

Performing an Error Analysis

In order to have an intelligent discussion about what your student knows relative to reading and math, you must analyze the responses your student gave in order to determine whether or not there seem to be patterns to her mistakes.

In reading, for instance, a student might earn a score of 85% on her cccvc words. You might notice, however, that her mistake involves only one specific consonant blend which she miscues on every time she reads it in any pattern. Therefore, you could make the conclusion that she is independent with regard to most consonant blends, but needs work on only one specific blend. This is the type of thing you would discuss in the *Discussion Section* of the reading results. Then, when you write your objectives you would not write a general objective for remediation with respect to all cccvc words, but rather a specific objective with regard to the blend that she consistently misses. You should also be able to make some conclusions about whether a student is able to decode but is not a good sight word reader, etc.

In math, error patterns are pretty easy to spot. It is not enough, however, to say that a student was 77% accurate on "3-digit numbers minus 3-digit numbers with regrouping."

Sometimes, students will acquire an incorrect pattern of solving a particular kind of computation. For instance, perhaps a student has acquired a mistaken strategy of moving all the way to the hundreds column to "borrow" regardless of whether or not he has to. He would end up with the correct answer on a problem like 322-248, but would have a big problem on a problem like 247-129. Therefore, you might report that he was 77% accurate on 3-digit minus 3-digit with regrouping in the ones, but in your *Discussion* you would report that he had acquired an incorrect strategy for solving the problem. Additionally, in your *Objectives* section you might include something like: "...the student will look at each column of a 3- digit subtraction problem, starting with the ones column, and state, before attempting to solve the problem, which column(s) require regrouping..." In other words, try to get at the bottom of why a student makes a particular error. You can only do that by scrutinizing his work product and seeing if there are patterns. It is "error" analysis that makes your *Discussion Section* (and your objectives) relevant to the student's needs.