



# The Thompson TDA Model

## Student Work Analysis Using the Text Dependent Analysis Learning Progressions

The Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) Learning Progressions<sup>1</sup> illustrates the pathway in which students demonstrate their ability to integrate reading comprehension and analysis through a written essay. The TDA Learning Progressions are structured in grade spans (3-5 and 6-8) with 4 levels, *Beginning*, *Emerging*, *Developing*, and *Meeting*. The levels describe the typical path we see in student responses as they move toward demonstrating more sophisticated understanding. The levels described on the TDA Learning Progressions are not intended to coincide with the rubric scores, which provide a holistic view of students' ability to demonstrate the criteria on the TDA Scoring Guidelines. Rather, these levels provide the teacher with an indication of student strengths and needs based on what students can do at a specific point in time. The purpose of this resource is to guide educators through a diagnostic process that meets students' needs. The entire *Student Work Analysis Protocol* is located at the end of this guide.

### Purposes for Student Work Analysis (SWA)

Responses to text dependent analysis prompts provide a window into how students construct meaning of key concepts and skills as described in the TDA Learning Progressions. By examining and analyzing student work through a clear and systematic process, teachers can:

1. Review the quality and effectiveness of a text dependent analysis prompt and close reading text dependent questions;
2. Make key instructional decisions for individual students and/or groups of students by targeting support and differentiating instruction for comprehension, analysis and essay writing;
3. Monitor student progress over time for analyzing text;
4. Gain a clearer understanding of how learning and demonstrating analysis occurs over time;
5. Build expertise of how analysis is demonstrated.

(adapted from Hess, K., 2018)

<sup>1</sup> See TDA Learning Progressions



- 1. Review the quality and effectiveness of prompts and questions.** Determining if the text selection is appropriate and a text dependent analysis prompt is of high quality depends on the results from student responses. Examining student work helps determine if the prompt was written clearly and whether the text dependent questions in the close reading lesson provided the support necessary for students to respond in the expected manner. When students do not respond in the expected manner, it may be due to either the prompt or the text dependent questions being unclear. For example, a prompt might expect students to analyze different techniques used by an author. Therefore, the TDA prompt must reflect the vocabulary used in the lesson and the word *techniques* must be embedded in the text dependent questions.
- 2. Make key instructional decisions.** Examining student work using the TDA Learning Progressions reveals gaps in student knowledge. The gaps may be due to unknown vocabulary such as the example described above. The gaps may also reveal that an underlying component of text dependent analysis (reading comprehension, analysis, essay writing), or a specific concept (reading element or text structure) requires additional instruction. Using the SWA process may reveal that a small group of students struggled with vocabulary or concepts. Determining specific needs of students allows the teacher to differentiate instructional decisions to support struggling students and deepen the instruction for other students.
- 3. Monitor student progress over time.** Comprehending appropriately leveled texts, selecting accurate and precise evidence, making inferences, explaining and elaborating on ideas, writing in an organized manner, using grade appropriate vocabulary and structures, and using appropriate English language arts conventions remains a constant focus throughout the school year as students respond to TDA prompts. Although texts and the reading elements/structures change throughout the course of the year, analyzing student work for successful analysis does not. SWA (using the TDA Learning Progressions) provides a lens into determining how individual students and the whole class make progress in demonstrating these skills.
- 4. Gain a clearer understanding of how learning and demonstration of analysis occurs over time.** Using SWA in conjunction with the TDA Learning Progressions uncovers how the learning and demonstration of text dependent analysis evolves over time. Using the *Student Work Analysis Protocol*, the teacher describes the performance of students at different levels. Comparing and recording these descriptions helps the teacher to gain a deeper understanding of the expectations of analysis and how novice students differ from more expert students. This, in turn, provides a stronger foundation for the necessary instructional decisions that are required during close reading instruction.
- 5. Build expertise of how analysis is demonstrated.** Analyzing student responses using the TDA Learning Progressions provides an opportunity for teachers to diagnose student work and how to make instructional decisions to support students in analysis. Furthermore, when teachers work collaboratively in this process they expand their expertise in multiple ways. Together they establish a professional understanding of what student progress looks like over time and they become confident in identifying successful analysis in student responses.



