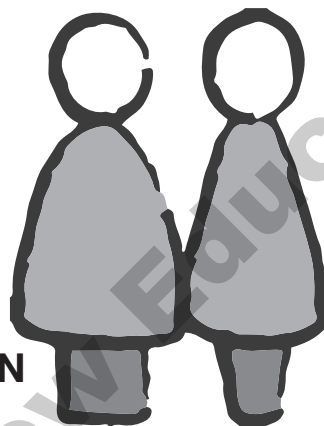


Looking Together at Student Work

THIRD EDITION



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New Foreword by Joseph P. McDonald
Foreword to the Second Edition by David N. Perkins
Foreword to the First Edition by Kathleen Cushman





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Foreword to the Third Edition

You are holding in your hand (or viewing on screen) a book that is at once brief, elegant, and useful. The brevity may have been among the first things to attract you to the book, and it is indeed crucial to its mission—namely, to help educators learn more about their students despite all the pressures on their time. It is as if the authors pledged from the beginning to pack as much as they could into as little a space as possible—the equivalent for educational publishing of a tweet or a quatrain—and with similar passion piled on. “This stuff matters a lot,” the authors seem to say, “but we needn’t go on and on about it.” So each of the book’s chapters is as spare as a Microlab Protocol, one of the new protocols featured in this edition, and the one the authors use here to introduce the others. The Microlab reduces all the drama of school reform to some elemental things—raising good questions, giving people time to think about them, providing room for everyone to speak, insisting that everyone also listen, and providing a safe margin for reflecting before acting. Not all brevity ends up being elegant, but this kind does. It’s a matter of treating complex things simply without being simplistic. These authors know as well as anyone on Earth that the practice of collectively accountable teaching is messy, but they also appreciate the fact that people in the midst of it nonetheless need some kind of map.

You’ll likely gain the best sense of the book’s usefulness after you’ve read through it, then gone back later to find something that strikes you retrospectively as exactly what you now need—for example, the distinction between interpretation and evaluation, a rationale for getting colleagues to refrain from quick judgment, or a guideline for deciding when to offer or withhold context information in looking at student work. Thus the book is a kind of handbook. But it’s useful in a couple of other ways. For example, you might find yourself thumbing through it just before you have to facilitate a group that will be looking at student work—just as you might review before the houseguest arrives the directions for inflating your blow-up bed. And

finally, like some veteran readers, you eventually may come back to this book occasionally as you might to the photos you keep on your phone—to remind yourself, at a moment when you feel the need, about what really matters—in this case, in teaching and educational leadership.

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Preface

Nearly 2 decades have passed since the first edition of this book was published, and the education landscape has changed. In the late 1990s when we would visit schools to provide professional development support, we often began with a few questions about the group's prior experience with the ideas and strategies we'd be focusing on. When we asked, "How many people here have had experience with protocols for examining student work?" the question was met mainly with furrowed brows, silence, and, occasionally, a puzzled question: "You mean like diplomatic protocol or medical protocols?" Today, when we ask those same introductory questions, we find that nearly everyone in the room has heard of protocols for guiding professional conversation, and many of those people have taken part in at least one.

This tidal shift is exciting. It accompanies a growing emphasis in schools on the importance of collaboration among colleagues and an expanding definition of "professional development." All good! And yet . . . challenges still persist in making the close, collaborative examination of student and teacher work a regular and valued part of educators' professional lives. Educators still have far too little time for meaningful reflection on their practice, and where time is available for groups to examine student work using protocols, that activity too easily can take on the flavor of perfunctory exercise rather than deep investigation into challenges of teaching and learning.

The aim of this revised edition of *Looking Together at Student Work* is still much the same as that of its two predecessors: to provide teachers and administrators with strategies and resources for working together to examine and discuss student work in ways that lead to better learning and teaching for both students and their teachers. However, this new edition contains a number of changes, including:

- An updated overview of research on the effectiveness of practices that involve teachers in the collaborative examination of student work. (Chapter 1)
- The inclusion of the Microlab Protocol as a relatively quick and easy way to introduce groups to protocol-guided conversation,

as well as strategies for addressing some of the key challenges that emerge when educators begin to make their own and their students' work public for one another. (Chapter 2)

- More detailed notes for presenters in both the Collaborative Assessment Conference and the Tuning Protocol about how to select work and prepare for their roles in these protocols. (Chapter 4)
- Updated examples and case studies. (Chapters 4 and 5)

A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

The protocols we describe in this book are appropriate for teachers and administrators working at all grades (early childhood through 12th grade, and beyond). We use the term *student* for children and adolescents in all grades. We use the term *student work* to refer to things students do and make, usually in response to a teacher's assignment. The term *protocol* is applied to structures for guiding conversation, which usually involve multiple steps and guidelines for participation.

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