



Consultancy

Adapted for Examining Student Work

Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove.

Time

At least one hour

Roles

Presenter (whose student work is being discussed by the group)

Facilitator (who also participates)

Steps

1. The presenter gives a quick overview of the student work as an artifact for her/his dilemma. S/he highlights the major issues or concerns, and frames a question for the consultancy group to consider. The framing of this question, as well as the quality of the presenter's reflection on the student work and related issues, are key features of this protocol. (5 minutes)
2. The group examines the student work. (5 minutes)
3. The consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter — that is, questions that have brief, factual answers. (5 minutes)
4. The group asks probing questions of the presenter — these questions should be worded so that they help the *presenter* clarify and expand his or her thinking about the issue or question s/he raised for the consultancy group. The goal here is for the *presenter* to learn more about the question s/he framed or to do some analysis of the issue s/he presented. The presenter responds to the group's questions, but there is no discussion by the larger group of the presenter's responses. (10 minutes)
5. The group talks with each other about the student work and related issues in light of the questions framed for the group by the presenter. What did we hear? What didn't we hear that we needed to know more about? What do we think about the question and issue(s) presented?

Some groups like to begin the conversation with "warm" feedback — answering questions like: "What are the strengths in this situation or in this student's work?" or "What's the good news here?" The group then moves on to cooler feedback — answering questions like: "Where are the gaps?" "What isn't the presenter considering?" "What do areas for further improvement or investigation seem to be?" Sometimes the group will raise questions for the presenter to consider ("I wonder what would happen if...?" or "I wonder why...?"). The presenter is not allowed to speak during this discussion but instead listens and takes notes. (15 minutes)

6. The presenter responds to what s/he heard (first in a fishbowl if there are several presenters). A whole group discussion might then take place, depending on the time allotted. (10 minutes)
7. The facilitator leads a brief conversation about the group's observation of the process. (10 minutes)