



Looking at Patterns in Student Work

Developed by Marjorie Larner for Tools for Leaders. Scholastic, 2007.

Description

This protocol focuses on inquiry into an essential question through looking at a range of work from students in multiple classrooms. As you examine patterns, themes, and inconsistencies, you gain insight about a particular population or large group of students and are able to draw conclusions and generate implications for instruction in general. This is a good protocol to introduce looking at student work as it does not focus on performance of one student or one teacher, thus presents a lower level of personal risk.

Time

45-60 minutes

Steps

1. Everyone in the group brings samples of student work that represent the population or question you want to address. These samples may be random, chosen to present a range or demonstrate particular points in student performance.
2. Pass the work around the circle. Look for patterns, contradictions and themes. It is helpful to take notes.
3. Discuss patterns, contradictions and themes.
4. Share questions raised by these patterns, contradictions and themes.
5. Discuss implications for practice and further study.
6. Establish next steps.

Follow up: One teacher brings work from an individual student that relates to the questions and implications raised. This might be student work that represents a breakthrough, a struggle, a range of performance, etc.

Debrief

Discuss the process. Was it helpful to our understanding and our practice? How could it have been better?