Discussion Protocol for Examination of Student Work*

Facilitator introduces protocol as a kind of "appreciative inquiry."

Facilitator: Our goal is to build an enriched understanding of what a young writer has accomplished – an appreciation for his/her work.

We will use a process studying just one piece of work at our table and the process will last for about 30-40 minutes.

There are seven steps to the process, or "protocol."

You might wonder why we do this work…it gives us time to describe and understand what a child has done well, to imagine how we might teach that child how to continue improving in their writing, and to imagine next steps for teaching. The process gives us that rare amount of time to reflect closely on one piece of work.

My job will involve helping us in this process that honors _____ presenting teacher's work and her student's writing. **I will take notes and keep track of time.**

Teacher Introduction………………………………………………….3 minutes
- Presenting Teacher briefly explains what this work is. What was the instructional context? For instance, did this piece of writing come from one class, one week, or several weeks of instruction? What aspect of the

1

process does this student work sample(s) represent (e.g., Initial brainstorm? First draft? Final work?)?

Clarifying questions…………………………………………………………………3 minutes

- Group members may ask any clarifying questions (not philosophical). Facilitator collects questions from group, then teacher answers with brief, factual answers.

Facilitator: At this point, I wonder what clarifying questions we have about the work or the context of the work? Please ask the questions. I will write them down and (_____/Presenting teacher) will answer after a couple of minutes.

➔ **DISTRIBUTE WORK AFTER CLARIFYING QUESTIONS**

At this point, (_____/Presenting teacher), could you please read the student work aloud to the group?

Thank you. At this point, you (presenting teacher) will now be taking an observational role, taking notes as your peers appreciate the work.

Group Examination of the Work……………………………………………5 minutes

- Presenting teacher read the student work aloud and then steps aside from the group and takes notes on the ensuing discussion. Teacher re-joins group for "Teacher Reflection" portion.

Group members individually take 1-2 minutes to underline/take notes on the work sample, noticing places of interest. Each member of the group takes a turn stating facts about the work, avoiding inference and judgment.

2

I see…; I notice…; There are many…; There are few… Facilitator takes notes

Facilitator say back

Group <u>Examination</u> of the Work…………………………………………5 minutes

Facilitator: **This portion involves looking at what we see.** Take a private couple of minutes to collect your thoughts about the work. Underline /take notes on the work sample, and notice places of interest.

AFTER A MINUTE OR TWO…Now…we will each take a turn describing a feature of the work that caught our interest. Who would like to start? Remember our goal is to connect ideas that we have to the actual work. I may ask you to point to and read the portion of the text that is connected to your comment.
NOTE: Facilitator may need to interrupt and ask notice to point to and read text.

- Each member of the group takes a turn stating facts about the work, avoiding inference and judgment.

    I see…; I notice…; There are many…; There are few… Facilitator takes notes

Facilitator asks: Is there anyone that has something to say about the work that they didn't get a chance to say?

Facilitator summary say back: If not, I will take a minute or so and "say back" some of what you observed during our examination of the work.

3

SUMMARY SAY BACK = <u>Summarize participants' comments</u> from your notes.

Group <u>Interpretation</u> of Work...10 minutes

Facilitator asks group members: Let's now speculate about what we think the writer has accomplished (or tried to accomplish); I will ask us to keep pointing to pieces of the text for support.

- Group members speculate about what the writer does and does not understand.
  The student seems to think…; The student has learned…; S/he understands…

Facilitator summary say back: I will take a minute or so and "say back" some of what you observed during our examination of the work.

Group Implications for Classroom Practice............................5 minutes

Facilitator introduce this turn: What might you do if you could work this student, next?

NOTE: Encourage participants to use "I" rather than "you"… "what I would do…"

- Facilitator asks group to imagine that they might do if they were working with this student(s). Group members suggest teaching strategies, assignments, and/or assessments that would help the student progress.
  I would…; The student needs help with…; Next, a teacher could…; I like to…

4

Facilitator summary say back

Teacher Reflection..3 minutes

Facilitator thanks teacher for sharing her work and requests, "You've taken notes on this rich conversation. I'd like you to tell us some of your thoughts about what you heard that was important, exciting, clarifying/confusing, etc.

- Teacher reports observations.
- Teacher shares what was learned about the student, the assignment, teaching, and/or colleagues.
- Group members listen

I learned…; I saw…; I heard…; I am going to…; This helped me…

Individual Reflection on Discussion……………………………………..5 minutes

Facilitator: Please take a few moments and write down a couple of thoughts that you found most important. Again, we have some prompts below that might help you.

- Each participant records reactions, thoughts, and ideas.
  What did you see or hear that was new or important for you? What ideas for writing or strategies for teaching would you consider trying or experimenting with in your classroom? Why? How might you adapt them?

*Adapted from Prospect Center Descriptive Process, Bennington VT

Facilitator:

Imagine that you could present one of your student's using the same protocol. What do you see in your own students' work that reflect accomplishments?

How could we demonstrate accomplishment? Progress?

With the post-it, please select a piece that you could begin to annotate…writing down ONE accomplishment/attaching to text.

END