

New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning

Statewide Peer Review

LEARNING STANDARDS

Working the Diamond

TEACHING PRACTICE



The University of The State of New York
The State Education Department
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President of The University and Commissioner of Education

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JAMES A. KADAMUS

Assistant Commissioner for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

ROSEANNE DEFABIO

Assistant Director for Curriculum and Instruction

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PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
AND COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION
THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
ALBANY, NY 12234

June 2001

Dear Teacher Colleague:

The New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning has several goals. One is to honor **the active participation** of teachers in helping their students achieve the learning standards established by the Board of Regents. In honoring the hard work of so many teachers, the Academy also honors the significant **role that teaching plays** in helping to focus classroom instruction on the learning standards. Another goal is to **highlight a process** pioneered by the charter members of the Academy. These teachers were willing to be learners, too; they dared to share their own work and that of their students with peers from across the State and to ask each other for critical review. They, in partnership with the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, designed the process for the Statewide Peer Review.

The Statewide Peer Review exemplifies teacher professionalism. The spirit of reflective practice embodied in the process is crucial to our efforts to make the learning standards the base upon which all classroom activity is built. In the pages that follow, you will find a description of the aims, guiding principles, and methods that are part of this review. It is the Department's hope that you will be challenged by the process—challenged enough to try it yourself in partnership with colleagues from your school, district, professional networks, and BOCES. It is our hope that this booklet will guide your work and that you will feel free to adapt the methods to suit your own situation.

I am sure that your peer review conversations will enrich your teaching, enhance the learning of your students, and inform the work of other teachers by helping them learn ways to use the learning standards as the core of their teaching. Finally, in recognition of your involvement in this initiative, I hope to be able to welcome you to the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning. For more information on the Academy and its Statewide Peer Review, please visit www.nysatl.nysed.gov or email nysatl@mail.nysed.gov.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Mills



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COORDINATORS:

Virginia Hammer
NYSATL Statewide Director
Office of State Assessment
New York State Education Department

Linda Headley-Walker
NYSATL Adult Education Coordinator
Office of Workforce Prep & Continuing Ed
New York State Education Department

Anne Schiano
NYSATL Statewide Director
Office of Curriculum, Instruction and
Assessment
New York State Education Department

Joan Payton
NYSATL Conference Coordinator
Office of Curriculum, Instruction and
Assessment
New York State Education Department

Senior Advisors:

David Allen
Project Zero
Harvard University

Joseph P. McDonald
Department of Teaching and Learning
New York University

CONTRIBUTORS:

Rose Ambrosino
NYSATL Consultant for Math

Jeff Arnold
NYSATL Consultant for Science

Barry Borakove
NYSATL Consultant for Technology

Jill Crooker
NYSATL Consultant for Languages Other
Than English

Zenon (Zeke) Deputat
NYSATL Consultant for Health

Deb DiBona
NYSATL Consultant for Health

Catherine Fish-Petersen
NYSATL Consultant for Social Studies

Jeanne Gray
NYSATL Consultant for the Arts

Ted Kantorowski
NYSATL Consultant for Physical
Education

Sandy Latourelle
NYSATL Consultant for Science

Lorraine Roberts

NYSATL Consultant for Career
Development and Occupational Studies

Judith Rothstein

NYSATL Consultant for English Language
Arts

Rosalie Travers

NYSATL Consultant for Family Consumer
Science

Edward Zak

NYSATL Consultant for Technology
Education

GOALS 2000 CONTRIBUTORS:

Dr. William R. Miles

District Superintendent
Otsego-Northern-Catskill BOCES

Marie Warchol

Assistant Superintendent
Otsego-Northern-Catskill BOCES

Norma Walter

Assistant Coordinator
Otsego-Northern-Catskill BOCES

SUPPORT STAFF:

NYS Education Department

Jan Christman

Ed Donnelly

John Maryanopolis

Pat Mulligan



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“Working the Diamond”



Joseph P. McDonald, Professor of Teaching and Learning, New York University

At the approach of the 21st century, New York State's Board of Regents approved a set of learning standards. The standards are high, yet they apply to all students. They represent the core, the Regents have said, of what all people should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their schooling. As such, these standards form the basis for a re-vision of education in New York. This vision is one in which students may expect an intellectually powerful education no matter where they live; in which teaching, assessment, and the provision of supports for learning are to be closely linked; and in which schools and parents share the same high expectations. Adult learners are included in this community of learners. They need to reach higher standards in order to be effective parents, productive workers, and active citizens. New York's standards for learners offer an extraordinary challenge to New York's teachers—one they will need help to meet. The Statewide Peer Review is one source of that help.

I like to cite the work of several Connecticut teachers who formed a study group in the early 1990s, one with an intriguing logo and motto. The logo is composed of two intersecting triangles. The first, with its base on the bottom and two long sides pointing up, represents teaching practice. Teaching practice is like a mountain, the Connecticut teachers said, impossible to move and hard to scale. The other triangle—base on top and sides pointing down—represents the State's standards: like a dagger, the teachers added, apparently aimed straight at the teacher's heart. But when the "mountain" and the "dagger" are superimposed, a third geometric figure is formed. The Connecticut teachers called this figure a diamond. Indeed, their motto is "Working the Diamond."



Joseph P. McDonald
was chief consultant
for the development of the
Statewide Peer Review.

The diamond, I've told Statewide Peer Review participants, is where you work when you do peer review. The diamond (as shown in Figure 1) is where New York's interest in ensuring that all its students are educated to high standards intersects your best practice and your deepest thinking about your work and your students' work. It is also the crucial arena in which the fate of the learning standards will be played out. The diamond is a conversation with teachers about standards, and (through their work) their students, too.

“Working the Diamond”

Where State Standards & Teacher Practice Come Together
Creating Communities of Reflective Practitioners