Although teachers often review student work in order to provide a grade, a systematic diagnostic analysis of student work allows teachers to determine students' knowledge of specific content expectations and to shape instructional next steps. This analysis is a necessary step in the teaching-learning-assessment process. Student work analysis assists teachers in making a shift from **scoring** student work to **diagnosing** student performance. It is only through this diagnostic work that teachers can make thoughtful instructional decisions and appropriate instructional moves that improve student performance.

The *Student Work Analysis Protocol* incorporates diagnostic questions (strengths, needs, and instructional strategies), and provides educators with a clear process for diagnosis. Specifically, teachers are asked to sort student work in three levels, to analyze samples from each level to identify strengths, misconceptions or needs, to identify class patterns and trends over time, and to determine instructional next steps.

## Structures for Analyzing Student Work

Analyzing student work should occur at the beginning of the year and continue on a regular basis throughout the school year. Depending on grade level, the first diagnostic response for text dependent analysis may be administered formally or informally, independently, in pairs, or in small groups. Student responses may consist of one or more paragraphs.

Teachers can analyze student work individually, in grade-level teams, in content-alike teams, or in cross-content teams. Analyzing student work can occur during any available time such as common planning time, professional development time, or in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). There are benefits and drawbacks to each structure. Different structures can be used throughout the year.

### SWA by the Individual Teacher

#### Benefits

The teacher...

- knows what was taught, what was modeled, and what students were able to demonstrate independently.
- examines student work for one specific concept.
- examines student work for one specific group of students.

#### Drawbacks

The teacher...

- misses helpful insights from colleagues.
- misses students' thinking within the response.
- misses different instructional strategies that may assist student learning.



### SWA by Content-Alike Teachers (same grade or cross-grades)

#### Benefits

The teachers...

- form a consensus around the content expectations for students in the same grade or in a continuum of grades.
- calibrate their understanding of grade-level expectations for literary elements and the demonstration of analysis in student responses.
- examine student work for one specific concept or a specific group of students.
- examine student work for performance of a specific group of students.
- provide diverse insights about students' thinking within the responses.
- provide diverse ideas for instructional strategies that may assist student learning.

#### Drawbacks

The teachers...

- spend additional time summarizing the text(s) and explaining prior instruction.
- require extended time when analyzing student work from multiple classes.

### SWA by Cross-Content Teachers (same grade or cross-grades)

#### Benefits

The teachers...

- calibrate their understanding of grade-level concepts and the demonstration of analysis in student responses.
- examine student work for the transfer of basic understanding of the concept of analysis across different content areas or for a specific group of students.
- examine student work for performance of a specific group of students.
- provide diverse insights about students' thinking within the responses.
- provide diverse ideas for instructional strategies that may assist student learning.

#### Drawbacks

The teachers...

- spend additional time summarizing the text(s), assignment expectations, and explaining prior instruction.
- require extended time when analyzing student work from multiple classes.



## Focus for Analyzing Student Work

There are multiple ways to analyze student work based on a specific area of focus. The focus can be on the underlying component as a whole (reading comprehension, etc.) or on a specific criterion of the component (focus on the prompt, etc.).

Underlying Component	Criteria
Reading Comprehension	Focus on the Prompt Understanding of Text
Analysis	Textual Evidence Inferences Explanation and Elaboration
Essay Writing	Organization Word and Sentence Choice Conventions of Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar

Additionally, the focus can be on the specific reading elements or structures that are taught and assessed (theme, characterization, etc.). The lens of the SWA occurs through examining the work of an entire class, selected students, or an individual student. The focus of the SWA decisions is made based on the instruction provided and the needs of students.

## Use of the Student Work Analysis Protocol (SWA Protocol)

The teacher employs the *SWA Protocol* to examine a class set of student work in response to a TDA prompt to diagnose students' strengths and weaknesses. As mentioned above, the teacher examines the responses independently, with a colleague, or in a team approach. The *SWA Protocol* is organized into three parts.

