

ACTIVITY: LOOKING AT STUDENTS' CURRENT THINKING AND SURFACING GAPS (90 MINUTES)

OVERVIEW

Teachers will be able to analyze current student work produced by existing strong instructional tasks/assignments; will examine the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to identify points of alignment and surface gaps between what students currently know are able to do and what the standards articulate they need to know and be able to do; and will discuss implications for teacher planning and preparation.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are the gaps between what students know and are able to do and the expectations of the CCLS?

OUTCOME

Participants will be able to follow a protocol to surface gaps between current student thinking and CCLS expectations.

MATERIALS

- Representative student work samples from appropriate disciplines
- Common Core Learning Standards
- 2013-14 Citywide Instructional Expectations

FACILITATION NOTES

- 1. Introduce the activity. (5 minutes).** In this activity, teacher teams will bring a variety of student work and use the adapted *Looking at Students' Thinking* protocol to examine what the student work reveals about student thinking. Then, the teams will examine the relevant Common Core standards to identify areas of alignment and to surface gaps. Finally, the teams will discuss the implications for teacher planning and preparation.
- 2. Review and engage in the protocol: *Looking at Students' Thinking*. (40 minutes).**
 - Step 1:* Presenting teacher describes the task to team and distributes a copy of the assignment as well as samples of student work. (5 minutes)
 - Step 2:* Teachers review the task and student work. (10 minutes)
 - Step 3:* Teacher teams describe the work, recording low-inference observations, and then discuss. (10 minutes)
 - Step 4:* Speculate about students' thinking. Consider questions like: *What did the instructional task and student work reveal about student thinking? Where in the work do you see insights into students' thinking? How are they making sense of ideas, putting information*

together, organizing thoughts, and reasoning? (15 minutes)

Consider recording current student thinking in the first column of a chart that looks like this:

Current Student Thinking	Desired Student Thinking <i>or</i> Gaps between Current and Desired	Implications for Teacher Planning and Preparation
This work reveals that the student(s)...	Students need to develop the skill of using evidence to support their argument/opinion in discussion	Plan for more explicit focus on classroom discussion by modeling the use of evidence from a text to support an argument during classroom discussion

3. **Surface gaps. (15 minutes).** Examine the relevant Common Core Standards in order to surface the gaps between the current and desired student thinking. Questions to consider while reviewing the standards:

- What do these standards require students to know and be able to do?
- How do the demands change from grade to grade?

(Note: Consider recording teachers' responses under "desired student thinking" on the chart. Ask: What are the gaps between current student thinking and desired student thinking? Teachers discuss. If using "gaps between current and desired thinking" version of chart, record gaps in middle column.)

4. **Discuss implications for teacher planning and preparation. (15 minutes).** Considering the gaps surfaced above, teachers discuss the implications for teacher planning and preparation in designing instruction and assessments. Record responses under "Implications..." on the chart (see sample chart in step #2).