



Looking at Student Work Tool

DESE INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND OBSERVATION TOOLS COLLECTION | PILOT VERSION 2024-2025



Guiding Question

How can intentional planning help me facilitate **deeper learning** for all students and provide equitable access to grade-level, real-world, interactive, and relevant work?

This Tool Helps Educators

- Determine students' progress, strengths, and opportunities for growth based on grade-level content, language, and practice standards
- Reflect on and shift instructional practice
- Determine next steps to support student learning

This tool is best used after the Unit Unpacking and Lesson Internalization tools to ensure the team is clear on the goals of the unit and lesson. We also encourage you to review the Instructional Planning Tools Guidance before using it.

Applying an Equity Lens and Considerations for Reviewing Student Work

When reviewing student work, it is important to recognize that everything students share with us provides valuable insight into the student's thoughts and makes their thinking visible to others. Student work analysis is best done when reviewing trends in overall understanding first before diving deep into a specific area of concern. We review student work to support student growth rather than blame, and we can better understand the instructional decisions that led to these trends and plan future instruction. When using the tool, consider the following:

1. Analyze student work through an asset-based lens; keep students' strengths at the forefront.
 - Move beyond "got it" & "didn't get it."
 - Approach student work/results with a curious mindset: value the "figuring out" process of learning and look for patterns and trends across student groups.
 - Analyze your own and others' implicit biases & assumptions.
 - Question the role of your own values and beliefs when analyzing and interpreting student work.
 - Be open to gathering and analyzing additional data/information to develop a comprehensive analysis.
2. Ensure that the set of student work samples is representative of a diverse set of students (i.e., students with disabilities, multilingual learners at varying levels of English language development, advanced, etc.).
3. Know your student's skills, language, and content understandings well so you notice data that doesn't 'fit.'
4. Consider the student experience before, during, and after the task.



Looking at Student Work Tool: Every Day and Deep Dive Versions

The Looking at Student Work Tool is designed to answer three guiding questions. While it may not be practical to run the complete "deep dive" tool after every lesson, teachers can use the "every day" version to support their day-to-day analysis of student work.

EVERYDAY STUDENT WORK ANALYSIS	
1. What are our expectations for student work for this lesson and task? (10 mins)	Review the exemplar and rubric or criteria for success to ensure that you are assessing student work against grade-level standards and practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the content and language objectives for this specific lesson? What content standards and practices did this lesson target?
2. To what extent did students meet the learning goals of the lesson? (15 mins)	Read the student work and sort by the highest level of understanding to the lowest as aligned to the rubric or criteria for success. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What trends, including both strengths and areas for growth, do you see? • Where is there evidence of student learning and understanding related to the objective and standard of the lesson? • How does student learning and understanding vary across student groups?
3. What will we do to both shift our instructional practice and address specific areas for growth? (15 mins)	Reflect on the impact of your instruction and facilitation on learning for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it lead to the trends - strengths and areas for growth - you identified in the work? • Did every student meet the objective for this lesson and task? If not, identify the highest leverage gap(s) in student work. What specific aspects of your instruction contributed to this gap? Plan action steps. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you address the highest leverage gap(s)? • What shifts will you make to your instruction to deepen student learning in upcoming lessons? • How will you communicate progress and next steps to students?

TEAM DEEP DIVE

Get Prepared

Team Members

1. Select the student work you want to analyze. We recommend choosing student work for one of the lessons/tasks that you created an exemplar for during the Lesson Internalization tool.
 - a. Note that student work may include written responses, videos of student-created performances/explanations, models, investigations, explanations, etc.
 - b. For analysis, select a set of student samples that is representative of a diverse set of students (i.e., students with disabilities, multilingual learners at varying levels of English language development, advanced, etc.)
2. Review and share a rubric or criteria for success for the task, as well as an exemplar if available. Briefly review all student samples.
3. Re-orient yourself in the learning goals of the unit and lesson through revisiting your notes from the Unit Unpacking and Lesson Internalization Tool.
4. If relevant, review the additional data provided by your facilitator that your team will reference during the protocol.

Facilitator

1. Support the team in collecting a diverse representative set of samples of student work artifacts.
2. While there are no time stamps provided, the tool is designed for approximately one hour. It could also be adapted for shorter or longer periods of time, depending on school and/or district priorities, student assets and needs, the expertise of teachers participating, and the time allotted
3. We recommend spending the majority of your time on **Steps 2, 3, and 4.**
4. Support the team to apply an asset-based approach in analyzing student work.

Optional: Collect additional data for your team to use during their conversation, such as student feedback, standardized assessment data, etc.

Step 1: Anchor in Your Vision and Focus

Consider

- Outcomes you want for all students and your school and/or district’s priorities and instructional vision.
- Areas for growth that have emerged from recent learning walks and/or observations
- Trends from recent analysis of student work or data.

Reflect

- What do you want students to be able know and do as a result of this lesson, unit, course, and/or learning experience(s)?
- What do we need to shift in our practice and/or in our students’ experiences? Why?



Pause and Check: Consider your biases.

We all approach student work with expectations about what students can or cannot yet do, emotions, and prior knowledge and assumptions.

Reflect on your own implicit biases and assumptions.