### Part A: Understanding Proficiency Expectations

Part A provides discussion questions that allow teachers to gain clarity regarding what students are expected to know according to grade-level expectations. When teachers are discussing the grade-level expectations, they should move beyond simple identification to a deeper discussion of students' understanding of the reading elements or structures and their interrelationship. For example, a TDA prompt may ask students to *analyze how a character contributes to the plot*. Teachers should move beyond simply identifying the two reading elements of character and plot. They should discuss which aspect(s) of the plot<sup>2</sup> students are expected to analyze, such as the conflict or rising action. In addition, teachers anticipate what evidence students should select as support. Part A will determine the quality of the text and the effectiveness of the text dependent analysis prompt.

<sup>2</sup> See TDA Resource: Reading Elements and Structures



### Part B: Diagnosing Student Strengths and Needs

In Part B teachers begin the diagnostic process. The first step in the diagnostic process shifts teachers away from scoring student work to considering the underlying expectations of a response given the time of the year, the instruction students have received, and the grade level of the students. With these considerations in mind, teachers sort student work into three piles—high, medium, and low. In other words, the sorting process should be focused on what students are able to do **at that moment in time** rather than by end-of-year expectations. The initial quick sort calibrates the teacher to the students' current demonstration of skills. In other words, the students are loosely ranked into high, medium, and low performance. This sorting allows the teacher to make determinations about the need and focus for differentiated instruction, and provides clarification of any student misconceptions. The individual classroom teacher completes the initial sort of a class set. If working within a team, it will be necessary to calibrate through discussion and re-sort the student work into newly combined high, medium, and low piles. Student names should be recorded in the table so that student progress can be monitored.

The second step requires diagnosing student strengths. It is easier to identify what students do not do; however, determining what students have learned focuses the teacher on using a positive mindset. Students are learning! This step reveals the prerequisite knowledge that students have and what they have learned due to the teacher's instruction. Focusing on this information provides a solid starting place for the next instructional moves. Although there may be multiple students in each pile, the teacher identifies the overall strengths of these students with respect to reading comprehension, analysis, and essay writing based on the descriptions in the TDA Learning Progressions. When teachers are working together, this step can occur by discussing each paper prior to placing it into a pile or teachers can sort the student work independently and discuss any discrepancies afterwards. Either way, this step provides the opportunity for collegial discussions about how learning and demonstrating analysis occur over time. This information should be recorded in the table so that the teacher can refer to it as close reading lessons are planned and to make determinations about progress over time.

Finally, the teacher diagnoses student needs. Determining student needs using the TDA Learning Progressions requires consideration of the students' zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, determining instructional next steps should not be a long list of all the knowledge and skills that students need to be successful at the end of the year, but rather what are the next instructional needs based on the response to the current TDA prompt. Using the learning progressions provides guidance on what the students' needs which is based on the criteria for reading comprehension, analysis, and essay writing. This information should be recorded in the table. The teacher can refer to the table when planning close reading lessons and when making determinations about student growth.

### Part C: Identifying Instructional Next Steps

Part C focuses on making decisions about instructional next steps for the whole class and for differentiating instruction for small groups. Although student work has been sorted into three piles (high, medium, low), there may be specific patterns that are noted across all three groups. For example, the teacher may note that all students struggled with an organizational structure for writing the essay. Therefore, this area of focus would be appropriate for whole group instruction and is recorded in the table. The strategies that are recorded in the table should move beyond general statements, such as,



teach *RACE* organizer. It may be necessary for teachers to brainstorm different strategies for teaching essay writing organization. Brainstorming with colleagues encourages diverse ideas for instructional strategies. It allows teachers to expand their instructional repertoire for teaching text dependent analysis.

