students at that level

	1e Name, draw, & label angles, triangles, & quadrangles	1f Identify & describe right angles, parallel lines, & line segments	1g Know addition & subtraction facts		
S			****		
D/S	****	****			
D					
B/D					
B					

Indicate the # of students at benchmark or above / the total number of students:

___/___

___/___

___/___

Indicate % at Benchmark or Above:

_____%

_____%

_____%

MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTIONAL ASSESSMENTS GRADE LEVEL SUMMARY FORM

UNIT 1 – FOURTH GRADE

School _____

Date Completed _____

GRADE LEVEL TEAM REFLECTION:

Summary of Findings: (Indicate areas of strengths and weaknesses)

Next Steps: _____

PRINCIPAL REFLECTION: (Ways to support classroom instruction)

APPENDIX 2

Printed:
10/30/2008 10:46 AM

EVERYDAY MATH PRE / MID – YEAR / POST EVALUATION
SUMMARY REPORTING FORM

Grade One School: School Year:

Complete this form including the reflection section as a grade level team and turn it into your principal after the evaluation is administered each time.

TABLE 1: In each cell below, the requested information should reflect the data of the individual classes at the same grade level.

Please record:

A = # of children at benchmark or above/total # of students

B = Indicate % at benchmark of 80% proficiency or above

TEACHER NAME	Pre-Evaluation		Mid-Evaluation		Post-Evaluation	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
Teacher 1	0 / 15	0%	2 / 16	13%	/	
Teacher 2	0 / 14	0%	0 / 17	0%	/	
Teacher 3	0 / 14	0%	0 / 15	0%	/	
Teacher 4	0 / 15	0%	2 / 15	13%	/	
Teacher 5	0 / 18	0%	1 / 16	6%	/	
	/		/		/	

TABLE 2: In each cell below, the information reflects the data for the entire grade level, not an individual class.

Recorded below:

A = # of children at benchmark or above/total # of students

B = Indicate % at benchmark or above

GRADE LEVEL TOTALS	Pre-Evaluation		Mid-Evaluation		Post-Evaluation	
	A	B	A	B	A	B
	0 / 76	0%	5 / 79	6%	0 /	0%

EVERYDAY MATH PRE / MID-YEAR / POST EVALUATION SUMMARY
REFLECTION ON THE DATA

Grade Level Team Reflection

**Principal Reflection On Grade
Level Data**

Summary of Findings:	Ways to Support Teachers
<p align="center"><i>(Areas of strengths & weaknesses)</i></p> <p>Their strengths are tally marks, top-it, calendar routines and counting by 5 and 10s. Their weaknesses are vocab (more/less, before/after) and counting by 2s.</p>	<p>How many students scored a 70%; 60%; 50%; 40%; 30%; 20%; 10%? In looking at your data from last year, are students coming in with a higher score? Use the kindergarten program as a reference. You might have to backup a bit and provide small group instruction at a more basic level. How will growth be monitored?</p>
<p align="center">Next steps in raising student understanding?</p> <p>Our next steps implement all components of Every Day Math, especially Part 3. Students will complete daily math journal page(review and word problem.) We will introduce ISTEP vocab. Students play EDM games in school and for homework. We will review Homelinks and contact parents.</p>	
Summary of Findings:	Ways to Support Teachers
<p align="center"><i>(Areas of strengths & weaknesses)</i></p> <p>Our strengths were comparing numbers, before and after, counting up and back by 1s, 2s, and 5s. Our weaknesses were the number grid puzzle, fact family triangle, time and money. The number grid puzzle and fact family triangle have not been discussed in class yet, so we feel that our students will do much better on these on the post test. Our students are still struggling with the money because part of it was quarters (not discussed yet) and partly because we feel that they struggle with counting and exchanging with pictures of coins. The problem with the clocks was the fact that they have not been taught digital time and they couldn't spell half-past and/or o'clock, so they left it off.</p>	<p>You have at least 30 students close to benchmark. As you reflect on your data how many students will your team be able to move from high risk (red) to some risk (Yellow)? Some risk to low risk (green)? What will your team do differently to address these skills? How will parents be involved? What can teachers send home with students? How will growth be monitored?</p>
<p align="center">Next steps in raising student understanding?</p> <p>15/79 or 19% of our students are scoring in the 70% range, 15/79 or 19% of our students are scoring the 60% range, and 17/59 or 22% are in the 50% range. Our next steps are to teach quarters, digital time, number grid puzzles, fact family, continue with coins, number stories, and practice writing the numbers up and back on a line.</p>	

Grade Level Team Reflection

**Principal Reflection On Grade
Level Data**

Summary of Findings:		Ways to Support Teachers	
(Areas of strengths & weaknesses)			
Next steps in raising student understanding?			