

Looking at Students Thinking (LAST) Protocol

Source: Harvard Project Zero

Purpose

This protocol focuses on the work from a single student or a group of students, arising from a task aimed at eliciting students' thinking. In this protocol, participants consider what the student was learning or thinking as they carried out the work, building participants' skills for careful observation of student work and the questions raised by student responses.

Time allotted

About 60 minutes.

Group format

The protocol needs one facilitator, with understanding of and experience with the protocol, a documenter to capture the groups' thinking, the presenting teacher, and a group of 5-10 colleagues.

Facilitation tips

- This protocol works best if one person, preferably someone who is familiar with the protocol, acts as the facilitator. This person will not be part of a group that discusses the question(s).
- The facilitator should begin the session by restating the importance of the trust and respect that this protocol requires. Discussions and feedback that take place in the session are professional conversations between the participants and the teacher seeking feedback.
- The facilitator should also explain that the protocol will be implemented with fidelity to the process and the constructive spirit of the process. The facilitator may ask participants to reword or withdraw comments that are evaluative or judgmental.
- The protocol follows the following steps:
 - Introduction (protocol goals, guidelines and schedule): 5 – 10 minutes
 - Presenting teacher shows the piece of student/group of students work to the group (briefly explain the task and review the types of thinking that activity was meant to reveal): 2.5 minutes
 - The participants observe or read the work in silence, making brief notes about aspects of it that they particularly notice: 2.5 minutes
 - The facilitator asks the group "What do you see?"
 - The participants provide answers without interpretations or evaluations about the quality of the work, if these do emerge the facilitator asks for evidence on which the comments are based: 5 minutes
 - The facilitator asks the group "Where in the work do you see insights into students' thinking? What does this reveal about how students are collectively and individually making sense of ideas putting information together, organising thoughts, reasoning, and so on?": 10minutes
 - The facilitator asks the group "What questions does this work raise for you?"

- The participants state any questions they have about the work, the child, the assignment, the circumstances under which the work was carried out, etc. (individuals may take notes about the questions, but not respond at this time): 10 minutes
- The facilitator invites all participants, including presenting teacher, to share any thoughts they have about their own teaching, students' learning and thinking or ways to support these particular students in future instruction: 10 minutes
- Debrief (open discussion of the experiences of the group): 10 minutes
- Thank the presenting teacher