**

**For the Leader of the Activity**

What Can My Students Learn by Writing?

Professional Development Planning Page

**Purpose:**

* To understand how reading and writing can be used to build a knowledge base in science, social studies, literature and other areas.
* To demonstrate the role of deep understanding in effective writing.
* To generate ideas about how CCSS aligned writing can be used to guide students in making sense of information and experiences.

**Audience:** K-12 educators, administrators, ELA and **content area specialists**

**Grouping:** Groups of two or three, single or multiple grade levels

**Materials:**

* Selection of student work from the Range of Writing collection (see criteria below).
* *What Can My Students L earn by Writing?* record sheets – one sheet for each piece of student work to be analyzed.

**Approximate Time:** 20 minutes- 1 hour

This activity can be easily flexed by adjusting the number and length of student samples used.

**Advance Preparation:**

1. Copy the packet provided or use the *In Common* Collection to create a packet of student work and record sheets for each participant.

To create a custom packet of student work:

* Choose 3-6 pieces of student work (transcribed or revised/edited version) from the Range of Writing pieces in an appropriate grade level span. Pieces selected should show clear evidence of classroom content, but can be from any writing type. This activity works best when pieces are drawn from a variety of grade levels and content areas.
* Add multiple copies of the *What Can My Students L earn by Writing?* record sheet – **one record sheet will be needed for each piece chosen.**
* Copy one packet (student work and record sheets) for each participant.

2. Carefully read through, and reflect on, the pieces and questions provided before leading this activity.

**Leading the Activity:**

1. Introduce the activity and collection of student work samples, using the short PowerPoint or the written protocol included in this resource.
2. Group participants as desired. Most activities work best if done in pairs or groups of three. Group members may teach the same grade level or represent multiple grade levels.
3. Hand out materials (listed above).
4. Review directions for completing the activity on the Protocol, calling attention to the recording sheet provided.
5. Circulate, answering questions and extending thinking as participants observe, record and reflect on the student work.
6. Debrief by sharing observations on the recording sheet as a full group.
7. Help participants synthesize and summarize what they have learned.
8. Optional: As a group, develop a short written synthesis of learning. Arrange for everyone to get a copy of this group synthesis (This can be e-mailed to participants, created in a Google Doc, printed out and photocopied or even copied by hand by participants).
9. Distribute and collect the Exit Ticket below. Be sure to respond to questions and use this feedback before repeating the activity with a different writing type or grade level span.

Common Ground Protocols: Using the *In Common* Collection to Better Understand the CCSS

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**Exit Ticket**

*Please reflect briefly on this activity below.*

What are the key elements in this writing type at your grade level?

How will what you have learned in this activity help you in planning writing instruction?

What questions do you have about this writing type?

What would make this activity more effective? What suggestions do you have for future activities?

Thank you!

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**For Participants**

What Can My Students Learn by Writing?

**Overview:**

The student writing in this packet has been chosen to provide some examples of the ways in which writing can be used to build deep understanding of key concepts in a variety of content areas. After reading each piece, you will be asked to identify the content or concepts the student has learned. You will also speculate about what may have happened in the classroom to build the knowledge and develop the writing skills needed to write each piece.

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**Protocol:**

1. Begin by choosing a student piece that interests you. The pieces do not need to be read in order.
2. Read the piece, focusing on the content expressed as well as the way the piece was written.
3. With a partner, discuss each question on the *What Can My Students Learn by Writing?* Recording Sheet. Capture your thinking on the sheet as you work.
4. Jot any questions you have on the back of the sheet.
5. Repeat this process with another piece of your choice.
6. Be prepared to share your observations and questions with the larger group.

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What might have happened in the classroom to produce this piece of writing?

*With a partner, please speculate on the following:*

For what class/subject area might this piece have been written?

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What “Big Idea” (content area concept) is the student exploring in this piece?

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What (content area) question might the teacher have posed to focus this writing piece?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Underline** the sentence or section of the piece that most concisely expresses or summarizes this “Big Idea”.



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What kind of texts and experiences might have been used to build the knowledge and understanding needed to explore this question?

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How might the students have gathered and recorded information?

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What supports/writing instruction may have helped the student to write this piece?

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