

3rd Annual Life Sciences Summit

Examining Student Work

Step One — Getting Started

- The group chooses a facilitator who will make sure the group stays focused in each step.
- The presenting teacher distributes copies of the student work to the other participants at the table.
- The participants review the work in silence making brief notes about aspects of it that they particularly notice. (3-5 minutes)
- The presenting teacher describes the assignment and the context in which it was created. (3 minutes)

Step Two — Describing the Work

- The facilitator asks the group, “What do you see?”
- Group members provide answers without making judgments about the quality of the work or their personal preferences.
- If a judgment emerges, the facilitator asks for the evidence on which the judgment is based.

Step Three — What knowledge and skills did the student have to have in order to produce this work?

- Group members state their observations citing evidence when possible.
- The presenting teacher makes notes about the comments (but does not respond to them or engage in conversation).

Step Four — Speculating about Science as Inquiry

- The facilitator asks the group, “By looking at the student work, what can you say about the students and their understanding of science as inquiry? What can you say about the teacher’s expectations?”
- Participants, based on their reading of the work, make observations.

Step Five — Hearing from the Presenting Teacher

- The facilitator invites the presenting teacher to speak.
- The presenting teacher provides his or her perspective on the student’s work, describing what s/he sees in it, responding to the questions raised, and adding any other information that s/he feels is important to share with the group.
- The presenting teacher also comments on anything surprising or unexpected that s/he heard during the describing, observing and speculating phases.

Repeat Steps 1-5 for all of the Student Work at the Table

Step Six — Discussing Implications for Teaching and Learning and for articulation

After all of the student work has been examined at the table, the facilitator invites everyone to share any thoughts they have about what we can expect students to know and be able to do at various levels (high school, community college, university) related to science as inquiry.