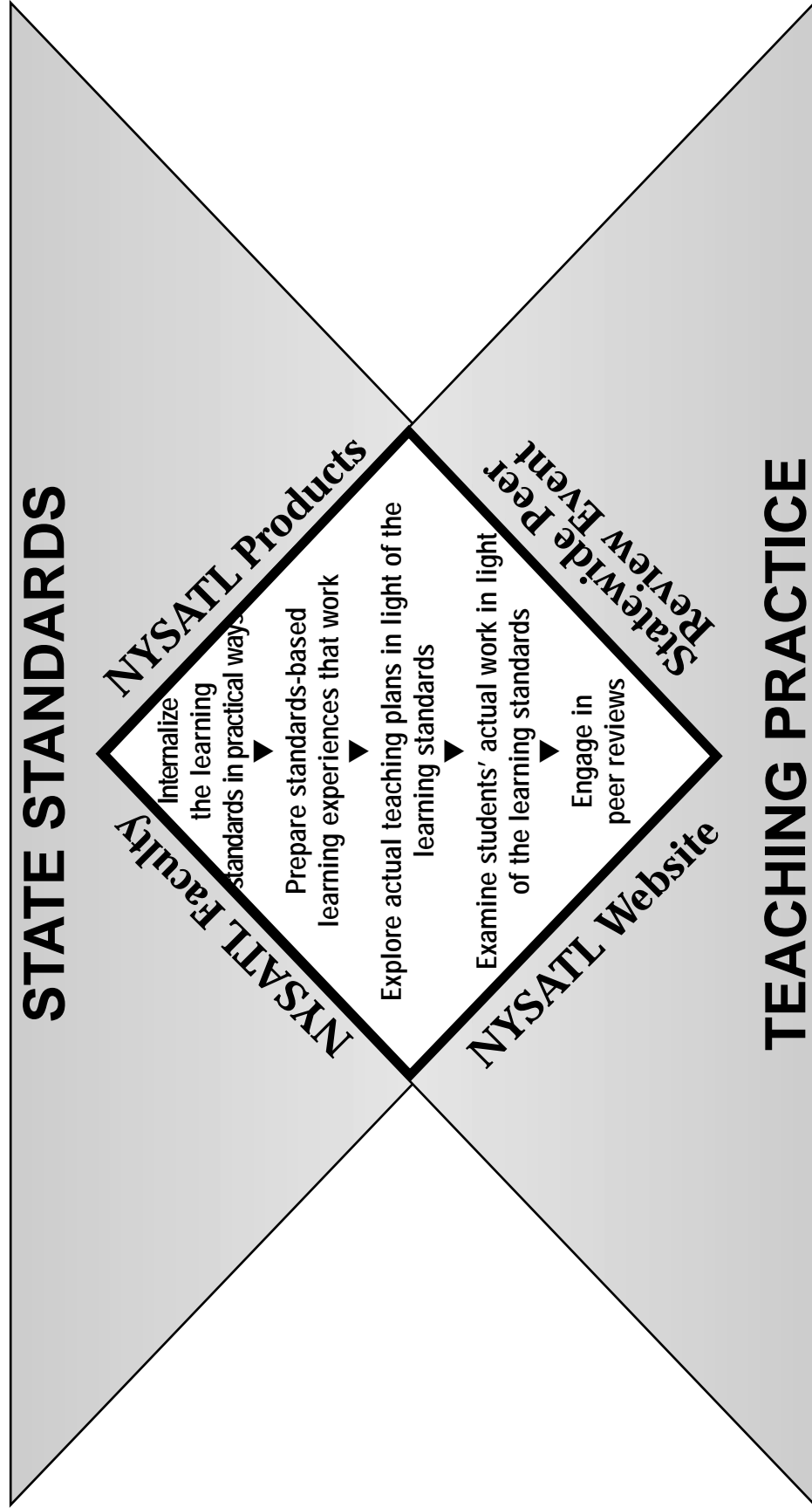


Figure 1

For updates on the NYS Academy for Teaching and Learning visit: www.nysatl.nysed.gov

NYSATL Initiatives

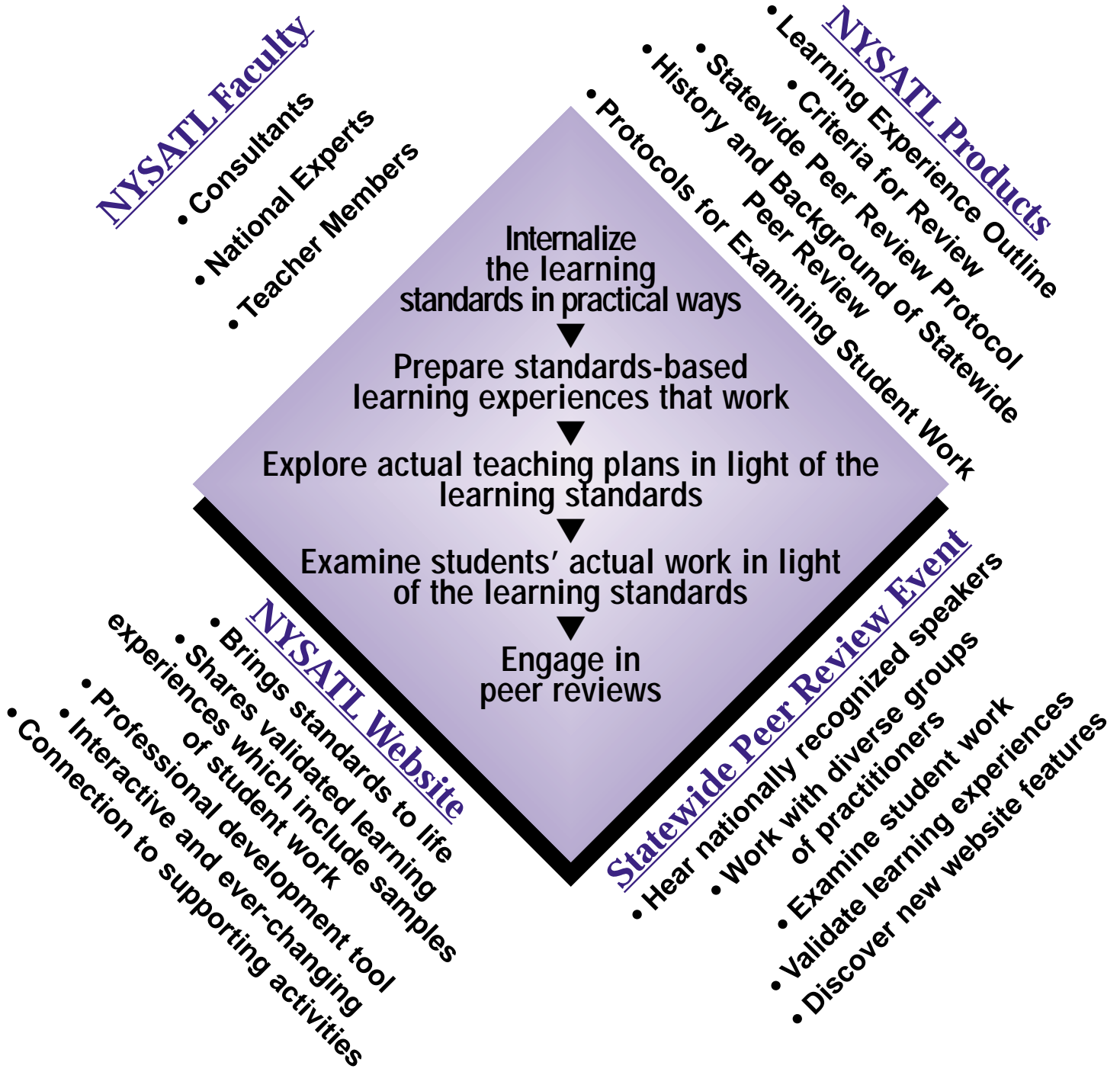


Figure 2



Overview of NYSATL

NYSATL Mission. The mission of the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning (NYSATL) is to improve the achievement of all students by enhancing teachers' abilities to provide quality instruction based on New York State learning standards.

The Academy believes that ongoing teacher-to-teacher interaction focusing on the improvement of learning experiences within the context of the Statewide Peer Review process is an effective professional development tool for teachers.

