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Examining Student Work a Constructivist Protocol

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What makes students and teachers really care about their work? This self-assessment tool is aimed at generating new insights and increasing that investment. The protocol can be used both for assessment and for planning, and it can be done individually or in groups.

1. Students bring to class an example of the best work they have ever done. The work can come from any source, medium, or setting.
2. Students look carefully at their own work and come up with a list of three to five qualities they believe exist in the work and contribute to making it their best.
3. The whole class brainstorms the qualities they found, then condenses the list to three to five qualities everyone agrees are essential to good work.
4. The teacher gives an assignment to the class, asking that students attempt to build those qualities into their work. Students should make five copies of their completed assignment.
5. When the assignment is completed, small groups of three or four students look at each other's work in search of evidence that the agreed-on qualities are present. (The tuning protocol makes an excellent vehicle for the student to present such evidence.)