

COLLABORATIVE ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL¹ FOR STUDENT WORK

The purpose of this protocol is to provide opportunities for teachers to discuss pieces of students' work, notice integration and opportunities for growth. The protocol can be used to assess and support students, to advance professional development and to reflect about teaching design.

I. GETTING ACQUAINTED – GENERAL ASSESSMENT

- 1. Introducing the work:** Presenting teacher shares minimal information about the work avoiding value description – e.g., course, initial or advanced, assignment.
- 2. Clarifying specific goal:** The group makes sure that the goals for the conversation are clear. E.g., Do we seek to examine the degree to which a piece represents integrative or interdisciplinary understanding? Do we seek to diagnose opportunities for growth in an initial or developing piece?
- 3. Looking at the work:** In silence, individuals read or observe the work brought in.
- 4. Pointing out:** The group points out any aspect of the work noticed withholding judgment about quality or comments about taste.
- 5. Valuing the work:** Group members share general qualities of the work that they appreciate (e.g. student shows strong personal voice, paper is clearly composed, provocative use of imagery.)
- 6. Raising questions:** Once everyone has a chance to describe appreciated qualities in a work, the group is asked to raise questions and concerns that have come up. Participants are reminded that not all questions will be answered. Questions open up the work and make the group's thinking visible.

II. ZOOMING IN – TARGETING ASSESSMENT OF INTEGRATIVE/INTERDISCIPLINARY UNDERSTANDING

7. Discerning the purpose of the work:

Group members *describe what they view as the purpose of the work*, pointing to the evidence in the work that makes them say so.

Once there is clarity about the purpose or purposes of the work, the group discusses the degree to which the purpose might invite different disciplines.

8. Revealing disciplinary grounding:

Group members *describe what they view as the disciplines (or ability areas) that seem to be informing this work*, pointing to the evidence in the work that makes them say so.

Focusing on one discipline at a time, the group considers:

Are the disciplinary insights and modes of thinking selected appropriate to inform the purpose of the work?

Are disciplinary insights and modes of thinking employed in accurate/effective ways?

What suggestions might we offer to this student to deepen the disciplinary grounding (selection and use of disciplinary understandings)? E.g., are there important disciplines to be included?

9. Revealing integrations:

Group members *describe what they view as overarching integrations* of disciplinary perspectives attempted by the student (e.g. complex explanation, aesthetic synthesis, contextualization, pragmatic solution), pointing to the evidence in the work that makes them say so.

¹ Developed by Veronica Boix-Mansilla, March 2006, and adapted for National Project on Assessing Learning in Learning Communities

Once the group has gained a sense of how disciplinary insights seem to be coming together, group members ponder: How does/or could the integration of disciplines enrich, enlarge, deepen student understanding of the issue under study? A productive thought experiment at this point is “What would have happened to students’ understanding if discipline x had not been brought in?”

What suggestions might we offer to this student to deepen the disciplinary grounding (selection and use of disciplinary understandings)?

10. Assessing thoughtfulness:

Group members *describe what they view as student’s reflections about the nature of his or her work and learning* (e.g. comments on the relevance of the work, the limitations of single disciplines, limitations of the work itself). Participants are asked to point to the evidence in the work that makes them say so.

Once the group has gained a sense of the reflective stance taken in the work, the group discusses how student reflections reveal a developing ability to do interdisciplinary work.

What suggestions might we offer to this student to deepen the reflective stance they take?

III. STEPPING BACK

11. Hearing from the presenting teacher:

After listening without intervening, the presenting faculty adds her/his perspective on the general and targeted assessment comments. He or she may or may not choose to address particular questions raised or clarify aspects of context.

12. Implications for teaching:

By examining students’ work in this way, what you have learned about designing assignments that invite integrative or interdisciplinary learning?

13. Reflecting on protocol:

It is always helpful to leave time at the end to revisit the process and the protocol, considering what was helpful in the conference structure and what was frustrating.