The Academy promotes the use of the Statewide Peer Review process as a means of achieving quality standards-based instruction and high levels of student achievement.

NYSATL Initiatives. NYSATL furthers its mission through the development and promotion of its faculty, products, website (which posts a variety of learning experiences), and Statewide Peer Review event (see Figure 2) as well as through its partnerships.

NYSATL Partnerships. As NYSATL continues to seek ways of offering teachers meaningful, standards-based professional development opportunities, it recognizes the need for coordination across all K-adult, state, and federally funded programs. Professional development networks and institutes of higher education play a key role in building the capacity of classroom teachers to develop and implement quality programs which will produce the best educated people in the world. NYSATL values its partnership with these bodies/institutions and continues to coordinate efforts and leverage resources on behalf of the teachers of New York State.



NYSATL Membership

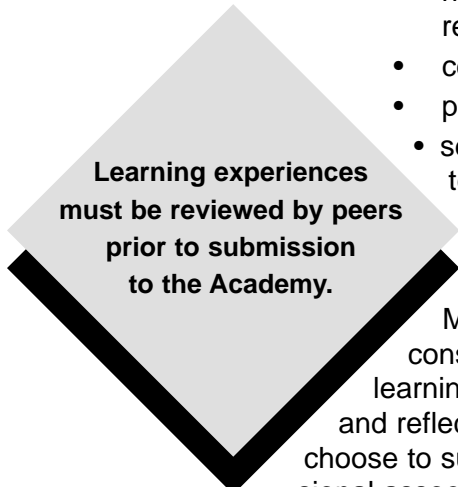
Becoming a member. Since its inception in 1996, hundreds of teachers have become members of the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning (NYSATL). Teachers become members of the Academy through the process depicted in Figure 3 and described below.

To become a member of NYSATL, a teacher:

- participates in professional development activities designed to learn about standards-based instruction;
- writes a learning experience, using the Learning Experience Outline form. The Learning Experience includes a range of student work and the teacher's **evaluation** of the work;
- gets feedback on the learning experience from a colleague or at a local/regional peer review;
- submits (postmarks) the learning experience by the December 1 deadline;
- presents the learning experience at the Statewide Peer Review event;
- revises the learning experience according to written feedback; and
- submits the revised learning experience to NYSATL by a deadline date.

NYSATL:

- selects learning experiences to be reviewed at the Statewide Peer Review event;
- organizes and conducts the Statewide Peer Review event;
- notifies teachers, in writing, of participants' recommendations and necessary revisions to the learning experience;
- certifies that the necessary revisions have been made;
- publishes the Academy membership list on the NYSATL website; and
- sends the superintendent of the teacher's district a press release and the teacher's Academy Membership Certificate which signifies the teacher's contribution to raising standards for all students in New York State.



Learning experiences must be reviewed by peers prior to submission to the Academy.

Members of NYSATL are eligible to submit their learning experiences for consideration for publication on NYSATL's website. NYSATL's website posts learning experiences which represent all seven standards areas at different levels and reflects the diversity of New York State's learners. NYSATL members may also choose to submit their learning experiences to BOCES, school districts, and professional associations for posting on websites or for publication.

New York State Academy for Teaching & Learning (NYSATL)

Statewide Peer Review

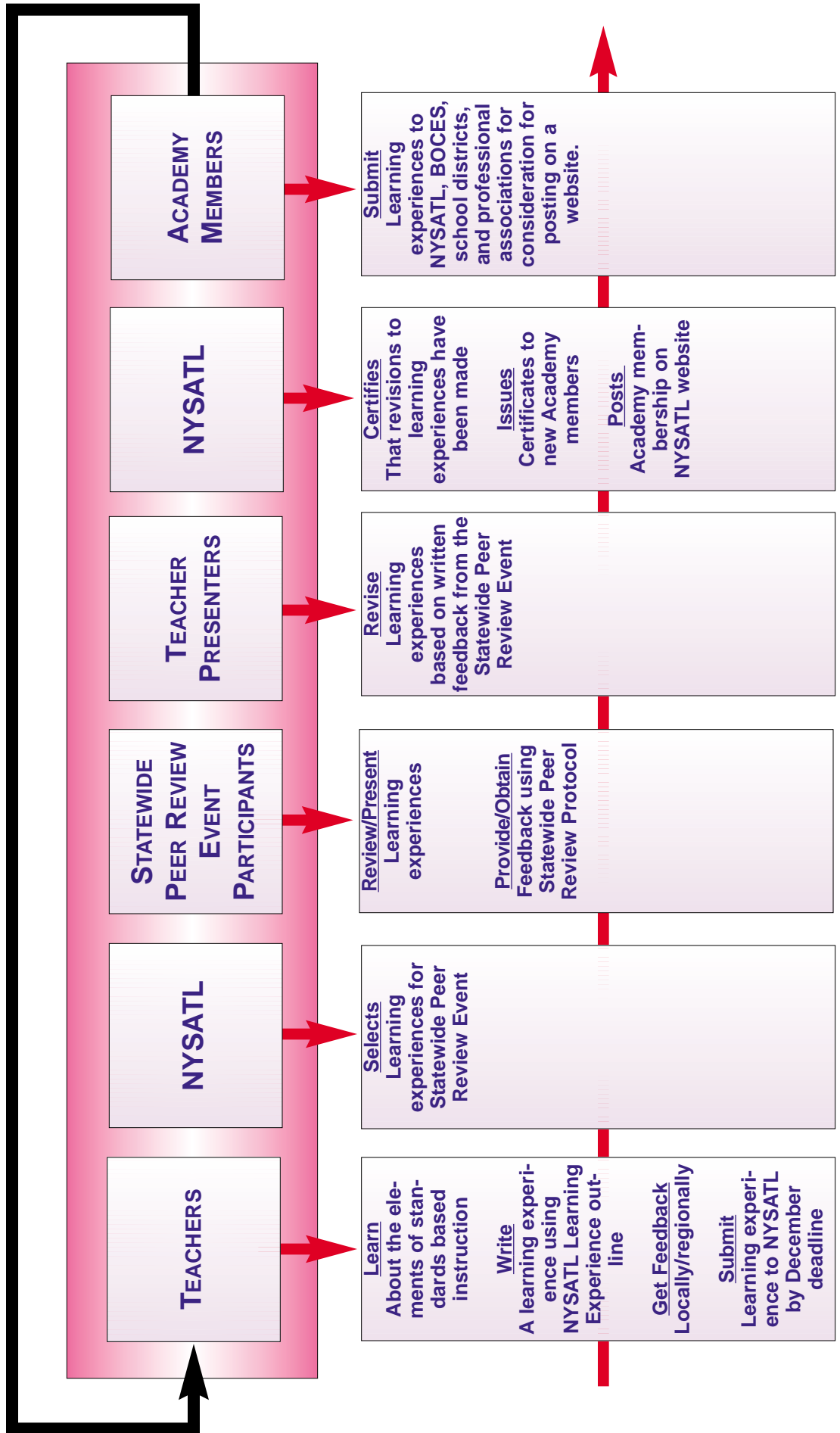


Figure 3

The following information about your learning experience should follow this outline. Please address each of the eight categories. **This learning experience must be reviewed by peer(s) prior to submission.** This review may consist of conversation with a peer(s), supervisor(s), member(s) of the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning, or participation in a formal peer review process. Please **paginate** your learning experience.

