Answers to the Formative Assessment

1. How do you think your class did overall? How many and what percent of your class correctly answered five or more questions?
    a. The distribution of scores ranged from 20% correct to 90% correct with an average of 56%. Half of the students scored 50% or below. Seven students did quite well, scoring 80 or 90%. So for the most part, the students still have substantial room for improvement.
    b. 15 of the 26 students or 58% got 5 or more items correct.
2. Are there groups of students that did particularly well or particularly poorly?
    a. Females performed slightly better than the male students. Students with disabilities struggled the most followed closely by English Language Learners. Asian students as a group, performed the best followed by white students. Hispanic students performed the lowest.
3. Which groups are you most concerned about? Why?
    a. Students for whom English is not their first language and students with disabilities. A possible explanation is that the language burden of the items presented particular difficulty for these students who have language deficiencies.
4. Which items are of concern to you? Why?
    a. There were four items where under half the students responded correctly (Item 2 - 12%; Item 10 – 23%; Item 3 – 38%; and Item 6 – 42%). The fact that only 3 students got Item 2 correct indicates that there is a real problem with how the content of that item was taught. The three correct responses may even be guesses on the part of those students (one had 60% and two with 80%). There needs to be a consideration of why most of the students struggled with these four items. Even for the two students who got 90%, Item 2 was the only item they got wrong. It is also possible that the item was poorly written, causing problems with responses or that the items was not sufficiently aligned to the content of the instruction.
5. Are there other data or information from this assessment you might like to have to help you make your instructional decisions? Are there data beyond this assessment you might like to have to help make your instructional decisions?
    a. Given that the items were taken from an existing item bank, it would be helpful to gain a better understanding of how the items aligned to the instructional content. It is possible that some items failed to align properly with the curriculum. It might be helpful to get some more local data, such as exercises or other teacher-produced products that are better aligned to what has been taught to determine if those results either confirm or disconfirm the formative assessment data. Triangulating the sources would help to provide a reliability check. Another strategy is for the teacher to find an open-ended item to more closely examine the content that the two particularly problematic items tap. The teacher could look at attendance data to see if students were absent when the material was covered (particularly for the highest scoring students who missed the item). Additionally, as a formative assessment, the purpose is to help provide a short-term data check to see where students are and provide an indication of understanding and misunderstanding to help the teacher modify the next instructional steps. It

provides short-term data for the purpose of informing teachers on what is needed for instructional modification.

6. Given the items that were most difficult and the students that struggled with those items, how might you have adjusted your instructional planning before starting the unit?
    a. The teacher might have focused more on the students with language limitations to explain more, take more time, or find other ways to communicate the content to these students. The teacher might go back to the lesson plans to see if s/he had provided multiple entry points and scaffolding for the English Language Learners and had attended to vocabulary sufficiently.

7. What instructional decisions could you make based on these results?
    a. The results may require modified instruction for the entire class as well as supplemental assistance for the students who struggled the most. The teacher needs to find a better way to communicate the content but also focus on the students with language and disability limitations. Confer with the English language specialist to determine if there are other instructional strategies that can be incorporated.

8. What additional questions come to your mind based on the data?
    a. Are the results a problem with the test or with the instruction? What other measures of performance might the teacher have that tap the same content that might be triangulated to inform this question. Were all students in attendance when the material was taught? The teacher could do a look back to see if in previous years, did students in class then, also have difficulty with the content. The teacher could examine learning trajectories to determine if there were deficits with any underlying skills.

9. Overall, what do these data indicate to you?
    a. That the teacher needs to address the content of this test to help the students to better understand the material. For the students who struggled most – those with language or disability issues – the teacher may want to consider how to restructure the content in a way that is more approachable for these students. Even for students not in those categories, their performance was not particularly strong so the teacher needs to rethink what when wrong with the instruction and modify it accordingly.