

Tool 13

Sample Student Work Analysis

Prior to the on-site school review, teachers were asked to collect student work from each of their classes for a 2-week period. Teachers were also asked to include corresponding lesson plans, any scoring guides used, and a description of each assignment if available. In this sample, student work was received from 13 teachers in a K–7 school in the following content areas/classes: language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, special education, physical education, technology, and art. A total of 243 unique assignments were received and reviewed (Table 1). A “unique assignment” is one that is given in one or more classes. Thus an identical assignment given in three classes counts as a single unique assignment.

Table 1: Number of Assignments by Grade Level and Specialist Grouping

Grade Level and Specialist Grouping	Number of Unique Assignments
K, 1, 2, and 1–2 split	76
3, 4, and 2–3 split	31
5, 6, 7	51
Special education, physical education, technology, and art	85
Grade level could not be determined	5
Total	243

Cognitive Demand

To determine the level of cognitive demand, assignments were analyzed using Bloom’s Taxonomy (Table 2, next page). This classification system divides tasks into two orders representing higher- and lower-order thinking skills, with three progressively more complex levels in each of the orders. The cognitive demands from the lower order progress from recall to comprehension to application. Within the higher order, the cognitive demands progress from analysis to synthesis to evaluation.

This analysis of student work reviewed during the 2-week window revealed that the majority of assignments (90%) were targeted to lower-order thinking skills. However, within that majority, the highest percentage of assignments were at the application level, which is the highest level in the lower order.

Level of Rigor

Academically rigorous content leads students beyond the acquisition of knowledge. An academically rigorous curriculum teaches analytical thinking, learning skills, comprehension skills, and writing skills. The rigor of each assignment reviewed was calculated based on the degree of academic challenge present in the assignment in relation to state grade-level standards (Table 3, next page).

Table 2: Cognitive Demand

Level	Number of Assignments at Level
Higher Order	
Evaluation	3
Synthesis	0
Analysis	21
Total Higher Order	24
Lower Order	
Application	115
Comprehension	31
Knowledge/recall	68
Total Lower Order	214
Could not be determined	5

Table 3: Level of Rigor

Level	Number at Level	Percentage at Level
Higher than state standard/benchmark	23	10
Match to state standard/benchmark	168	69
Below standard/benchmark	44	18
Could not be determined	8	3
Total	243	100