TITLE OF LEARNING EXPERIENCE: _____

LEARNING CONTEXT

Describe the context by including:

1

- a brief statement of the purpose, objective, or focus of the learning experience;
- the entire wording of the learning standard(s) and the specific performance indicator(s) being assessed;
- a description of how the learning experience addresses an existing New York State core curriculum; and
- a discussion of what students need to know and/or be able to do to succeed with this learning experience.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Describe the:

2

- levels of student performance (e.g., developing, proficient, distinguished);
- strategies or techniques used to collect evidence of student progress toward meeting the learning standards' performance indicators (e.g., observation, group discussions, journal writing);
- tools used to document student progress (e.g., rubrics, scoring guides, rating scales, checklists, teacher-made tests, observation forms). *Please submit blank copies of these tools; and*
- manner in which students are involved in developing assessment criteria, maintaining an awareness of their progress, and reflecting on their work.

STUDENT WORK

Student work may be submitted on videocassette, audiocassette, or diskette, clearly labeled with teacher's name and title of learning experience. When submitting diskettes, add to the label the format used (Windows or Macintosh) and the name of the software program. Please do not send student work projects that cannot fit in a reasonably sized box or envelope. Photographs, including digitals, are acceptable. Send three or four samples of graded student work that demonstrate a range of student performance (e.g., developing, proficient, distinguished). Include:

3

- for each student, a completed set of all assessment tools described in the assessment plan (e.g., rubrics, scoring guides, rating scales, checklists, teacher-made tests, observation forms);
- the teacher-assigned grade/points/score/level; and
- for each sample of student work, a statement of the basis for your "grade(s)" or "evaluations" by citing evidence from the student work.

PROCEDURE

Describe, in a *sequential manner*, the actions that take place during this learning experience, including:

4

- what teacher(s) does;
- what students do individually and/or in groups; and
- how technology (when used) enhances learning and helps to assess student performance.

RESOURCES

Please note unique resources (human or material) needed to successfully complete this experience, including the titles of texts, reference books, and software; website addresses; etc.:

5

- for the student, and
- for the teacher.

INSTRUCTIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS

Describe the procedures used to accommodate the range of abilities in your classroom. Include:

6

- instructional modifications made; and
- physical modifications of the classroom setting.

TIME REQUIRED

For each aspect of the learning experience, state the amount of time for:

7

- planning;
- implementation (note the length of your class period, when appropriate, and the number of days it takes to implement the experience); and
- assessment.

REFLECTION

Please offer personal comments on the learning experience, including:

8

- why this lesson was developed for the specific learning standard(s), performance indicator(s), and core curriculum;
- what you learned from implementing this lesson;
- how the lesson was reviewed by peer(s) prior to submission and what you learned from the review;
- how it reflects current scholarship in your field and “best” classroom practice;
- how the lesson prepares students for life outside of school; and
- a quote from a student, parent, or educator (optional).



SAMPLE
DO NOT SEND TO
NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The State Education Department is developing and maintaining an Internet website supporting the learning standards approved by the Board of Regents for all students.

The website includes a collection of instructional practices which promote student attainment of the learning standards.

Your child’s teacher has designed a learning activity that is geared toward these higher standards. This lesson, along with samples of student work related to the lesson, is being submitted to the State Education Department for possible publication on the State’s website.

We ask that you complete and sign the form below to allow the State Education Department to use your child’s work, should it be selected, for purposes of teacher training and public education. The work would appear without the student’s name or other identifying information. Please return the form to your child’s teacher.

Thank you for your assistance in this important project.

Date:

I give permission to the State Education Department to use the work of (student’s name) _____ with educators and the public for the purposes of teacher training and public education, with the understanding that the student’s name or other identifiable information will not be disclosed.

Signature: _____

Relationship to student: _____



Criteria for Review

The following set of criteria has been designed to guide the Statewide Peer Review process. The criteria serve a dual purpose. In the same way that teachers give students criteria for performance at the outset of an activity, teachers benefit from criteria to guide their work. Secondly, the criteria are key to the learning experience review process. The criteria provide the reviewer with a basis for commenting on the teacher's presentation, and for offering "warm" and "cool" comments based on specific evidence in the student work and the learning experience. The Criteria for Review Reporting Form is used to record comments/evidence to be shared with the teacher. This feedback will help to strengthen classroom practice by making connections to the New York State learning standards, core curriculum, assessment plan, and student work.

RELATION TO LEARNING STANDARDS

This learning experience lists specific NYS learning standards, lists performance indicators for each standard, and links to an existing NYS core curriculum. It requires students to demonstrate the use of ideas, perspectives, tools, skills, and/or methods that are central to the learning standard.

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

The learning experience requires students to grow intellectually, moving beyond rote application, building on prior learning and skills, connecting with real-world contexts wherever possible, and using a variety of talents, skills, and strategies.

ASSESSMENT PLAN

The assessment plan provides a description of the assessment tools and the techniques and/or strategies to measure student performance relative to each performance indicator. It clearly defines the various levels (e.g., developing, proficient, distinguished) of student performance in order for students to understand what is expected of them. It incorporates elements of good assessment: clear criteria to guide work, feedback on work in progress, and reflection on work completed. The assessment plan is illustrated by a range of evaluated work at different levels of achievement (developing, proficient, and distinguished).

ENGAGEMENT

The learning experience motivates students to become intellectually, emotionally, and/or physically involved in ways that support learning.

ADAPTABILITY

The learning experience is adaptable to the range of student abilities in most classrooms.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Instructional technology, when appropriate, is used to enhance instruction. It assists students in achieving the learning standard(s) addressed in the assessment plan.



Basics of the Process

On the following pages of this booklet, you will find a detailed description of the Statewide Peer Review protocol for the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning. Here, however, we present the process more generally in order to emphasize its basics. Our purpose here is not simply to describe the Academy's Statewide Peer Review protocol for the benefit of those who want to try it, but also to promote the culture of peer review in the schools, school districts, and professional networks of New York State.

Standards-Based Examination of Student Work. The Statewide Peer Review protocol reviews more than just teaching plans. The real focus is on how these plans play out in the experiences of diverse students struggling to achieve high standards and how these plans align with existing core curriculum. The standards offer direction and are central to the discussion. The presence of actual student work—chosen to illustrate a variety of achievement levels (developing, proficient, distinguished)—brings the standards to life, connects them with the actual world of the classroom, and provokes among peers a certain kind of meaningful conversation.

