

Writing about Your Practice

National Board Academy



PRESENTED BY
Tammy Kirkland, NBCT & Angela Victory, NBCT

1

The Three Modes of National Board Writing

Before You Begin: Analyze Exemplars & Examples
Recognize what NB writing looks like

How Do the Standards Fit into Your Writing?

Using the Rubrics to Strengthen Your Writing

Commentary Writing Tips

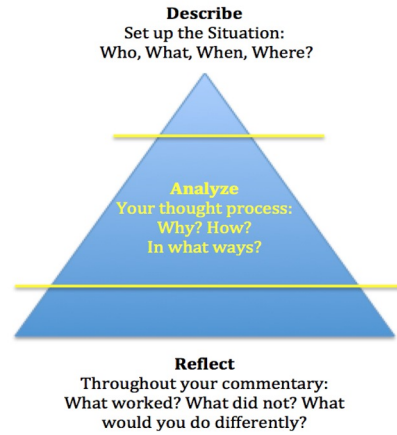
2

The Writing Pyramid

Your writing is your assessor's eyes into your classroom.

The standards must be clearly embodied in your classroom and teaching.

NOTE: The Standards for each certificate area are the sole basis for the assessment specifications that frame both the assessment center component and the portfolio components.
(Scoring Guide p.3)



3

Fear of Writing



4

Descriptive Writing

- Descriptive writing is a retelling of what happened in a classroom situation. This kind of writing should allow the reader to **visualize** and **understand** what the teacher is describing.
- It “sets the scene” for the assessors.

5

Descriptive Writing

You will be asked to write descriptively when the component prompt uses verbs like **list, state, describe, what, when, where, or which**.

For Example-

- ***“What particular instructional challenges to these students represent?”***
- ***“What are the relevant features of your teaching context that influenced the selection of this period of instruction?”***

6

Criteria of Descriptive Writing

- Accurate and precise explanation
- Clear and logical order of the elements/features of the event, person, concept, or strategy described; and
- Inclusion of supporting features or elements that would allow an “outsider” to see whatever is described.

7

Analytical Writing

- Analysis depends on the interpretations the teacher made of what happened, examination of why the elements or events described are the way they are. It shows assessors the thought processes the teacher used to arrive at the conclusions made about a teaching situation. It also demonstrates the significance of the evidence you submit.

8

Analytical Writing

Analysis is called for when a prompt asks **how, why, or in what way(s).**

Analysis is **required** when teachers are **asked**:

- To identify a particularly successful moment in a sample of teaching and why they regard it as successful
- For a rationale: or
- What a student performance suggests about their teaching (here the teacher uses the evidence of student work to explain and illustrate his/her practice and also to use his/her practice to explain and provide a context for the student work.

9

Analytical Writing

For example-

“How do the instructional goals for this particular lesson fit into your long-term goals and plans?”

“What is your rationale for choosing the instructional format that you used to meet the goals of this lesson?”

“Why was this goal appropriate for these students at this time?”

10

Analytical Writing Criteria

- The subject of the analysis should be available to the reader (e.g. the student work, the video.) If such an artifact is not available, a clear description of what is being analyzed must be given prior to the analysis;
- The focus of the writing is not on *what* happened (descriptive) but rather on *why* it happened (analytical.)

11

Reflective Writing

- Reflection is a thought process that you engage in after a teaching experience. This type of thinking allows you to make decisions about how you would approach similar situations in the future—deciding whether to do something the way you have in the past, differently, or not at all.
- Although reflective thought may occur at any time, the reflection component of your writing is where you must **show** assessors **how** you use what you have learned from your teaching experiences to inform and improve your practice in the future

12

Reflective Writing

- Reflection is called for when the component prompt asks you to consider the *successes* of their lessons, and *what they would do differently* and *why*.
- **For example-**
- **“What would you do differently, if anything, if you were to teach this particular lesson again to a similar group of young children next year? If you would not change anything explain why.”**
- **“How effective were your efforts to develop knowledge about the class of children you selected? In the future, what different approaches or additional steps might you take to further enhance your knowledge of children and why?”**

13

Reflective Writing Criteria

- **The subject of the analysis should be available to the reader (e.g. the student work, the videotape.) If such an artifact is not available, a clear description of what is being reflected upon must be given prior to the analysis**
- **The focus of the writing is not on WHAT happened (descriptive) but RATHER on WHY it happened (analytical) and HOW It will influence instruction.**

14

Types of Writers

You do **not** want to be one of these common types of writers.

