



## Suggestions for Bringing Student Work

---

*Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.*

As you think about what student work you might bring to our meeting, consider work that (1) you are *wondering* about, (2) work that you would like to *revise*, or (3) work that raises a *dilemma* for you.

1. You might be *wondering* about the work because it is so different from what the student usually does, or because it was an interesting piece of work, but the student completely missed the point of the assignment. Perhaps you wonder what others would see in the work, or what to do with this student next. If this is why you are bringing the work, please be sure you have the original work, with the name and any teacher comments removed. For this option, you need either one piece of work from a single student, or several pieces of work from one student. While you may want to bring the assignment or prompt, it is not necessary.
2. You might want to *revise* the unit or project or lesson because some of the students did not meet your expectations, or because a certain group of students consistently falls short in this subject area or on this type of assignment. Perhaps you are concerned and want to revise because some of the students didn't seem adequately prepared, or because some students didn't seem to understand the assignment itself, or because your assessment criteria didn't match the work the students produced. If this is why you are bringing the work, you should bring a range of student work (typically, from three or four students at different levels of accomplishment, but sometimes people bring a whole class set). In addition to the actual student work, you should bring a copy of the assignment that prompted the work, the assessment criteria/rubric you used, and the student learning goals/standards/expectations.
3. After looking at or thinking about your students' work, a *dilemma* about your practice may come up for you. If this is the case, you will want to frame a dilemma associated with the student work. Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling—something that is problematic or has not been as effective as you would like it to be. In this case, the student/educator work will serve as an artifact, illustrating your dilemma for others. Questions that are helpful to consider when framing dilemmas include:
  - Why is this a dilemma for me? Why is it important?
  - If I could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would others see (and what artifacts could I bring to help them see it, e.g., samples of student work or teacher work)?
  - Whose practice do I hope changes? [If your answer is *not* "yours," you'll need to change your focus. You will want to present a dilemma that is about *your* practice, behaviors and beliefs, and *not* someone else's.]

For any of the three reasons for presenting student work described above, the student work you bring to the table can be anything students produce: written pieces, drawings, math problems, science labs, 3-dimensional structures students have built, artwork, power point presentations, portfolios, videos of student presentations or performances, drafts and/or finished pieces, etc.

### One caveat

As you decide what to bring, please keep in mind that it should be something about which you have a real question or concern. We have learned over the years that as we think about choosing the student work to learn from with our colleagues, we are faced with a choice, “ Do we strut our stuff by bringing the student work that shows how successful we can be?” Or “Do we mine our mistakes, by bringing the work that didn’t meet our expectations?”

If we accept that all of us want to do our best learning for the sake of our students, then we need to bring work to the table that comes from our wonderings and confusions, from our failed efforts and uncomfortable dilemmas. So, as you think about what to bring to our session, please consider bringing the student work that “keeps you up at night.” Remember, this is an opportunity to examine the work with others, so that we can ALL learn from it!