

HSCPCC

April 2012



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

### HOW DO MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES DEMONSTRATE HIGH SCHOOL-READINESS?

#### INTRODUCTION: INTRODUCTION TO THE QUALITATIVE EVALUATION PROCESS (13-15MINUTES)

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#### OUTCOME

Participants will gain understanding about what the qualitative application process is

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- PowerPoint presentation (Slides 12-16)

#### FACILITATION NOTES

Participants sit at tables.

#### Room Facilitator shows slides 11-16.

Slide 11: Overview of qualitative evaluation process (*2 minutes*)

- Tell participants that there are two sections to the qualitative application: the submission of instructional artifacts, and the answers to short answer questions. Both parts will be discussed thoroughly in this section of the presentation.
  - Tell participants that these sections give reviewers insight into how the course is designed.
- Tell participants that applications are reviewed by trained reviewers who will be reading each application for alignment to the CCLS, rigor, and the development of academic and personal behaviors.
- Tell participants that the overall determination the reviewer makes is whether the course should be certified as high school ready.

Slide 12: Instructional artifacts (*4 minutes*)

- Review the list of instructional artifacts that are collected in the qualitative application. Reiterate that when examining instructional resources the reviewer is looking for evidence of alignment to the CCLS, rigor, and the development of academic and personal behaviors.
- Tell participants that the artifacts are reviewed holistically, and they put together a composite picture of the course.
- For example:
  - the **comprehensive curriculum and/or scope and sequence document** is important because it presents a start-to-finish picture of the course. Reviewers will look to see if the other artifacts map back onto the overall goals of the course.
  - **student assignments and accompanying texts** are collected to give the reviewer a sense of how the students use text to learn the course material, and how the assignments ask students to engage with the content. For example: is it increasingly independent?
  - **another insight the assignments yield** is whether or not they support the development of **academic and personal behaviors**. For example do they ask students to note-take, to plan ahead, to engage in group work?

- Tell participants that the **graded student work** is valuable because it shows (a) what kind of feedback students get; (b) how the teacher determines if students are meeting standard.
- Tell participants that the activity portion of this presentation will allow them to engage more deeply with the ideas of assessments being aligned to the CCLs.
- Ask participants if they have any questions about the artifacts.

Slide 13: Short answer questions (*2 minutes*)

- Tell participants to read over the sample short answer questions on the slide.
- Tell participants that there are 7 short answer questions, all of which should be answered in 500 words or less.
- Tell participants that the other questions get at the following aspects of course design:
  - Horizontal alignment between sections of the course
  - Engagement of students around areas of college readiness (e.g. literacy development, critical thinking skills)
  - DOK and Bloom's taxonomy

Slide 14: What reviewers are looking for (*3 minutes*)

- Tell participants that there are two main things that reviewers will be looking for in the artifacts
  - The first one is the alignment to CCLS and evidence of rigor.
- Tell participants that you have referred to academic and personal behaviors in previous slides and that now they will have a chance to go over them.
- Tell participants that academic and personal behaviors are critical in achieving academic success and that a high school ready course in middle school should include the explicit development of these skills and the opportunities for students to practice them.
- Ask participants if they have any questions about the academic and personal behaviors.

Slide 15: Guiding questions for reviewers (*2 minutes*)

- Tell participants that reviewers will read application materials with certain questions in mind.
- Tell participants that these questions will allow reviewers to hone in on alignment to the CCLS, rigor, and the development of academic and personal behaviors.
- Tell participants that these questions speak both to understanding discrete artifacts, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the whole course.
- Let participants read over the questions.

## ACTIVITY 1: ANALYZING INSTRUCTIONAL ARTIFACTS FOR ALIGNMENT TO STANDARD (40 MINUTES)

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### OUTCOME

Participants will understand the role of standards in creating quality assessments and giving meaningful feedback to students about their work.

### GUIDING QUESTION

WHAT DOES CCLS ALIGNMENT LOOK LIKE IN TEACHER AND STUDENT WORK?