- To what extent do you believe that every student is capable of meeting grade-level standards and expectations?
- Is your bar or expectation for what students can do the same for every student?
- To what extent do you believe your instruction and facilitation of the lesson impacts student learning, both success and areas for growth?
- When you see gaps in student learning, to what extent do you want to make the task easier versus identifying supports, scaffolds, and changes in pedagogy that would support all students in demonstrating mastery of a grade-level task?

Discuss biases as a team.

- Where have we identified potential biases or blind spots?
- How can we hold each other accountable in setting and maintaining high expectations for every student and in reflecting on the role our instruction played in students’ learning?

Step 2: Purpose and Goals of the Lesson and Task

STUDENT WORK DISCUSSION

What are our expectations for student work for this lesson and task?

Set the context with a brief unit, lesson and task overview.

- Contextualize the task within the sequence of learning within the unit.
- The content and language objectives for this specific lesson, as well as the aligned content standards and practices
- The lesson, task, exemplar, and rubric or criteria for success for the team to reference when examining student work to ensure that the team is assessing student work against grade-level standards and practices

To equitably assess student learning across ELD levels: provide or craft exemplars for each level of language proficiency or range of levels (I.e., ELD levels 1-2, 3, 4) using the WIDA proficiency level descriptors within the WIDA 2020 Standards Framework.

- Any scaffolds provided to students for this specific task
- The reason why this lesson and task would benefit from reviewing student work
- A reminder to apply an equity lens and review the considerations for reviewing student work with the group

Distribute samples of student work and assessment materials.

- Print copies for each team member are suggested.
- Do not identify the levels/demographics of the students. If helpful, remove the names of students to help eliminate bias.
- Provide time for the team to read the exemplar(s), rubric, and/or criteria for success.

Respond to any clarifying questions from the team about the lesson goals or the task.

Step 3: Analyzing Student Work

STUDENT WORK DISCUSSION

To what extent did students meet the learning goals of the lesson?

Individually review the work.

- Read each sample of student work. Consider how student responses give us evidence of their understanding and thinking related to the grade-level standards, the objectives for the task, and the rubric.
- Sort the student work by the highest level of understanding to lowest, as aligned to the rubric or criteria for success. Be prepared to explain your ranking for each student sample.
- Highlight or note where you see evidence of grade level understanding of content, skills, and language.

Additional Thinking

Consider what student work reveals about the task.

To what extent did the task provide opportunities for students to think critically about the content and resources of the lesson and engage in learning that values and leverages their own identities? For example, to what extent is there evidence of:

- Variation in responses and answers?
- Students planning and/or revising their work?
- Original thinking and/or the creation of something authentic to the discipline?
- Students leveraging their own identities to make sense of and complete the task?
- Opportunities for students to reflect on their process and/or their learning?

As a team, analyze student work with an asset-based lens and discuss trends.

- What strengths and areas for growth do you see across student work samples? Share evidence from student samples, aligned to the rubric, criteria for success, and standards-aligned exemplars.
- Where is there evidence of student learning and understanding related to the objective and standard of the lesson?
- How did you sort the student work and why? Ask each team member to share, providing evidence for why they put the work in that order.
- How does student learning and understanding vary across student groups? Student identities may need to be shared to answer this question.
- To what extent do students use different pathways, ideas, strategies, or representations in their responses?

Compare trends to other evidence and data.

- How do these trends from student work compare to student feedback, standardized assessment data, and other data collected?
- How does the evidence collected from student work reflect learning goals identified for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and/or advanced learners?

Step 4: Reflect on and Plan for Instruction and Communication

STUDENT WORK DISCUSSION

What will we do to both shift our instructional practice and address specific areas for growth?

As a team, discuss the impact of our instruction and learning for all students.

- How did it lead to the trends, both strengths and areas for growth, that we saw in student work?
- How did our use of scaffolds specifically impact students' thinking and learning?
- Did every student meet the objective for this lesson and task? If not, identify and align on the highest leverage gap(s) in student work. What specific aspects of our instruction contributed to this gap?

ADDITIONAL THINKING

Review an upcoming lesson and collaboratively plan for implementation of the action steps you identified.

- What will these next steps look like in an upcoming lesson?
- What will you do differently to support all learners?
- How will you share feedback and progress with students?
- How will you revise the rubric or criteria for success to meet the needs of the task?

Determine high-leverage instructional practice(s) to address specific areas for growth.

- What actions will you take to improve learning for all students and to reduce disparate outcomes?
- How will you address the highest leverage gap your team identified?
- What shifts will you make to your instruction? Consider specific instructional practices or routines that will deepen student learning in upcoming lessons. As needed, reference the Observation Tool or the Deeper Learning Guidance Tool in determining next steps in instructional practice.
- How will you provide specific, timely, and asset-based feedback to students?
- How will you know that these action steps are successful in improving learning for all students?

Determine how you will revise the lesson for future years.

- What support for building students' knowledge, skills, language needs to be added to and/or removed from this lesson or task next time in order to ensure all students meet the learning goals and to increase all students' capacity as independent learners?
- What areas of the rubric or criteria for success might need to be revised?

Discuss how will you communicate the feedback and progress to students, colleagues, and families.