

Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership Protocol (Analyzing and Learning from Student Work)

Source: Using a Structured Protocol for Analyzing and Learning from Student Work, by Pandora Bedford and Rosann Hollinger, Wisconsin Teacher of Mathematics, Winter 2006

Purpose

This protocol is a set of guidelines for structuring conversations among teachers about student work. The goal is to foster a common understanding of student learning expectations for mathematics and to provide a collaborative forum for examining student work to inform mathematics instruction.

Time allotted

About 90 minutes.

Group format

The protocol needs one facilitator, with understanding of and experience with the protocol, a documenter to capture the groups' thinking, a group of 5-10 teachers, each bringing three samples of student work from the same assessment. The work should reveal a range of responses from low to middle to high performance (not there yet, almost there, got it).

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
 - The first presenting teacher displays the work where everyone can see it or distributes copies to the other participants (the teacher says nothing about the work, the context, or the students: 2 minutes
 - The participants review the student work in silence (they may take notes for use during the discussion): 5 minutes
 - The facilitator asks the group 'What do you notice about the student work?
 - The participants take turns speaking (individuals are free to pass) without making judgements or personal preferences. Comments are kept short. The facilitator may choose to insert clarifying questions (the presenting teachers does not take part in the discussion, but listens and may take notes: 10 minutes

- The facilitator asks the group 'What do the students understand?'
- The participants take turns speaking (individuals are free to pass) without making judgements or personal preferences. Comments are kept short. The facilitator may choose to insert clarifying questions (the presenting teachers does not take part in the discussion, but listens and may take notes: 10 minutes
- The facilitator asks the group 'What questions do you have about the work?'
- The participants take turns speaking (individuals are free to pass) without making judgements or personal preferences. Comments are kept short. The facilitator may choose to insert clarifying questions (the presenting teachers does not take part in the discussion, but listens and may take notes: 10 minutes
- The facilitator invites the presenting teacher to share his or her reflections and reactions to the discussion: 10 minutes
- The facilitator invites all participants, including presenting teacher, to share any suggestions for teaching and ways for supporting students' learning: 10 minutes
- Debrief (open discussion of the experiences of the group): 10 minutes
- Thank the presenting teachers