

4A.1

Collecting Information: What evidence is worth gathering?

Refer to your one page plan. For each collection of information you identified in your one page plan, fill in an *Information Collection Worksheet*.

When you have finished describing each collection of information, answer the following questions:

1. Do you have a clear picture of the information you will have when you've collected it? Could you answer enough of the questions about who, what, when, where, why and how to determine exactly what you will have "in hand" when you finish collecting this information? Do you know everything you think you need to know to begin collecting this information?
2. How important is this information in answering your question? Is it worth the work it will take to collect it? Is there another collection of information that will give you the same or better evidence for less work? If there is, fill out an Information Collection Worksheet for that collection. Compare the two. Which is the better information? Which is less work or more readily available information?

When you have all the different collections of information identified and know why you are collecting that information, consider them all as a whole. Answer the following questions:

3. Do you have a variety of sources that will give you a cross section of information so that you can study your question from a variety of angles or from different points in time? Do you need to collect the same information from different groups of students to more completely address your question? Do you need to collect the same information from the same students at different points in time to address your question more completely?
4. Are you comfortable that these different collections of information will give you concrete evidence to address your question?
5. If this were a perfect world, what information would you collect that you haven't identified? Is there any way you can come close to collecting that information even in a limited fashion?

Select the final collections of information that will most likely address your question, that require reasonable amounts of effort for their relative importance, and that fit in the time frame of your study.

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4R.1

Information Collection Worksheet

Develop a brief description for each intended collection of information using the form below. Use one sheet for each collection. You may not use all the questions. They are simply here to help you think through each collection of information.

Who?	From whom will you collect information? What information do these particular individuals or groups of people have that will help you answer your question? (Remember that students should be one of the groups of people from whom you collect information.)
What?	What information is important to gather? What is it, exactly, that you want to find out by gathering information from the individuals or groups of people you named above?
When?	Is there a specific time you need to gather this information? For example, before a project to increase expressive language in retelling a story and then again after the project?
Where?	Is there a specific place that you will need to arrange to gather information? For example, if students must work on a project do you need to gather them in a specific place to videotape their storytelling? Do you need tables and chairs rather than desks so students can work together in groups easily?
Why?	Why this particular information? Why is this information important to answering your question?
How?	How will you gather the information? By observing your students? By surveying your students' parents? By interviewing a random sample of other teachers in your discipline area or grade level?