Diversity of Reviewers. Reviewers in the Statewide Peer Review protocol include both teachers experienced in the presenting teachers' subject and grade level and those with other expertise including instructional technology integration. At first, the third-grade teacher may worry that he/she will have little to contribute to the high school science teacher's review, or vice versa, but such concerns are quickly allayed by experience. Indeed, teachers whose own work seems at first far afield provide some of the most useful perspectives on the teachers' and student work they review. Diversity of teaching setting can help enormously, too: different schools and different districts are represented, and a mix of urban, suburban, and rural practitioners are included.

Warm and Cool Feedback. The Statewide Peer Review protocol deliberately cultivates and juxtaposes responses that are supportive and empathetic, and that emphasize the promise of a learning experience (warm), with responses that are questioning and comparative, and that emphasize the ways in which the learning experience might be enriched (cool)¹. The deliberate effort to keep these separate and in balance can seem, at first, needlessly artificial to those preparing for a review. But most who experience the process appreciate the benefits of such artifice—the encouragement it offers to seek out deeper levels of promise and shortcoming, and to give each kind of response its due. At the same time, the artificiality supports a safe environment to examine and discuss the actual work of students and teachers.

Evidence-Based Discussion. The protocol asks the Teacher Presenter and the Reviewers to speak about the learning experience in terms of specific evidence identified in the samples of student work and learning experience. The focus on evidence allows the discussion to move beyond abstract comments, assumptions, and quick judgments to

a deeper understanding of how the learning experience helps students to achieve the intended learning standard.

Authentic Conversation. The Statewide Peer Review protocol—with its balance of warm and cool perspectives and its focus on students’ as well as teachers’ work—encourages the peers to acknowledge their intimate awareness of how difficult it is to teach all students to reach high standards. This acknowledgment in turn provides the basis for an honest and open conversation about how to do such difficult work. It lowers defenses, activates a richer flow of ideas, and ends up boosting teachers’ confidence. The result is that teachers leave the peer review process not only with some fresh approaches to their work, but also with a renewed willingness to maintain the struggle to teach well. Ultimately, the latter is even more important than the former.

¹ Joseph P. McDonald, “Three Pictures of an Exhibition: Warm, Cool, and Hard,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 1993, pp. 480-485.



Participants' Roles

The Statewide Peer Review protocol specifies a set of reviewer roles, a format for the review, and a set of review criteria. In what follows, we describe each of these elements of the process in detail.

It is recommended that the review team remain small in number, between seven and nine individuals per team. At least half of the members should represent the standard area/discipline and level at which the lesson was taught. Members of the team assume the following roles:

Facilitator. The Facilitator sets the tone for the review and is an active participant in the process. It is the Facilitator's responsibility to ensure that the review adheres to the protocol and focuses on student work within the context of this learning experience. The Facilitator seeks to promote a thoughtful conversation among participants with a balance of warm and cool feedback. The Facilitator may prompt participants (including the Teacher Presenter) to keep the conversation focused and to ensure that evidence from the learning experience is discussed for each of the Criteria for Review.

Peer Reviewer. The Peer Reviewer is committed to meaningful feedback (warm/cool), note taking, and active listening. The Reviewer engages in active listening by totally focusing on the Teacher Presenter's comments, rather than mentally planning future comments. This person has a responsibility to use the Criteria for Review by carefully examining the student work and the learning experience to identify evidence of the criteria. The Reviewer will sign and submit the Criteria for Review Reporting Form to the Facilitator at the end of the review.

Teacher Presenter. The Teacher Presenter provides the review panel with a context for the learning experience, including the targeted learning standards and performance indicators, and its relation to the core curriculum. The Teacher Presenter shares samples of student work in order to illustrate how the learning experience helps students achieve the intended learning standards and performance indicators, and how the assessment plan measures the student achievement.

Recorder. The Recorder is a Peer Reviewer who not only actively listens but synthesizes at the same time in order to replay the essence of the Reviewers' feedback and suggestions to the teacher for revision of the experience. The Recorder, using the Criteria for Review Reporting Form, records warm ("W") and cool ("C") comments for each of the criteria and specific evidence noted in the discussion. The completed form, including the panel's recommendation, serves as the official Academy documentation of the peer review.



Statewide Peer Review Protocol

The following format is designed to achieve a reasonable balance of teacher presentation, attention to the student work submitted, warm and cool feedback comments, teacher response, and open conversation. It is also designed to take no longer than 75 minutes, with some additional time for follow-up conversation among the Facilitator, Recorder, and Teacher Presenter.

- 5 minutes** **Introduction.** Facilitator states the charge of the review panel: to provide a review of the learning experience based on the Academy’s criteria and to recommend one of the three follow-up actions--ready for Academy as is; ready for Academy with minor revisions; or not ready for Academy. The Facilitator gives an overview of the format, including an explanation of warm/cool feedback; asks for a Recorder and someone to keep track of the time (optional); and gives each Reviewer the reporting form.
- 15 minutes** **Teacher Presentation.** The Teacher Presenter
--briefly states the purpose, object, or focus of the learning experience
--states the learning standard(s)/ performance indicator(s) that are assessed in the learning experience and how the learning experience links to an existing core curriculum
--shows the tools used to assess how students achieved the teacher’s goals for the learning experience
--shares samples of student work (developing, proficient, distinguished) and, using specific evidence in the work, reflects on the skills and knowledge students demonstrate as a result of the learning experience. Specifically, the Teacher Presenter should reflect on:
- Why he/she brought these particular pieces of student work
 - What led to his/her judgment of their level (developing, proficient, or distinguished).
 - How instructional technology, if used, enhanced student learning.
- 15 minutes** **Quiet Time.** While reading the learning experience, the Reviewers “flag” evidence in the student work and the learning experience relating to each of the Criteria for Review. The Reviewers focus on the “graded” student work and what it shows about the performance indicators and the assessment plan. Using Post-its, Reviewers flag evidence that seems to them to relate to particular criteria in either a warm or a cool way.

- 10 minutes** **Reviewers' Feedback.** The Facilitator begins Reviewers' feedback by inviting warm and cool feedback that relates to any of the NYSATL criteria. All Reviewers' comments should refer in some fashion to the criteria, and be as concrete as possible. In this regard, the Facilitator may "push" Reviewers for more specificity, asking, for example, "Is there anything in the student work that makes you think so?" or "What criterion are you especially concerned about?" The Teacher Presenter does not speak but takes notes on the remarks.
- 10 minutes** **Teacher Response.** The Teacher Presenter responds to some or all of the Reviewers' comments. The Reviewers become active listeners by focusing on the teacher comments rather than preparing future responses.
- 10 minutes** **Full Group Conversation.** The Facilitator ensures that any criteria not previously addressed are now discussed. During the course of the conversation, there begins to emerge a clear understanding of the recommendations of the review panel.
- 5 minutes** **Reflection Period.** The Reviewers are given the opportunity to reflect upon all feedback and teacher responses. In addition, the Reviewers complete and sign the reporting forms.
- 5 minutes** **Summary.** The Recorder offers a summary of the review by criteria. For each criterion, the Reviewers and Facilitator may offer brief revisions to this summary. The point is not to achieve a final summation at this point (that comes in the follow-up consultation), but to test consensus, and to give all the Reviewers a chance to contribute to the joint work of Presenter, Facilitator, and Recorder in achieving the final summation. The Facilitator collects the Reviewers' reporting forms.
- Follow-up** **Consultation.** The Facilitator should lead off the conversation by asking the Teacher Presenter about his/her general impressions of the peer review and what he/she heard as the Reviewers' recommendation on the learning experience (i.e., ready for the Academy as is, ready for the Academy with minor revisions, or not ready for the Academy). The Facilitator then summarizes the areas of agreement among the Reviewers, based on their feedback, that suggest next steps--most typically, revisions to the learning experience. The Recorder provides criteria-evidence cited by Reviewers and documented on the Recorder's Criteria for Review Reporting Form to support the recommendation and next steps. The discussion among the Facilitator, Recorder, and Teacher Presenter then aims at consensus. If consensus is unattainable, the Facilitator prepares a brief report for the Academy noting the points of agreement and disagreement. The conversation should conclude with the Facilitator ensuring that the Teacher Presenter has a clear understanding of the recommendation and next steps.