The Talk Show Host

- Personal views or frustrations
- Excuses, blaming, or bashing the administration, parents, or students

The Theorist

- My philosophy of education
- What all children need to learn
- Political or policy speeches

The Architect

- Everything is scripted
- No mini-lessons
- No reteaching
- Students appear as trained actors

The Psychic

- Does not connect the dots for the assessors
- Believes the assessor will infer what they mean
- Explanations are not provided or thorough

The Unseen Teacher

- Is merely a facilitator, a spectator
- Does not engage with the students
- The students did this...the students did that

The Pulitzer Prize Winner

- No need for revision
- No need for feedback
- Award winning capable (and over confident) writer



15

Three Types of Writing
Examples and Exemplars
Standards
Rubrics
Commentary Questions

16

Resources to Help Your Writing

Thoroughly study and analyze all provided writing resources provided by the National Board **BEFORE** you begin writing.

- ▶ ATLAS
- ▶ General Portfolio Instructions

17

Commentary Examples

GENERAL PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS
Components 2, 3, and 4

All Certificate Areas

Example 1

Instructional Context

My Advanced Placement (AP) Biology class was a very homogenous class relative to the rest of the school. In this class, students ranged in age from 16 to 17, with 19 students in the 11th grade and 2 students in the 12th grade. There were twenty white students and one black student, with no Hispanic, Multiracial or Asian students. There were no students identified as ESE or on a Free or Reduced lunch plan. There were 13



Key:
Description shown in **bold**
Analysis shown in underline
Reflection shown in *italic*

18

Example: A Standard in Action

Notice, all the
underlined writing
(analysis)

My second reason for choosing the small group format is because this model ensures a greater number of students actively participating in discussion while simultaneously learning to appreciate cultural, linguistic, and personal interests of others.

For example, Caroline...spoke low and was slow to respond. Her behavior is consistent with her family's belief that it is disrespectful to be the center of attention so she resists bringing attention to herself.

Erika...and Christian, my two ESOL students were vocal in small group discussion. This does not happen during whole class discussion. Since English is a barrier for them, they often shy away or speak too low to be heard by other students in a whole class discussion. I noticed how a small group setting facilitated ESOL students' speaking abilities because they felt validated by their peers. This method allows all my students to make personal and reading connections to the novel as they engage in meaningful discussion about conflict.

19

Analyze

technology integration. This selection ["The Pinballs"] is a good example of how culture transmits itself through literature, and students see how literature reflects true human experiences. I chose the small group format for two reasons. First, students are comfortable talking to each other as they work in collaborative groups on assignments in the classroom. This method allows them to take intellectual risks without feeling as though they have to "act" for me. For example, Kevin...used good oral language skills, but his dialect included incorrect grammar such as, "Ain't got no." As I monitored discussion, I knew I would need to address verbs and double negatives in a later lesson. My second reason for choosing the small group format is because this model ensures a greater number of students actively participating in discussion while simultaneously learning to appreciate cultural, linguistic, and personal interests of others. For example, Caroline... spoke low and was slow to respond. Her behavior is

20

ATLAS for Candidates

What's to Gain from ATLAS?

A clear understanding of what Accomplished Teaching looks like; NBCTs in action. See inside their classroom.

Written analysis that makes the invisible and intangible aspects of planning, intentions, analysis, and reflection available. Includes four sample **videos**
Cases certified at a 3.75 or higher

21

It's All Connected

- The Standards for each certificate area are the **sole** basis for the assessment specifications that frame both the assessment center component and the portfolio components.
- Rubrics align with the standards
- Commentary questions are designed to “prompt” candidates with **opportunities** to integrate/embody the standards into their writing.

22

Unpacking the Questions

- How do I understand what the Questions are asking me to do, and what is the best way to answer them?



23

Analysis Frames Sentence Starters

Because... I...
 In order to... I...
 Since my students... I...
 Knowing that my students... I.....
 To encourage my students to... I...
 Recognizing that... I...
 To capitalize on my students' ability to...I...
 Given that... I...
 I... so that...
 After considering... I...
 The purpose of/reason for... was...
 I hoped that..... because...
 Desiring my students to... I...
 To ensure that... I...
 I decided that... so that..|
 This was appropriate for these reasons: ...

