

Defining Student Voice

Student* voice is the term used to describe students' expressing their understanding of their learning process. Student performance improves when students understand the purpose of a lesson or activity. Students are encouraged to focus on the intended knowledge, skill or behavior in the lesson.

About the Portfolio: An Emphasis on Student Voice

The *ProTeach Portfolio* is a compilation of evidence and commentary demonstrating your positive impact on student learning through reflective practice. A critical component of the portfolio, and of Washington reform, is the ways in which the teacher provides evidence of practice through student voice. Student voice is a particular type of evidence or artifact. It refers to evidence of learning from the students' perspective(s). The term "voice" is not meant to imply that this evidence must be oral or even verbal.

Each entry requires written commentary as well as artifacts from your teaching practice, including teacher and student work samples in student voice, or evidence of learning from the student perspective. Select and include evidence of reflection and feedback from the learner, both on their learning and on their learning process (use of students' perspective).

Writing Responses for the Entries with the Use of Student Voice

For each portfolio entry, carefully review the:

- Standards & Criteria
- Entry directions
- Rubrics
- Glossary

As you review these documents, you will notice the expectation of reflection and feedback from the learner on their learning and their learning process (use of students' perspective). That is, the learning process should be demystified for students so they can take an active role in their learning and, as a result, achieve higher-quality outcomes. An essential way to determine this engagement is through "**student voice**." As stated above, **student voice** is a particular type of evidence or artifact. It refers to evidence of learning from the students' perspective(s).

Examples of Student Voice

Consider, for example, a persuasive-writing lesson. Students may be divided into two groups, one that will write a *pro* argument for school uniforms while the other group writes the *con* argument against school uniforms. While the intent is for students to develop persuasive-writing skills, students may easily think the point of the lesson is about whether the school's authority to require school uniforms is right or wrong. If the teacher engages in dialogue about the purpose of this activity and elicits students' comments about the learning targets—in this case, making a persuasive argument in writing—he or she is taking the steps to collect evidence of **student voice**. Without intentionally seeking evidence in **student voice**, these more subtle student misunderstandings may go completely undetected and unaddressed.

Students are using voice when they are analyzing and evaluating their own work against a standard and are able to articulate what they can and still may need to do. Goal writing is one way for students to show they are reaching a standard.

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Another example of student* voice evidence: students evaluate work (e.g., math problem-solving or work in any other content area) against a rubric that was created as the result of student/teacher collaboration. Students indicate directly on the rubric their own understanding, or lack of understanding, of the concept presented. Students then write a summary statement that reflects the amount of understanding evidenced in their own work.

Sample Writing Rubric: Student checks off the skills demonstrated in his/her writing paper.



5th grade

Introduction Rubric

Created by Mrs. Walter's class ©2005

	Content	Writing style	Conventions
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Everything listed under 3. -Ends with a question that leads into the report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Everything listed under 3. -Some sentences start with adverbs or -ing words. -Voice -Interesting word choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Perfect spelling, punctuation and capitalization. -No run-on or fragment sentences. -Not too long, but not too short (about 4 sentences). -Typed and double-spaced
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Starts with a great hook...interesting or surprising fact, quotation, share a brief story about the subject or ask a question. ✓ -Includes what the topic is...let them wonder a little first, but then tell them. ✓ -Tells the main idea (the main focus of your report). ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Don't say "I'm going to tell you about" or "My report is about..." ✓ -Sentences start differently. ✓ -Stay on topic—be organized when listing facts and ideas. -Sentences are longer but don't include several and's. ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One spelling, punctuation, or capitalization error. -No run-on or fragment sentences. -Not too long, but not too short (about 4 sentences). -Typed and double-spaced
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uninteresting hook. -Includes what the topic is. -No main idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -May say "I'm going to tell you about" or "My report is about..." -Some sentences start with the same word. -Some details seem unorganized. -One sentence is short and/or includes several and's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Two to three spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors. -One run-on or fragment sentence. -A bit too long or a bit too short (2-3 sentences). -Typed but not double-spaced.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No hook. -Topic not included. -No main idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Says "I'm going to tell you about" or "My report is about..." -All sentences start with the same word. -Details are unorganized. -All sentences are short and/or include several and's. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Several spelling, punctuation, or capitalization errors. -Several run-on or fragment sentences. -Too long or too short (1 sentence). -Handwritten

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Two additional examples of student* understanding of learning targets are below. The first example is in the form of a letter. The second example is in the form of a journal entry. As you read the students' work, note the learning targets each student is addressing.

Learning Targets:

1. Knowing the learning targets and how to demonstrate them
2. Knowing the progression of learning to reach the learning targets
3. Knowing how to access additional resources when needed

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am writing this letter to tell you about my progress with our long-term assignment called the City Studies Project. Please read over my progress and then be prepared to write me a letter back with your feedback.

My class began the City Studies Project back in January. We decided that we could use this project to meet several of our Social Studies and Language Arts standards. We looked at our standards for 9th grade, and I picked the ones that matched the project. We need to assess where we are on these before the end of the year. You will see how I did in my portfolio at the Student-Led conference next week. We posted our learning targets so that we could target the district standards in our goals. For example, we did research on a major city (our research standard) and then developed a persuasive speech explaining why it was the best city for an organization to move to. We presented our speech to the class. We made a brochure about our city and made maps and other visuals for our speech. Even though this was not a group project, my table group looked at each other's progress and gave suggestions. We did this Project progress check about once every two weeks. As you can see, this was a very big project.