Criteria for Review Reporting Form

The Criteria for Review Reporting Form is used to document the conversation about a learning experience using the Statewide Peer Review protocol for the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning (NYSATL). For the purpose of the Statewide Peer Review, a learning experience is defined as an instructional strategy used by the teacher which demonstrates at least one NYS learning standard and one performance indicator embedded in the assessment plan. It must be discussed within the 75 minute protocol established by the Academy. During this time, the teacher receives feedback on his or her experience in relation to the criteria established by the Academy. The review panel is responsible for making one of three recommendations. These recommendations are: ready for the Academy as is, ready for the Academy with these revisions, or not ready for the Academy.

The purpose of this form is to:

- provide the Reviewers with a place to document specific evidence from the learning experience and student work in relation to each of the six criteria established by the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning (NYSATL);
- provide the Recorder a place to record specific evidence from the Reviewers' warm ("W") and cool ("C") feedback in relation to each of the Academy's criteria;
- allow for official documentation of the peer review.

AS YOU LISTEN TO THE TEACHER PRESENTER AND AS YOU READ THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, PLEASE DOCUMENT EVIDENCE RELATED TO EACH OF THE ESTABLISHED CRITERIA.

Title of Learning Experience: _____

Standard Area(s): _____

Teacher(s): _____

Facilitator: _____

Recorder: _____

Reviewer: _____

Recommendation

Please check **one** of the three boxes shown below:

Ready for Academy as is

Ready for Academy with these minor revisions:

Not Ready for Academy—requires major revision. A major revision is one that changes the intent and/or substance of the learning experience by altering the nature of the student work called for and/or the assessment tools used.

Directions: For each criterion, please note specific evidence from the student work and the learning experience.

(1) RELATION TO LEARNING STANDARDS

This learning experience:

- lists specific NYS learning standards
- lists performance indicators for each standard
- links to an existing NYS core curriculum
- requires students to demonstrate the use of ideas, perspectives, tools, skills, and/or methods that are central to the learning standard

(2) INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

This learning experience:

- helps students grow intellectually
- moves beyond rote application, e.g., encourages interpretation, prediction, analyses, synthesis
- builds on prior knowledge and skills
- wherever possible, connects with real-world contexts
- uses a variety of talents, skills, and strategies

(4) ENGAGEMENT

The learning experience:

- holds the attention of students
- motivates students to become intellectually, emotionally, and/or physically involved in ways that result in higher achievement

(3) ASSESSMENT PLAN

The assessment plan:

- provides a description of the assessment tools, techniques, and/or strategies to measure student performance relative to each performance indicator
- clearly defines the various levels of student performance (e.g., developing, proficient, distinguished) in order for students to understand what is expected of them
- incorporates elements of good assessment: clear criteria to guide work, feedback on work in progress, reflection on work completed
- includes “graded” or “evaluated” samples of a range of student work illustrating the use of each assessment tool

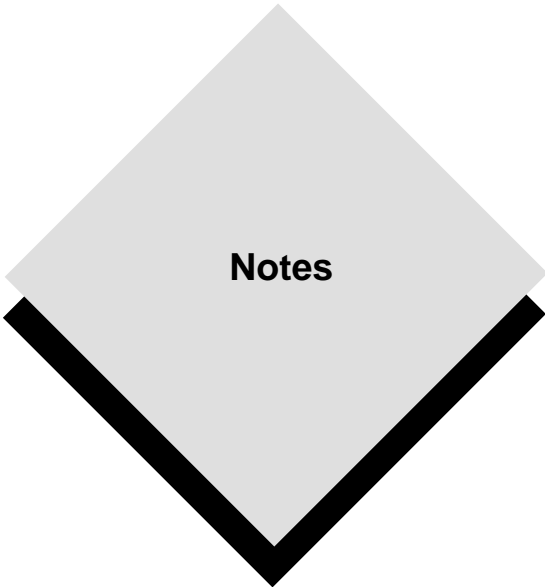
(5) ADAPTABILITY

The learning experience is adaptable to the range of student abilities in the classroom

(6) TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Instructional technology, when appropriate:

- is used to enhance instruction
- assists students in achieving the learning standard(s) addressed in the assessment plan



Notes

Statewide Peer Review Protocol:

Frequently Asked Questions

The purpose of this section is to provide information ensuring the consistency of certain activities, practices, and components of the Statewide Peer Review protocol for the New York State Academy for Teaching and Learning (NYSATL)*. The section is organized according to segments of the Statewide Peer Review protocol, which is described in the earlier sections.

It should be noted that for the purpose of the Statewide Peer Review annual event, a learning experience is defined as an instructional strategy used by the teacher which demonstrates at least one NYS learning standard and one performance indicator embedded in the assessment plan. It must be presented in the prescribed Academy format and can lend itself to discussion within the 75 minute protocol.

GENERAL

1

What are the priorities for the peer review?

The purpose of the review is to provide feedback on teaching and learning in light of the established Criteria for Review. All participants should strive to maintain the balance between focusing on the student work and on the instructional context, recognizing that it is often easy to lose track of the student work. The feedback serves two purposes: first, it provides a sound basis to recommend one of three follow-up actions (Ready for Academy as is, Ready for Academy with these minor revisions, or Not Ready for Academy) and second, it provides information for the Teacher Presenter in considering changes/improvements to the learning experience for the future.

2

What is the Criteria for Review Reporting Form and how should it be used?

The Criteria for Review Reporting Form provides a description of the Criteria for Review established by the Academy. The format allows for documentation of evidence relating to the Academy's criteria. Reviewers should be told that all notes taken during the peer review protocol should be placed on the form in the appropriate boxes. The form becomes the repository for evidence from the student work and the learning experience supporting the warm and cool feedback. The Reviewers should also understand that the signed forms are submitted to NYSATL as official documentation of the peer review and may be referred to in subsequent letters and conversations with the Teacher Presenter.

3

How should the Recorder use the Criteria for Review Reporting Form?

