

The Collaborative Assessment Conference

Developed by Steve Seidel and Project Zero Colleagues

1. Getting started

- The group chooses a facilitator who will make sure the group stays focused on the particular issue addressed in each step.
- The presenting teacher puts the selected work in a place where everyone can see it or provides copies for the other participants. She says nothing about the work, the context in which it was created, or the student until Step 5.
- The participants observe or read the work in silence, perhaps making brief notes about aspects of it that they particularly notice.

2. Describing the work

- The facilitator asks the group, “What do you see?”
- Group members respond without making interpretations, evaluations about the quality of the work, or statements of personal preference.
- If evaluations or interpretations emerge, the facilitator asks the person to describe the evidence on which those comments are based.

3. Asking questions about the work

- The facilitator asks the group, “What questions does this work raise for you?”
- Group members state any questions they have about the work, the student, the assignment, the circumstances under which the work was carried out, and so on.
- The presenting teacher may make notes about these questions (but does not answer them).

4. Speculating about what the student is working on.

- The facilitator asks the group, “What do you think the student is working on? What problems or issues is she trying to understand?”
- Participants, drawing on their observation of the work, make suggestions about the problems or issues that the student focused on in carrying out the assignment.

5. Hearing from the presenting teacher

- The facilitator invites the presenting teacher to speak.
- The presenting teacher provides her perspective on the student’s work, describing what she sees in it. She may choose to respond to the questions raised, and she can add any other information that she feels is important to share.

6. Discussing implications for teaching and learning

- The facilitator invites all participants, including the presenting teacher, to share any thoughts they have about their own work with students, students’ learning, or ways to support this particular student in his or her future learning.

7. Reflecting on the Collaborative Assessment Conference

- The group reflects together on their experiences of or reactions to the conference as a whole or to particular parts of it.

8. Thanking the presenting teacher

- The session concludes with acknowledgement of and thanks to the presenting teacher.