

## Figure 2.2: Team Discussion Tool—High-Quality Assessment Evaluation

**Directions:** Examine your most recent common end-of-unit assessment, and evaluate its quality against the following eight criteria in figure 2.1 (page 14). Write your responses to each question in the following spaces.

1. Are the essential learning standards written on the assessment?

**Discuss:** What do our students think about learning mathematics? Do they think learning mathematics is about doing a bunch of random mathematics problems? Or, can they explain the essential learning standards in student-friendly *I can...* statements for each group of questions? Can they solve any mathematical tasks that might reflect a demonstration of learning that standard? Are our students able to use the essential learning standards and tasks to determine what they have learned and what they have not learned yet?

Note: In order for students to respond to the end-of-unit assessment feedback when the teacher passes it back, this is a necessary assessment feature.

2. Is there an appropriate balance of higher- and lower-level-cognitive-demand mathematical tasks on the assessment?

**Discuss:** What percentage of all tasks or problems on the assessment instrument is of lower-level cognitive demand? What percentage is of higher-level cognitive demand? Is there an appropriate balance? Is balancing rigor a major focus of our work?

Note: Use figure 2.4 (page 23) as a tool to determine the rigor. This will help you to better understand the level of cognitive demand. Also, see the appendix (page 111) for more advice on this criterion. As a good rule of thumb, the rigor-balance ratio should be about 30/70 (lower- to higher-level cognitive demand) on the assessment as appropriate to the standards on the assessment.

3. Is there variety of assessment formats and a clear use of technology?

**Discuss:** Does our assessment use a blend of assessment formats or types? If we use multiple choice, do we include questions with multiple possible answers? Do we include tasks that allow for technology as a tool, such as graphing calculators? Do we provide tasks that assess appropriate use of tools or modeling?

Note: Your end-of-unit assessments should not be of either extreme—all multiple-choice or all constructed-response questions.

4. Are scoring rubrics clear and appropriate?

**Discuss:** Are the scoring rubrics to be used for every task clearly stated on the assessment? Do our scoring rubrics (total points or proficiency scale) make sense based on the complexity of reasoning for the task? Are the scoring points or scale assigned to each task appropriate and agreed upon by each teacher on our team? Is there clear understanding about the student work necessary to receive full credit for each assessment task or question? Is it clear to each team member how partial credit will be assigned?

5. Are the directions clear?

**Discuss:** What does clarity mean to each member of our team? Are any of the directions we provide for the different assessment tasks confusing to the student? Why?

Note: The verbs (action words) you use in the directions for each set of tasks or problems are very important to notice when discussing clarity. Also, be sure that in the directions you clearly state the student work you expect to see and will grade using points or a scale.

6. Is the academic language precise and accessible?

**Discuss:** Are the vocabulary and notation for each task we use on our common assessment clear, accessible, and direct for students? Do we attend to the precision of language used during the unit, and do students understand the language we use on the assessment?

Note: Does the assessment instrument include the proper language supports for all students?

7. Does the visual presentation provide space for student work?

**Discuss:** Do our students have plenty of space to write out solution pathways, show their work, and explain their thinking for each task on the assessment instrument?

Note: This criterion often is one of the reasons not to use the written tests that come with your textbook series. You can use questions from the test bank aligned to your instruction, but space mathematics tasks and assessment questions as needed to allow plenty of room for students to demonstrate their understanding.

8. Do we allot enough time for students to complete the assessment?

**Discuss:** Can our students complete this assessment in the time allowed? What will be our procedure if they cannot complete the assessment within the allotted time so all students receive equitable opportunities for demonstrating learning?

Note: Each teacher on the team should complete a full solution key for the assessment he or she expects of students. For upper-level students, it works well to use a time ratio of three to one (or four to one) for student to teacher completion time to estimate how long it will take students to complete an assessment. For elementary students, it may take much longer to complete the assessment. All teachers should use the agreed-on time allotment.