During the peer review protocol, the Recorder is using the Criteria for Review Reporting Form to maintain a record of the remarks of the Reviewers' and the Teacher Presenter's responses. The Recorder should write warm ("W") and cool ("C") feedback from Reviewers in the respective boxes relating to the established criteria. Evidence identified by Reviewers relating to the criteria should also be written in the respective boxes. The Recorder should be reminded that the evidence documented on this form should support the review panel's final recommendation to the teacher. This form serves as official Academy documentation of the peer review.

4

Who are the Reviewers at the Statewide Peer Review?

It is recommended that the review panel remain small in number, between seven and nine individuals per team. At least half of the members should represent the standard area/discipline and level at which the lesson was taught.

5

How is the Facilitator selected for the Statewide Peer Review annual event?

The first consideration in selecting a Facilitator for the Statewide Peer Review annual event is the extent to which the individual has content expertise in the particular standard area. A skilled facilitator with content area expertise is the ideal Facilitator. NYSATL provides opportunities for building skills in facilitation.

6

How is the Recorder selected?

During the Statewide Peer Review event, everyone is expected to be a Recorder and will be offered this opportunity. Time will be provided during the orientation period for guidance on how to record the conversation. Experience has shown that if everyone is informed that this is a shared responsibility, volunteers are not difficult to identify.

7

Can the order of segments described in the Statewide Peer Review protocol be altered?

No. The order of segments described in the protocol for the Statewide Peer Review conducted by NYSATL may not be altered.

8

Is there flexibility in the time frames allotted for each segment of the protocol for Statewide Peer Review?

Yes. At the Facilitator's discretion, time left over in one segment described in the protocol may be assigned to the full group conversation segment as long as the total amount of time for the review does not exceed 75 minutes.

9

Is there a preferred seating arrangement for the Facilitator, Teacher Presenter, and Recorder?

A seating arrangement that has been successful places the Facilitator between the Teacher Presenter and the Recorder. This arrangement projects a supportive role for the Facilitator in relation to the Teacher Presenter and the Recorder. The close proximity of the Teacher Presenter, Facilitator, and Recorder may also promote improved communication.

TEACHER PRESENTATION

10

What written materials does the teacher bring to the Statewide Peer Review event and when are those materials distributed to the Reviewers?

The teacher is responsible for bringing copies of the learning experience, including copies of the student work, to the Statewide Peer Review event. Since the focus of the Teacher Presentation is the Learning Context, Assessment Plan, and Student Work components of the learning experience outline form, the learning experience should be organized so that the Teacher Presenter can refer to, and the Reviewers can easily locate these components during the Teacher Presentation segment of the protocol. This means that the pages of the learning experience should at least be numbered; some teachers have provided tabs for these sections. During the Teacher Presentation segment of the protocol, Reviewers should focus on the material referred to by the Teacher Presenter and avoid looking through those components of the learning experience that are not being discussed at that time. During Quiet Time, and for the rest of the peer review, Reviewers should use the entire learning experience, plus any additional student work that the teacher has brought, as a basis for warm and cool feedback related to the NYSATL criteria.

11

In the Statewide Peer Review protocol it is understood that the Teacher Presenter sets the stage for the learning experience by providing information on the context in which the work was done. What is "context"?

The Teacher Presenter provides context for the student work by briefly stating: the purpose, object, or focus of the learning experience; the standards/performance indicators that are assessed; and the connection to an existing core curriculum. The Teacher Presenter shows the tools used to assess how students achieved the teacher's goals for the learning experience. As much as possible, this context should be established by sharing samples of student work and reflecting on the skills and knowledge students demonstrate as a result of the learning experience. Specifically, the Teacher Presenter should reflect on why he/she brought these particular pieces of student work and what led to his/her judgment of their level (developing, proficient, distinguished). If appropriate, the Teacher Presenter should also comment on how instructional technology enhanced student learning.

12

What is "active listening" within the context of the peer review protocol?

Reviewers are engaging in active listening when they are totally focused on the comments of the Teacher Presenter. During this time, the Reviewers refrain from mentally planning future comments. The Reviewers are listening and note taking simultaneously, using the Criteria for Review as a point of reference.

13

How can the Facilitator enhance the effectiveness of the Teacher Presenter's remarks during the Teacher Presentation part of the protocol?

Prior to the beginning of the Statewide Peer Review protocol, the Facilitator should take time to ease the anxiety of the Teacher Presenter. The Facilitator should discuss a two-minute warning signal and should review the concept of keeping student work central to the conversation. The Facilitator should explain to the Teacher Presenter that he/she has a specific period of time to bring the learning experience to life in the minds of the Reviewers.

14

How does the Facilitator "prompt" the Teacher Presenter?

Prior to the Statewide Peer Review, the Facilitator helps the Teacher Presenter prepare for the presentation segment of the protocol by reviewing the description contained in this booklet. During the presentation, the Facilitator may prompt the Teacher Presenter by reminding him/her of any points that the teacher is forgetting to address, or by helping the Teacher Presenter stay focused.

QUIET TIME

15

Is it ever appropriate for the Reviewers to speak during the teacher presentation?

No. This segment is exclusively the Teacher Presenter's 15 minutes. During this time, only the Teacher Presenter speaks while the others listen and record notes under the "Notes" section in the Criteria for Review Reporting Form. The Facilitator should only intervene in the teacher presentation if he/she feels it is not providing the Reviewers with the information needed. The appropriate way to do this is to remind the Teacher Presenter of the guidelines for the Teacher Presentation (see page 20).

16

Is talking allowed during quiet time?

No, talking is not allowed during quiet time.

17

What is the Teacher Presenter doing during quiet time?

The Teacher Presenter may wish to reread the learning experience to have a sense of the Reviewers' experience and to refresh his/her own thinking

18

What are the Reviewers doing during quiet time?

During quiet time, Reviewers are examining the student work samples carefully. They note on their Criteria for Review Reporting Form specific evidence of the Criteria for Review. Reviewers may jot down notes in the margins of their copies or use Post-its to "flag" evidence. The Reviewers also review the learning experience, paying particular attention to the assessment plan, and identify additional evidence of the criteria. Finally, Reviewers look over the evidence they've identified on their form and consider which evidence may be offered to the Teacher Presenter as cool feedback and which as warm feedback.

REVIEWERS' FEEDBACK

19

How might the Facilitator segue into this part of the protocol?

The Facilitator should begin this period of the protocol by reminding Reviewers of their responsibility to offer both warm and cool feedback related to the Criteria for Review and backed by evidence from the student work and learning experience. The Facilitator should allow for a brief period when nobody speaks. If this silence continues, the Facilitator may choose to suggest that the conversation begin with some warm feedback. If appropriate, the Facilitator may model what warm feedback sounds like.

20

What is the basis for providing warm and cool feedback?

Feedback in the Statewide Peer Review protocol is guided by the Criteria for Review. Reviewers offer feedback related to those criteria for which they are able to provide evidence from the student work and the learning experience. Reviewers may also point to "missing evidence"—what might be expected to be present in the students' work but is not found to be there (or is only present at a very rudimentary level).