Just using an analysis frame prompts the writer to explain and analyze

24

Writing Tips

- **Descriptive** at the beginning, to set the stage
- **Analytical after descriptive**, to let you think about the importance of your work, and why you did what you did
- **Reflective at the end** to lead from this lesson to the next time you teach (also sprinkled within commentary)
- Write the questions—then answer them. Answer the questions in your order.
- Paragraphs are NOT required. Paragraphs (indenting) often gets eliminated in the final edit in order to provide additional space.
- See *Electronic Submission at a Glance* for all Component formatting...Font size, spacing, margins...
- Follow the suggested page length. Remember if you extend one portion, you take away from the other. Tip: Following the suggested page length will prevent writing too much and having to cut later. Commentary questions in or out?

25

It's your decision, but...

Commentary Question

What are some of the trends you identified from the information you gathered from multiple sources?

Stem

Some of the trends I identified were...

Leave a “**stem**” of each commentary question in your writing. These does two things.

1. It signals your assessor that you are addressing the questions.
2. It assures that you do not edit out any of your commentary questions and answers.

Place the “**stem**” in italics.

* The reason to keep a “**stem**” is to prevent you from editing out answers to a question.

26

Your Certificate Standards

- The standards are to be woven in your teaching and in turn woven into your commentary.
- Think of the standards, your instruction, and your writing as a quilt.. They are sewn together seamlessly!
- For this reason, you **MUST** plan your lessons with your standards in front of you.
- You cannot backload the standards after your teaching is over.



27

Difference between Integrate and Embody

Integrate is simply using the “Language” of the Standards

Embody is using the “Language” of the standards AND showing specifically what the standard looks like in action in your classroom.

Goal is to embody the standards in your teaching.

28

You can also use your rubric to help answer commentary questions

Remember, your commentary questions align with your rubric. Your questions start off asking about knowledge of your students, classroom...etc. Then you will be asked questions about instruction, assessment, feedback, and finally you will be asked to reflect. The rubric has the SAME order.

Answer your commentary questions with your rubric right beside you

Remember, your rubric aligns with your standards.

Look for key words from the written commentary questions that are embedded in the rubric. Once you locate the key words, take notice...does the rubric elaborate on what you should do? Yes!

29

REMEMBER

- Your rubrics are a powerful tool
- Use your rubrics to improve your writing and provide your assessor with the evidence they are looking in your commentary

Levels 1 & 2 = Tell you what not to do

Levels 3 & 4 = Tell you what to do

30

- How did the pedagogical and instructional decisions you made during the lesson align with your planning?
- What specific approaches, strategies, techniques, or activities did you use to promote active student engagement in the lesson? Cite specific examples from the video recording.
- How did you establish a safe, fair, equitable, and challenging learning environment for all students?
- How did you monitor and assess student progress during the lesson and how did this influence your decision making during instruction? How was feedback provided to the students and what was your rationale for providing it in this manner?
- To what extent did you achieve the lesson's goal or goals? Provide evidence from the video recording to support your answer. What were your next steps with these students as a result?
- How was your approach to teaching this content to the students in this video influenced by past experience?
- What would you do differently, if anything, if you were to teach this particular lesson again to a similar group of students next year? If you would not change anything, explain why.

Commentary Questions (C3)



Rubric Bullets Aligned to Commentary Questions



The Level 4 performance provides clear, consistent, and convincing evidence:

- that the teacher has established a safe, fair, equitable, and challenging environment that promotes students' self-directed learning and active engagement with the teacher and other students in sharing ideas, conversing purposefully, and listening attentively during activities as students explore topics of substance.
- that the teacher creates a student-centered learning environment based on trust and mutual respect, facilitates the inquiry process, and equips students with skills that support collaboration, such as the ability to ask thoughtful questions and respond respectfully to others' ideas.
- that the teacher skillfully monitors and evaluates student learning, makes instructional adjustments as part of an ongoing process of assessment, and provides regular constructive feedback to students.
- that the teacher supports all students in developing the dispositions and proficiencies necessary for comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating concepts related to specific content matter.
- that the teacher effectively engages students in learning activities that are authentic, coherent, and connected to the learning goals; sequences and structures instruction so that students can achieve the goals; and creates opportunities for students to engage in meaningful expression.
- that the teacher draws on detailed knowledge of students' diverse backgrounds, prior knowledge, needs, abilities, and interests, and on her or his own knowledge of specific content matter in selecting high, worthwhile, and attainable goals and in selecting instructional approaches and appropriate, rich, and thought-provoking instructional resources that support the goals.
- that the teacher communicates persuasively about the pedagogical decisions made before, during, and after instruction; describes her or his practice accurately; analyzes it fully and thoughtfully; reflects insightfully on its implications for future teaching; and strategically seeks ways to improve practice to promote student learning.