

Analyzing Student Work for Actionable Trends in Literacy

Purpose: Follow an approach to efficiently analyze student work in order to understand students' thinking and identify gaps in skills and knowledge in order to take targeted action.

Objectives:

- Analyze student work in order to understand students' thinking and identify gaps in skills and knowledge
- Create a plan to take targeted action to support students' skills and knowledge

Materials:

- Writing task and student work (8-10 samples from a cross-section of your class is preferable)
- [Grade-level Common Core Writing and Reading Standards](#)

Actions:

1. **Understand the task, the standard, and the text.** Start by stepping into students' shoes and reading the writing prompt. Next, look at the writing standards to identify which standard(s) this task assesses. Last, read the passage to identify the qualitative features of complexity that may be challenging for students.
 1. What are students actually being asked to do in this task?
 2. Which standards are being assessed through this task?
 3. What will be challenging about this text for students? Where will they likely struggle?
2. **Set the criteria for student work.** With your team, craft an exemplar response to the writing prompt. Next, identify what you would expect to see in student work that is:
 - Meeting expectations
 - Approaching expectations
 - Far below the standard
3. **Analyze and sort student work into buckets.** Review each student work sample and sort it by these categories (i.e. Meeting expectations, Approaching expectations, and Far below the standard).
4. **Review each bucket for trends.** Identify patterns of success or need, specifically in relation to the standards this task addresses.
 - For each bucket, what does the work show about student understanding and misconceptions? Is there a trend in what's holding them back? Consider gaps in writing skills *and* reading comprehension—often, students struggle with writing because they struggle to comprehend the text.
5. **Come up with a targeted plan for your students.** Review the trends you've identified and think through next steps.
 - Which of these things is "actionable" - something we can control and take action on?
 - What will be the most important thing to focus on to move each group forward? Name one specific next step.
 - How will you target this gap in your planning and instruction?