21

What is warm feedback?

Warm feedback is a comment which identifies a strength in the student work or learning experience related to its goals and/or the Criteria for Review; for example, "Two of the students have demonstrated a use of technology that seems to get at your goals. One student used technology to ..., the other used it this way...."

22

What is cool feedback?

Cool feedback may be a comment or question that points to a gap in the student work or learning experience in relation to its stated goals and/or the Criteria for Review; for example, "Your rubric asks students to state and defend an opinion. I don't see how this student has supported his opinion. I'm wondering why you rated his essay so highly."

23

Should warm and cool feedback be offered to the Teacher Presenter in a single statement?

No. Reviewers should maintain a distinct separation between warm and cool comments. An example of the type of feedback that should be avoided is, "I like your assessment plan, **but** I am having difficulty relating it to the stated performance indicators."

24

What techniques are used by the Facilitator to guide the phrasing of warm and cool comments?

The Facilitator may provide models of warm and cool feedback to help Reviewers get started. He/she may also follow a Reviewer's feedback with an explanation of how it functions as warm or cool; for example, "Grace's question about missing steps in this student's problem solving is a great example of how a question can be a kind of cool feedback." The Facilitator should also ask Reviewers follow-up questions to help clarify their feedback, especially to "push" Reviewers to provide specific evidence; for example, "Can you point to a specific part of the student work that leads you to say that?"

25

How can the Facilitator maintain the delicate balance between warm and cool comments?

The Facilitator, who is a participant in the protocol, should use quiet time to note a warm comment and a cool comment. During the Reviewers' feedback, the Facilitator can insert the appropriate comment if necessary to balance the feedback or to model warm or cool as necessary. This tactic also helps the Facilitator to be vested in the learning experience.

26

How does the Facilitator encourage use of specific evidence in offering feedback?

The Facilitator reminds Reviewers that in offering warm or cool feedback, they should provide specific evidence. The Facilitator may give some examples of what "evidence" might be; for example, the wording of a rubric, or some element in a piece of student work. It's important that the Facilitator "pushes" Reviewers to back up their feedback (warm and cool) with evidence; for example, "Take us to the point in the student work that makes you say that."

27

Should the Facilitator structure warm and cool feedback by requesting that each of the Reviewers participate in a "go-around" in which only warm feedback is offered and then another go-around in which only cool feedback is offered?

No, go-arounds for the purpose of eliciting warm and cool feedback from the Reviewers should not be a technique used by the Facilitator during Statewide Peer Review. The Academy encourages a more authentic "conversation" among peers with Reviewers speaking when ready and limiting their own "airtime."

28

To ensure that all the Criteria for Review are addressed, should the Facilitator assign to each Reviewer a specific criterion for which he/she will be responsible throughout the peer review protocol?

No, the Facilitator should not assign each Reviewer a specific criterion from the Criteria for Review. Covering all the criteria is a shared responsibility among members of the review panel.

29

May the Teacher Presenter speak during the Reviewers' feedback?

No, the Teacher Presenter may not speak during the Reviewers' feedback. Teacher Presenters may choose to use the Criteria for Review Reporting Form to capture responses made by the review panel.

30

What is the Recorder doing during the Reviewers' feedback?

The Recorder is recording warm ("W") and cool ("C") comments for each criterion and noting the evidence discussed that reflects the conversation of the Reviewers.

31

Can the Recorder contribute comments during this part of the protocol?

Yes, if he/she chooses to do so. However, the Recorder must record the comments of others. If recording and commenting cannot be done simultaneously, the Recorder should consider refraining from offering comments.

32

During the Reviewers' feedback, does the Recorder stop the flow of conversation to ask to have a warm or cool comment repeated for clarification?

The Facilitator might suggest to the Recorder, before the feedback period begins, that the Recorder inform the Facilitator quietly if clarification is needed and allow the Facilitator to halt the protocol. This technique works well if the Recorder is sitting next to the Facilitator.

TEACHER RESPONSE

33

What is the primary purpose of the teacher response segment of the peer review protocol?

The purpose of the teacher response segment of the peer review protocol is for the Teacher Presenter to have the opportunity to address the questions/comments of the Reviewers. The Teacher Presenter may address any or all comments. The Teacher Presenter may choose to respond to a comment of a Reviewer with further explanation, but it is more useful to reflect on how a comment or question provoked the Teacher Presenter's thinking rather than to "defend" his/her work or their students' work.

34

What if the Teacher Presenter chooses not to respond to all of the questions and comments?

The decisions related to the Teacher Presenter's responses to questions and comments rest entirely with the Teacher Presenter. Time saved here can be added to the Full Group Conversation.

FULL GROUP CONVERSATION

35

What is the primary purpose of the full group conversation?

The purpose of this part of the format is to ensure that any criteria not previously addressed are now discussed and that during the course of the conversation, there emerges a clear understanding of the recommendation of the review panel, including any revisions to the learning experience. The Teacher Presenter should feel that his/her learning experience has been reviewed thoroughly and critically. The Reviewers at the conclusion of this part of the protocol should have considered every aspect of the learning experience in light of the Criteria for Review and should feel satisfied that all of their questions have been asked and answered.

36

What are the rules for the full group conversation?

At the beginning of this part of the protocol, the Facilitator reminds the group that only one person may speak at any given time so that everyone may offer at least one comment.

37

During the full group conversation, what techniques can the Facilitator use to keep the conversation on target?

The Facilitator should remind the group that the discussion must focus on the learning experience as it is presented in relation to the Criteria for Review. If the conversation begins to stray or get bogged down, the Facilitator can present a question to refocus the group's attention on evidence from the student work, the learning experience and the Criteria for Review. The Facilitator might ask, for example, "What evidence suggests that students are engaged in this learning experience?" or "What evidence suggests that students were involved in developing the assessment plan for this experience?"

SUMMARY

38

In addition to the Recorder, who is permitted to speak during the summary period?

The purpose of the summary segment is to ensure that the documented evidence provides an accurate and complete description of the conversation. During this segment, the roles of the Facilitator, Teacher Presenter, and Reviewers are to support the Recorder in the accomplishment of this objective. Consequently, all the members of the panel may speak during the summary segment of the protocol.

FOLLOW-UP CONVERSATION

39

What is the purpose of the follow-up conversation?

The purpose of the follow-up conversation is to review with the Teacher Presenter the Reviewers' recommendation on the learning experience (ready for Academy as is; ready for Academy with minor revisions; or not ready for Academy). If minor revisions are necessary, the Facilitator and Recorder must ensure that they clearly communicate to the Teacher Presenter the specific revisions required. The basis for the follow-up conversation is the criteria-based evidence cited by Reviewers and documented on the Recorder's Criteria for Review Reporting Form. The Facilitator should also ensure that the teacher clearly understands the next steps in the process (e.g., expected date for follow-up letter from Academy, date for submission of revisions, date of Academy announcement).

40

When should the follow-up conversation occur and who should participate?

The follow-up conversation should take place as soon as the Facilitator, Recorder, and Teacher Presenter can meet.