I accomplished a lot! I think the goal setting really helped me be successful. I used the strategy to do a timeline for the assignment. I broke it down into small tasks. I had to think about a good way to do this. I had to decide what needed to be done first, second, third, etc. I had to look at all that time and figure it out. I now know about the characteristics of cities and how to present data in a way that would show off the best points of the city. I learned about London and what it was like to live in this city. I researched in the library and on the internet. I wrote to the British Consulate for information also. I especially enjoyed making the visuals including the Power Point presentation and data visuals. I improved my technology skills because I had to apply what we learned in the lab. I think I did a really good job on the presentation. As you know, I practiced quite a bit and was just a little nervous until I got into it. I really feel confident about being able to organize myself for a long-term project. I am very capable in using Power Point. I am capable of making a persuasive speech. I think I can write a pretty good persuasive essay now. I know that this is a standard for seventh grade and doing the speech will help me do this task next year. I am still working on some of my goals because I have not accomplished them. I think I can do a better job at analyzing data. I had a good display of data but didn't really dig into what it meant. I think I can improve on my empathy. I am so independent and competitive that I sometimes don't take the time to think about how my comments might be affecting my classmates who have more trouble with the reading assignments.

I would like you to write me back a brief letter with your feedback, suggestions and comments.

Sincerely, Jennifer

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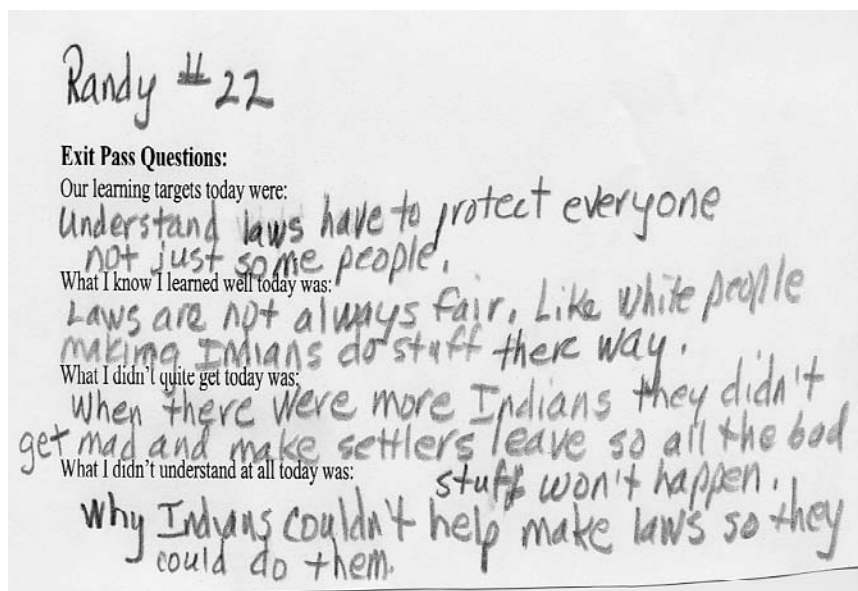
The following is a journal entry (another way to show student* voice) reflecting the same learning targets as above, but from the perspective of a different student.

Math - January 25 I am learning to multiply two digit numbers. Yesterday I got confused and didn't do them right because I started with the number on the left first. Today the teacher put up a picture on the wall that has a circle around the number to start with. I didn't know why we had to start with that number. Sean didn't know either and he asked the teacher how come. Sean and I will practice with beads in a box today. We can put same number of beads in each box as on the paper. When we are finished the teacher will check with us to see if we did it right. I hope I do it right.

Writing - January 26 We are writing a short story about anything we want. I am writing about going up in the mountains to snowboard with my Dad. I'm supposed to follow the rubrics. First I need an introductory paragraph for my story. Then I need three paragraphs telling three neat things about going up snowboarding. I end my story with why those things were fun. It will be a really good story because I liked my weekend. Tomorrow I will check each thing on the rubric to make sure I didn't forget anything. I will try to use words that make it sound fun because it was really awesome.

Another approach for collecting evidence of student voice is the use of exit slips that are completed by students at the end of each class session and returned to the teacher before leaving the classroom. An example is provided below:

This teacher collects student reflection by using pre-printed "Reflection Post-Its" that are affixed to all assignments before students submit them.



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Randy #22

Reflection Sheets – fill out and put on your assignment before you hand it in.

The learning target for this assignment were:

create chain of events = cause and effect

What I needed to do to reach the target was:

Read story about Ranold Macdonald. Find what happened at end and all stuff that made it happen.

I feel I

(circle one) reached, almost reached, missed the target because I:

Listed all the stuff but I missed one thing. My order did not show how one thing caused the next thing

The resources I used were:

None except the story. I should have used the the chart $\square \rightarrow \square \rightarrow \square$

What I need to do next time is:

Next time use the chart so I pay attention that one thing made next thing happen.