



Notes on the Collaborative Assessment Conference

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

The Collaborative Assessment Conference (CAC):

- is a means for professional conversation, not for classroom assessment.
- provides a context for exploring a child's work and our own understandings about teaching, learning, and education;
- helps educators make learning visible; the CAC is one attempt to answer the question: "Where and how might we look to see learning?";
- helps us to recognize what student work reveals about a student;
- allows educators to focus on student goals, issues, strengths, and needs;
- requires that we, as educators, slow down, take a step back, and look carefully to see what the student put into the work before we lay our interpretations on the work;
- provides the opportunity to look at the work of a particular student, with the help of colleagues who are less familiar with the work and therefore have fewer preconceptions, in order to "mine" the work for new insights;
- forces us to look more closely at student work without preconceptions about what "should" be in the work, due to the fact that no context is given;
- asks us to suspend judgement long enough to look carefully at what is in the work rather than at what we hope or expect to see;
- gives educators the chance to examine our perceptions and assumptions about how students bring meaning to their work;
- provides educators with the opportunity to reflect on and gather ideas for revising our own practice as we uncover our own strengths, interests, and struggles;
- calls for a renewed sensitivity to student thinking and more finely honed observational skills from the teacher;
- recognizes and respects that the student is often working on something very different than what we assigned him or her to work on;
- focuses entirely on the student until step 6. In step 6, we generate specific next steps. We all consider the implications for our own practice and our new insights into teaching and learning.