

PROTOCOL FOR LOOKING AT STUDENT WORK

LENS: COMMON CORE STANDARD OR DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Norms:

- Share the air (or “step up, step back”)
- Hard on the content, soft on the people
- Be kind, helpful, and specific

Presenter Overview (5 min.)

The presenter shares the context for the student work and a guiding question for feedback. *Participants are silent.* Contextual information may include:

- Information about the students and/or the class
- Assignment or prompt that generated the student work
- Student learning goals or standards that inform the work
- Samples of student work with student names removed
- Evaluation format, scoring rubric and/or assessment criteria, etc.

There may be two guiding questions for feedback:

- A question related to a Common Core Standard or a Design Principle (See attached samples)
- An additional presenter’s question: something the presenter is puzzled about and would like “other eyes” to look at, e.g. “What does this student(s) seem to be working on?” or “How might I respond to this work?” or “What might be some next steps for this student or this group?”

The facilitator writes the guiding questions on the whiteboard.

Examination of Student Work Samples (15 min.)

Participants look closely at the work, asking themselves “What strikes me about this work? What questions does it raise for me? What does the work communicate about...?” Participants take notes on where the work seems to be in tune with the stated goals, and where there might be a disconnect, focusing particularly on the guiding question. *Presenter is silent; participants do this work silently.*

- Keep in mind, it’s NOT about the presenting teacher; it’s NOT about the presenting teacher’s students. Look at the work as if it is a photograph in a museum: we may know a bit about the photographer, but it is the work itself that speaks to us.

Clarifying Questions* (5 min.)

Participants ask “clarifying” questions of the presenter. Clarifying questions have brief, factual answers and are intended to *help the person asking the question* better understand the context of the student work. An example of a clarifying question is “How were the groups chosen for this activity?” *The presenter responds to the group’s questions, but there is no discussion by the larger group of the presenter’s responses.*

Probing Questions* (5 min.)

Participants ask “probing” questions of the presenter. Probing questions *help the presenter* expand his/her thinking about the issue. Probing questions should not be “advice in disguise” such as “Have you considered...?” Examples of probing questions are “How did each student demonstrate their understanding through the final product?”, “What evidence did/will you gather to determine the extent to which the goals of your project were met?” or “How did you decide to...” *The facilitator should be sure to limit the questions to those that are “probing,” judging which questions more properly belong in the feedback section.*

Pause to Reflect on Warm and Cool Feedback (2 min.)

Participants take a couple of minutes to reflect on what they would like to contribute to the feedback session. *Presenter is silent; participants do this work silently.*

Warm and Cool Feedback (10 min.)

Participants discuss the student work and attempt to provide insight on the presenter's guiding question(s). It is helpful to begin with warm feedback, such as how the work presented seems to meet the desired goals. For example, "What strikes me about this work is..." Cool feedback includes a more critical analysis of the work, using the question posed by the presenter to frame the discussion and identify possible disconnects or issues. For example, "What do we not see in the student work?" or "I wonder what would happen if..." Often participants offer ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work presented. *During this time, the presenter physically removes him/herself from the group, is silent, and takes notes. Participants should direct their comments to each other, not the presenter. The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter's guiding question.*

Reflection (5 min.)

The presenter speaks to those comments/questions he or she chooses. It is not necessary to respond point by point to what others said. The presenter may share what struck him or her and what next steps might be taken as a result of the ideas generated by the discussion. *Participants are silent.*

Debrief (5 min.)

The facilitator leads a conversation about the group's experience of the process. Questions posed to the group might include: Did we stick to the question? When was a moment when the conversation made a turn for the better? Was there any point where we went off track? Did our probing questions push the thinking of the presenter? Resist the urge to turn the debrief back to a discussion of the dilemma.

Closing the Loop (5 min.)

Participants write in their journals about what they have learned from participating in this protocol and how it could inform their own practice. If time allows, participants share one of their take-a-ways with a partner or everyone in the group shares out one take-a-way.

**During both the of these sections, it may be helpful to take 2 minutes and have participants turn to a partner to either generate probing questions or discuss their response to the question that was framed by the presenter.*

Tips for facilitation:

Work with the presenter to frame a good question beforehand ~ meet beforehand to discuss the dilemma and wordsmith a question that is open-ended and not easily solved. Write the question on the whiteboard so that it is visible during the entire conversation.

Stick to the time for each section ~ if you need help with keeping time, ask someone to volunteer to help you and/or use a timer.

Don't be afraid to keep the group focused on the protocol ~ if a probing question is asked during clarifying questions, gently ask the participant to write it down and wait until you have moved on to that point in the conversation.

Redirect the conversation when necessary (without unnecessarily monopolizing airtime) ~ if the discussion jumps to cool feedback before warm feedback is shared, make sure to take time to celebrate the work first.

Resist the urge to skip the debrief ~ the debrief is a crucial way to deconstruct the conversation and improve the quality of our dialogue w/colleagues over time.

BE COURAGEOUS & CONFIDENT ~ strong facilitation is the key to having successful dialogue about our work and is appreciated by everyone in the group. If it helps to literally read each step to the group, by all means do so.