### What patterns are noted for the entire class that would allow for whole group instruction?

*Organization structure is weak*

### What strategies would be beneficial for whole group instruction?

*Model the structure using a think-aloud strategy*

- *Students highlight the different parts of a response*
- *Students place statements on sentence strips*
- *Students place the sentence strips in order*

Differentiating instruction allows the teacher to focus on the specific instructional needs of each group of students. The teachers use the TDA Learning Progressions to make determinations about the instructional needs for each group. Using the criteria for reading comprehension, analysis, and essay writing helps identify specific instructional strategies. This information should be recorded in the table. The teacher can refer to the table when planning close reading lessons and when making determinations about student growth.

The SWA process should be conducted throughout the school year. It is not necessary to review an entire class set of responses each time students respond to a TDA prompt. It is, however, recommended that teachers use the full SWA process initially to provide baseline data about students' ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary for text dependent analysis. Subsequent responses can be analyzed for different areas of focus individually, in grade-level teams, in content-alike teams, or in cross-content teams.

For more information on the different aspects of text dependent analysis, refer to the series of Text Dependent Analysis Resources by Dr. Jeri Thompson, Center for Assessment.

Thompson, J. (2020). Text Dependent Analysis Resource: Student Work Analysis Using Text Dependent Analysis Learning Progressions. [www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org), <http://www.education.pa.gov>, and <http://pdesas.org>.

## References

- Hess, K. (2018). *A Local Assessment Toolkit to Promote Deeper Learning: Transforming research into practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.



## Student Work Analysis for Text Dependent Analysis Prompts

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_

Task #: \_\_\_\_\_ Text Used (include page #s): \_\_\_\_\_

### Part A: Understanding Proficiency Expectations

Read the text dependent analysis prompt and clarify:

- Which reading elements/structures are the students expected to analyze?
- What do you consider to be a proficient analysis response for this prompt? What evidence would you expect students to select to support their analysis?
- Did the text dependent prompt and passage provide students an appropriate opportunity to demonstrate analysis of the text?

### Part B: Diagnosing Student Strengths and Needs

1. Read the student work samples and **without scoring**, sort students' work by the overall degree of each student's performance in relation to the entire group, not the end-of-year text dependent analysis expectations. In other words, your high pile of student work may still not be meeting your end-of-year expectations. Sort the piles into high, medium, or low. You may need a "not sure" pile. After sorting, the student work in the "not sure" pile should be matched with the papers in one of the existing levels. Student names should be recorded in the columns in order to monitor progress over time.

Class Set Sort		
High	Medium	Low



2. Select several samples from each level (high, medium, low) and identify the student's ability to demonstrate each of the criteria (e.g., **focus on the prompt, understanding of text, textual evidence**) for the underlying components (**reading comprehension, analysis, essay writing**) of the TDA.

Use the Learning Progression descriptions and evidence from the student response to make the determination of what aspects of the TDA the student is doing well. Record the student names in the table below based on the overall level for each underlying component.

### Diagnosing Student Strengths

Reading Comprehension	Analysis	Essay Writing
Beginning		
Emerging		
Developing		
Meeting		



3. Using the reviewed student work from each level, identify and record the **misconceptions, wrong information, and what students did not demonstrate** that was expected with regard to **Reading Comprehension** (general understanding or gist of the text), **Analysis**, and **Essay Writing**.

*Diagnosing Student Needs*

Reading Comprehension	Analysis	Essay Writing
Beginning		
Emerging		
Developing		
Meeting		



### Part C: Identifying Instructional Next Steps

1. After diagnosing what students know and still need to learn, record the instructional next steps for the class considering the following questions.

What patterns are noted for the entire class that would allow for whole group instruction?

What strategies would be beneficial for whole group instruction?

2. Based on the diagnosis of student responses at each level, what content/strategies will students at each level benefit from? Record this information for each level in the boxes below.

What strategies would be beneficial for students in the High group?

What strategies would be beneficial for students in the Medium group?

What strategies would be beneficial for students in the Low group?

3. Debrief by discussing the following questions to wrap-up review of student work.
  - Did the student work demonstrate what was expected from the TDA prompt?
  - Were there any unexpected student responses that should be considered that have not been discussed?
  - What formative assessment strategies can be employed to monitor progress?
  - How can the information gained from this SWA inform overall instructional practice?