

# The Model

These are the six steps of **The SIP Model**. Hold on to this model – you will need it to refer to throughout the training and in your regular meetings.

1. The team examines the assignment or task to ask about content and context: what learning was expected from this task? Each team member individually completes the assignment or task. (If this is not practical, the team discusses the assignment or task.)
2. The team asks: what did students need to have been taught to complete it successfully?
3. The team identifies the standards that apply to this assignment.
4. The team generates a rough rubric or scoring guide for this assignment from the standards and the assignment.
5. The team scores the student work, using the rubric/scoring guide.
6. The team analyzes the student work to plan instructional strategies for improving students' performance.

**STEP 1:**

The team reads the assignment to find out what the students were asked to do and why. The important question is: why did you give this assignment? What were students expected to learn from it?

The teacher bringing the assignment tells the team where in the semester the assignment was given, whether it was an in-class or homework assignment, and other pertinent information.

The teacher should NOT “present” the assignment or work through it, and the whole step should not take more than five minutes. This is a dialog, not a presentation.

**STEP 2:**

The team members list the required skills and knowledge needed to complete the assignment: Does it require problem solving? Computation? Knowledge of literary forms such as fairy tales? Writing? Reading comprehension? Editing? Etc.

**STEP 3:**

Identify the standards that apply to this assignment. Take the standards you are using (national, state, local) and find those standards to which this assignment might be directed. In other words, if the students do the assignment, what standards would they be moving towards? (If the answer is “none,” then jump immediately to Step Six, skipping the other steps).

*Don't make enormously long lists of standards.* Most assignments don't address more than two or three standards. Look at the assignment and figure out the central learning that it embodies. Remember that many assignments will include writing as well as other content, so you should choose a writing standard in addition to the main content.

**STEP 4:**

In this step, the team discusses the expectations and the level of complexity in the assignment as they develop a rubric or scoring guide for this problem from the standards and the assignment.

**Four (4)** is the highest score. Write the features of an ideal answer to this problem. Discuss with your team members and agree on the main points.

**Three (3)** is the next highest score. Write the features of an answer clearly based on understanding of the concept, but exhibiting less confidence and polish than a 4 response, but is still adequate as a response to the assignment.

**Two (2)** is the next to the lowest score. Write the features of an inadequate response that needs additional teaching.

**One (1)** is the lowest score. Write the feature of an answer that hasn't a clue.

**STEP 5:**

Score the student work ALONE, first, using the rubric you've worked out together. When everyone has a set of scores, share them and reconcile them so that each team member roughly agrees. If you can't get complete agreement, at least decide between the papers that get a 4 or 3, and those that get a 2 or 1.

**STEP 6:** *This is the most important step in the process.* People tend to think they're done when they've got the work scored, but in fact all that was just preparation for answering the most important questions.

First, ask about the qualities of the assignment: is it well aligned with standards? Is it worth the students' time? If it needs adjusting, how should it be reworded?

Second, look closely at the student work and make notes on what are the most frequent and fundamental problems: for example, if students are attempting a math problem, can they read it? Do they know what they are asked to produce? Do they lack computational skills, or problem solving techniques? Then build an instructional strategy—using the collective wisdom of the group—to tackle these problems.

Third, look beyond this specific assignment and generalize it into professional development at the school and district level:

*At the school level*, should teachers meet across grade levels (vertically) to coordinate their teaching, for example?

*At the district level*, could the district provide some special materials, for example? Or organize professional development in teaching patterns?

At the end of the SIP process, you should feel mentally stretched—that you have thought deeply about your work as a teacher and have moved forward in getting students to standards. SIP should ensure continuous progress. As groups meet regularly and teachers share experience and strategies, team participants will become increasingly comfortable in pushing each other towards excellence.

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