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Slides 16-17
- Handout 1: student task and accompanying texts
- Handout 2: student work and rubric
- Handout 3: exemplar student work
- Note-taking page

### FACILITATION NOTES

**Room Facilitator** shows slides 17 and 18 and then turns the activity over to table facilitators.

**NOTE: if you do not have a table facilitator, you can lead participants in activity from front-of-room.**

Slide 16: Activity (*1 minute*)

- Introduce participants to the activity. Tell participants that this activity will offer them a chance to look at how the CCLS can inform what assessments teachers design, how they are graded, and what student work results.
- Mention that this is a stand-alone task administered this year as part of the Citywide Instructional Expectations.
- Tell participants that they will do two things in this activity.
  - First they will review an eighth grade assessment and its accompanying texts to look for alignment to the CCLS.
  - The second part of the activity is to examine the resulting graded student work and how it aligns to the CCLS.

Slide 17: Sample task (*1 minute*)

- Tell participants they will be looking at a sample eighth grade task.
- Tell participants to keep in mind that this is not the exact process that reviewers will go through for all the submitted assessments and student work because it is highly detailed.

## TABLE FACILITATION NOTES

### Part I of activity: Determining the alignment of a task to standard: (15 minutes total)

- **HANDOUT 1:** The table facilitator directs participants to read the student task and accompanying texts and determine **what are students being asked to do, and do the texts contain sufficient and relevant information for them to complete the task?**
- Give participants *5 minutes* to review and then share out as a table *for 3 minutes*.
  - Possible responses about the expectations of the task may include:
    - Read both sides of an argument
    - Annotate the text by marking important pros and important cons
    - Explain the two sides and provide evidence for both
      - **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** Pay special attention to this expectation of the task. You will find in the student work sample that the student does as instructed in the prompt, which results in a weaker written argument.
    - Take a position
    - State claim
    - Use evidence to support their claim
    - Explain reasoning
    - Write a conclusion
    - Reread their letter
  - Possible responses about the texts and the use of them:
    - While the text does allow students to address the task, much of the thinking is done for them (e.g. the pros and cons are spoon-fed to the students; there is no role for student analysis of the text)
    - The expectations around labeling “pro” and “con” may be confusing because the text is already formatted as a pro/con t-chart.
    - The texts have the information necessary to complete the task.
    - Please note that no reading standards are cited for this task. While there may be issues around the texts, this is fundamentally a writing, not reading, task.

**NOTE:** participants may feel that the texts are too simple for an eighth grade task. Acknowledge this correct point by explaining that if we had more time for this exercise, we would delve into the issue of **text complexity**, which looks at whether the text is appropriate for a given grade. This is the reason that we collect a list of key texts as artifacts in the qualitative application. We want to be sure that students are being asked to read and write about appropriately complex texts.

- The table facilitator directs participants to read over the **standard** that the assessment cites. It is at the bottom of the task. **You can tell participants that the appropriate standard is the argument-writing standard.**

## W. 8.1

1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence
  - a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  - d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- **The table facilitator** asks the participants to spend *3 minutes* determining **whether the standards align to the task**.
  - Discuss the findings with the table for *5 minutes*.
    - Participants/facilitator should identify that the task is largely aligned to W.8.1
    - Participants may note a couple of issues about the task alignment to the standard
      - The students didn't have to grapple with the text—the arguments were laid out for them.
      - While the task and standard are aligned, the component of the task that asks students to “explain the two sides and provide evidence for both” doesn't necessitate that the students explain the information in the complex way the standard expects, as indicated by the language “support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence...”
      - The student voice may be odd because they receive directions to answer the prompt in both letter and essay form.
      - “Alternate” or “opposing” claims are not mentioned in the task—rather students are asked to “explain the two sides.”

## **Part II of activity: Examine resulting graded student work for alignment to standards (25 minutes)**

### 1. HANDOUT 2

**Table facilitator** should walk the participants through the rubric and point out how it is designed. (*1 minute*)

- The rubric is organized by grade level, with a “proficient” being indicated as on-grade level (grade 8)

- The rubric is an accurate alignment to standards, so the student work is being scored against the standard.

