

Collecting Our Data

INFORMATION BRIEF: *Collecting student and teacher artifacts*

Analyzing teacher products is an evaluation strategy that can yield helpful information and potentially serve to extend the learning and reflection of educators in the process. This strategy involves selection and analysis of teacher products that will shed light on the progress or impact of a school initiative. These products may range from reflective journal entries, focused professional portfolios, videotapes, lesson or unit plans, or student project designs to course or presentation designs. Analysis is generally achieved with the use of a collaboratively designed rubric that addresses agreed upon criteria, or, in the case of written reflections, through basic content analysis. (See section on analysis of qualitative data.) This method is good for measuring teacher attitudes and perceptions; teacher questions, concerns; teacher problem-solving techniques; teacher plan for action or implementation of learning; or teacher application of learning.

Analyzing student products is an evaluation strategy that can yield helpful information and potentially serve to extend the learning and reflection of educators in the process. This strategy involves selection and analysis of student products that will shed light on the progress or impact of a school initiative. These products may range from content area notebooks, tests, portfolios, to group or individual projects, presentations, or performances. Analysis is generally achieved with the use of a collaboratively designed rubric that addresses agreed upon criteria (ideally shared with the students). This method is good for providing evidence of student application of learning and skills, use of problem-solving techniques, performance to standards, and use of higher order thinking.

The following are a few pointers for successfully using this evaluation strategy:

- Communicate with teachers about the purpose of the evaluation and of analyzing either teacher or student products. If necessary, you may need to develop a system to maintain the anonymity of the teachers whose products or whose students' products are being used. To protect the anonymity of students, one strategy is to have them put their names on the back of the work that will be analyzed.
- Try to embed the development of the teacher products, e.g., lesson plan or reflective journal, within professional development activities, so that teachers are not being asked to create something additional for the evaluation.
- Try to embed the analysis of student work within professional development activities, so that the analysis serves two purposes: professional development—reflection on student thinking, and evaluation—analysis of the student products and feedback from teachers.