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