Table facilitator should have the participants read the student work (*5-7 minutes*) and rubric and should pose the question to the participants: **Did the student meet the expectations of the task? Why/why not? Did the student meet the expectations of the standard? Why/why not?**

- Discuss the findings with the table (*5-7 minutes*):
  - Participants/facilitators should identify that the student work **does not meet the expectations of the standard, but it does do what the task asks them to do.**
  - Some reasons for the lack of alignment may include, among other things:
    - The student does not start his/her writing with the claim, and then use the essay to further her claim (Part A).
    - Instead, the student spends the bulk of the essay summarizing the two sides to the argument with evidence that does not form a coherent explanation, but is strung together simply as facts from the texts (Part B).
    - The evidence is strung together, and does not use the language that the standard calls for to create a cohesive argument with clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaim, and evidence (Part C).
    - The student does not share his/her claim until the final paragraph, and does not include strong evidence to support it. (Part E).
- After the table has discussed the (lack of) alignment between the student work and the standard, turn the participants' attention to the rubric and ask: **Do you agree with the teacher's assessment on the rubric? What feedback might you give a teacher using this rubric?** (*5 minutes*)
- Discuss the implications of the rubric's design on assessing the student work: (*3 minutes*)
  - Participants/facilitators should identify that the student work **is scored too highly.**

**HANDOUT 3** After determining whether the student work is aligned to standards, tell participants to turn to Handout 3, the exemplars from the CCLS.

**Tell participants that** one exemplar is from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and one is from the 9<sup>th</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade one is included to show participants what level of writing is expected in that grade. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade sample is provided to show the level at which the rubric identified the student's writing.

Give participants 5 minutes to read the exemplars from the CCLS and ask themselves:

- Does this change your assessment of the student work?
- How might teacher assessment have been changed if they had incorporated the use of exemplars into their rubric and/or expectations?
- How might schools use benchmark student work to further their work around the CCLS? (**Facilitators** can make the point that the exemplars are a way of norming)

Discuss these questions as a table. (*4 minutes*)

## WHOLE GROUP DEBRIEF (12-15 MINUTES)

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- PowerPoint presentation slide 18-19

### FACILITATION NOTES

Participants sit at tables.

**Room Facilitator** shows slides 19-20

Slide 18: Whole group debrief (*5 minutes*)

- Ask 2-3 participants to answer the questions on the slide.

Slide 19: Turn and talk: academic and personal behaviors (*7 minutes*)

- Tell participants that this is a list of the academic and personal behaviors that reviewers will be looking for in middle school artifacts and short answer questions.
- Tell participants to discuss—in pairs or at their tables—the questions on the slide.
- After participants have had a chance to discuss, regroup participants as a whole-group and take 1-2 volunteers to answer the first question.
- After you hear from 1-2 participants, make the suggestion that this assessment tries to **engage** students by providing them with the anticipatory reading at the beginning of the task.
- Tell participants that another academic and personal behavior that the task addresses is that it asks students to **demonstrate work habits/organizational** skills with the note-taking the students are asked to do as they hear/read the text.
- Tell participants that reviewers do not expect to see evidence of academic and personal behaviors in every assessment.
- Segue to the second question after you make this point. Take 1-2 volunteers to answer the second question.
- You may want to offer the following ideas after you have called on 1-2 volunteers

- **Motivation** may be developed when student have autonomy of their work—for instance, if they choose their own research question, or have a choice of what assessment to complete.
- **Engagement** could included involving students in the goal-setting process
- **Work habits/organizational skills** may occur in the instruction of the research process, when teachers teach note-taking; or it may come from explicit instruction in how to study
- **Communication/collaboration skills** could be addressed in group work or oral or multi-media presentations
- **Self-regulation** is developed when students have a long-term project or know what they are expected to do to complete assignment—it could be as simple as a rubric to guide their writing from the beginning draft to the finished product.
- Call on 1-2 volunteers to answer the third question on the slide.
  - You may want to offer the following idea after volunteers have shared their answer.
  - The transition from scaffolded to independent work is one example of how you could see the development of academic and personal behaviors over the course of a year.

## WRAP UP (5 MINUTES)

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- PowerPoint presentation slide 20-21

#### Slide 20: Next steps in your networks (*3 minutes*)

- Ask 1 volunteer to answer each question on this slide.
- Emphasize to participants that even if schools do not apply this year, the process itself is meant to initiate conversation around rigorous course design.
- Tell participants that they should consider nominating schools that have begun to align their curriculum to the CCLS, though this is not a criteria for applying.

#### Slide 21: Additional resources (*2 minutes*)

- Point out to participants that the PR website has the resources listed on the slide. The powerpoint can be used to explain the content of this presentation.
- The copies of documents include everything that was a part of the activity—including the student work and the text exemplars.
- The guided activity refers to a highly scripted version of this presentation that network points can use with principals in a pd session. It leads them through the activity and the powerpoint step-by-step.