

Student Work Analysis

A Process Guide for Looking at Student Work Collaboratively



- Step 1 Select an assessment that supports school-wide goals, is focused on Core Content for Assessment, and is easily integrated into current classroom instruction. (Typically, worksheets, quizzes, or multiple choice tests don't provide much of a basis for giving feedback to students!)
- Step 2 Complete the assignment with students. Make sure to give clear directions
- Step 3 Create or gather a scoring guide to clarify expectations for student responses.
- Step 4 Select samples of student work that demonstrate authentic student responses to the assessment. You might choose two or three samples to provide contrast or randomly select samples from the class set.
- Step 5 Score the student work using the scoring guide. During this step, all participants must work independently without discussion about the student work. When everyone has a set of scores, share them so that each team roughly agrees.
- Step 6 Study the results to analyze strengths and weaknesses for the group. Ask some of the following questions:
1. How many students scored a 3 or higher?
 2. How many students need re-teaching for mastery?
 3. Holistically, what does this group know?
 4. How well do they display critical thinking?
 5. How well do they demonstrate effective communication skills?
 6. Was this assignment well designed?
 7. Were the students clear on the expectations?
 8. What trends are most obvious from scoring codes?
 9. Into what categories do the successful students fall?
 10. Into what categories do the unsuccessful students fall?
- Step 7 Plan instructional changes for classrooms, grade levels, or for the school based on the results. Make a list of the proposed instructional changes to distribute to all participants.
- Step 8 Revisit and revise instructional changes at the next faculty, team, or grade level meeting to discuss what change has occurred and how effective the changes are.

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NOTE: What the faculty will do in this step depends upon what the school's purpose is for conducting a scrimmage. If the purpose(s) is to discover student learning needs and to make informed decisions about revising curriculum and/or instruction, then the steps below may be helpful. However, if other purposes are behind this work, adjustments below or even an entirely different process may be necessary as a follow-up to the scrimmage.

Beliefs

- Students' work in schools is serious work.
- Students' work is key data about the life of the school.
- The work of children and adults in school should be public.
- Practices for looking at student work must be connected to serious changes in curriculum instruction, and professional development.

Why “Look at student work collaboratively”?

- To determine the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction.
- To set standards, to find high-level work and identify the instructional strategies that resulted in that work.
- To obtain the perspective others to and reflect on student learning and development – What skills do students need to learn?
- To learn more about the students' goals; the problems and issues students choose to focus on in the context of an assignment.
- To reflect on and gather ideas for revising classroom practice, and for following student progress over time.
- To help plan professional development.

Who?

- Groups of 5-10 education colleagues (usually teachers and administrators).
- Facilitators

When?

- After each scrimmage event OR -- Monthly or twice monthly in blocks of 1-2 hours depending on the type of process used.
- Make time to learn the process slowly and thoughtfully with a support system in place.

How? (*Example protocol*)

1. **Reading the text:** In silence, everyone reads a student text that has been brought to the session by a participant who has agreed to be the “presenting” teacher for the conference.
2. **Observation and description:** All other participants discuss the work, focusing first, as strictly as possible, on a description of the piece.
3. **Raising questions.** Description is followed by articulation of questions about the text, the author, or the context of the writing.
4. **What is the child working on?** Finally these readers speculate on what they think the child was working on as he or she created this text.
5. **The presenting teacher responds.** Throughout this discussion, the presenting teacher has been silent. At this point, though, the presenting teacher adds any observations he or she has of the text and answers as many of the questions as possible.
6. **Teaching moves and pedagogical responses.** Together, the readers and presenting teacher consider possible teaching moves the teacher could make to encourage and challenge this writer.
7. **Reflection.** When all of this is done, the entire group, including the facilitator, reflects on the conference, considering its satisfactions, frustrations, confusions, and ways to improve the next conference.

Two Major Rules: *First* participants are asked to withhold their judgments of the work under consideration, including expression of taste (“I don’t like...” or “I like...”) or of quality. *Second*, the initial phases of the conference are conducted with as little information revealed as possible about the student (producer) and the context of the assignment.

References

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- Blythe, T., Allen, D., and Powell, B. (1999). *Looking together at student work: a companion guide to assessing student learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (2000). *Teaching and teacher development: a new synthesis for a new century*. In R. Brandt, (ed.), *Education in a new era*. Virginia: ASCD.