



Learning from Student Work An Overview

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

“To be a teacher in the right sense is to be a learner. Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner, put yourself in his place so that you may understand what he understands and in the way he understands it.” — Soren Kierkegaard

Principles of Looking at Student Work

- Students’ work in schools is serious
- Students’ work is key data about the life of the school
- Must be connected to serious changes in curriculum, instruction and professional development

Purposes of Looking at Student Work

- Professional Development
- Accountability (determining effectiveness of curriculum and instruction)
- Setting standards
- Reflecting on student learning and development

Protocols

What?

- Guidelines for conversation
- Vehicle for building collaborative work

Why?

- Creates a structured environment for: speaking, listening, questioning
- Makes the most of limited time
- Promotes deep, meaningful conversation about teaching and learning

How?

- Incorporate into your study group meetings/grade level meetings/staff meetings
- Connect it to crucial teaching and learning issues in your study group/grade level/school
- Practice it regularly

Results

Teachers who present work typically find:

- Some of their own impressions about student work are confirmed
- They are likely to gain new insights into the thinking of their students
- The strengths and weaknesses of their assignments

Other teachers who participate

- Develop a sense of the kind and quality of the work going on inside their school
- Learn about students they will teach in future years
- See how students they taught in previous years have developed
- Gain new ideas for their own classrooms
- Begin to develop a shared understanding of standards in different domains and the steps students go through to meet them