

USING MENTOR EXAMPLES TO GUIDE SELF ASSESSMENT

This protocol is designed to help students critique their work in the context of high quality examples and to craft an evidence-based response that assesses their successes and areas for continued growth. These evidence-based self-evaluations are useful in portfolio development, future reflections, and a variety of ongoing assessment practices.

FIRST : Students, get your work! As you complete this self-assessment, be sure to have the following easily available: your final draft of your work, the provided professional example, and another high quality example of similar work that influenced you.

THEN : Answer the following, and include direct evidence wherever necessary.

1. What are you most proud of in this project?
2. How does your work measure up favorably to professional examples? Copy & paste samples of professional work (or use photos) and show how your work is similar to that of professionals.
3. How does your work need to grow, change, or improve to be more like that of professionals? Copy & paste samples of professional work (or use photos) and show how your work needs to grow, change, or improve in order to be more like that of professionals.
4. What was the most effective feedback that you received while drafting and revising your work? Copy/paste the feedback below (or use photos) and describe with evidence how it influenced your subsequent work.
5. What questions do you have about how your ongoing work?
6. Overall, what are the most significant takeaways from thinking about your work in the context of high quality examples?

This protocol can also be used to have students grade their own work—if this is desired, simply add, “What grade would you award your work and why?” Then, use students’ responses as an opportunity to align your vision of quality with theirs. You will gain insight into how and why they made project-related decisions and be better positioned to support them in creating work that is more finely tuned to professional standards that you—and, most importantly, the students—respect.⁵

ANALYZING PROFESSIONAL WORK IN THE LIBERTY RANCH HIGH SCHOOL AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

At Liberty Ranch High School, Mandy Garner engages her students in projects in the adult professional world through a variety of agricultural Career Technical Education classes: floriculture, advanced floral design, agriculture biology, agriculture leadership, and elements and principles of design. Her students run agricultural businesses—they provide floral services for weddings and formal events in the community, run a community-supported agriculture box program, and more. Mandy and her students regularly compare their work to professional examples because in many ways, it is their competition.

In the spring of 2016, Mandy began asking her students to provide written self-assessments of their work. Initially, this was an imperfect art, until she began requiring students to include photographs and detailed analyses of their professional influences. Mandy took similar self-assessments from English and history classes that asked students to compare their writing to professional writing. She adapted these to fit the needs of CTE classes; rather than have students use text-based quotations to compare their writing to professional examples, Mandy's students photograph examples of professional work similar to what they do in class, and compare them to their own work with corresponding evidence of their own processes and products. Now, as each student works on a project, he or she saves important photographs, plans, and related documents from his or her work, and similar elements from relevant professional work. As each student product is shared with adults in the community, either because it is sold via one of the school-run businesses, or because their work is regularly displayed in the school community, students speak and write in response to prompts like "My work is similar to professional work in that..." or "I am working to more like the professionals in that..."