



Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Protocol for “Longfellow Slice”

This protocol is a variation of the Vertical Slice, the Minnesota Slice, the Albuquerque Slice and the “Day In The Life” South Bend and Hempstead Slices. The Vertical Slice originated in the work of the Bush Educational Leaders Program at the University of Minnesota. The Albuquerque Slice was created by school coaches from the National School Reform Faculty of the Annenberg Institute for the 1996 Fall Forum of the Coalition of Essential Schools.

The purpose of the “Longfellow Slice” is to look at student work across classrooms and grade levels in order to gain new insights and perspectives on teaching and learning. The process is framed by guiding questions developed by the staff (See “Sample Sets of Questions for School/Grade Level Slice”). A representative sample of student work is collected over a specific period of time. Student and teacher names are omitted from all work.

Part I: Grade Level/Special Area Teachers Slice

1. Getting Started (5 minutes)

The facilitator describes the purpose for conducting the “Longfellow Slice”. The facilitator reviews the Guidelines for Learning from Student Work (Horace p.2, November, 1996) and encourages participants to focus on evidence and refrain from making judgments.

2. Framing the Slice (5 minutes)

The facilitator presents the guiding questions for the group’s work and future discussion. These questions are clarified by the group (The questions are provided in writing to all participants).

3. Focusing Inward (15 minutes)

Each participant exchanges student work with another colleague to review in depth. Each person is asked to answer the guiding questions in writing and to provide evidence for each response. Questions that emerge from this look at student work are also written down by each participant.

4. Broadening the Perspective (10-15 minutes)

After reviewing the student work, the facilitator convenes all the participants for a guided discussion. They review the guidelines for sharing perspectives based on the evidence. Participants share their responses to each question and the evidence supporting their responses. Participants look for patterns in their responses as well as differences that emerge from the evidence.

5. Emerging Questions and Insights (15 minutes)

Following the group’s discussion, the facilitator summarizes the evidence presented and the emerging patterns, issues, themes and questions from the discussion. The group identifies potential next steps for deepening the student work related to the guiding questions. Each participant selects one question to review across grade levels after school.

Part II: School wide Slice

- 1. Review of Protocol Guidelines** (5 minutes)
The Facilitator reviews the purpose of the Longfellow Slice and restates the guiding question for the slice.
- 2. Looking At The Big Picture** (15 minutes)
Participants go to one of three rooms to explore their guiding question more fully, looking at student work across classrooms and grade levels to find patterns and differences in the experiences and work across the whole school. Participants are asked to write down evidence they find across classrooms and grade levels related to the guiding questions and be prepared to share within their small group.
- 3. What Have We Discovered** (15 minutes)
The small group facilitator reconvenes the participants for a guided discussion about their question. The participants share evidence related to their question.
- 4. Summary of Group Discussion** (10 minutes)
The facilitator (or another designated person) provides a summary of insights, themes, and patterns discovered by the group. They then ask the participants to share questions that have emerged from their study. The group selects a representative to share out significant findings, insights and questions related to their review of student work.
- 5. Large Group Presentation/Discussion** (15 minutes)
The three groups gather together to share out their findings, insights, questions and recommendations. Each group has five minutes to share what they have learned.
- 6. Large Group Reflection** (10 minutes)
The facilitator leads a whole group debriefing of the process to explore what was learned, the value of the process and what could be improved. What did we learn from this process? What did we find useful? What did we find frustrating? What questions does this evidence raise for us as a staff?