Calibration Protocol

**Purpose:** To calibrate the scoring of student work and to consider the instructional implications of the prompt or task, student work, and rubric.

**Planning and Preparation:**

- **Time:** Approximately 2-3 hours (depending on the number of pieces of student work)
- **Group size:** 4-8
- **Materials needed for each person:**
  - Prompt or task
  - Task rubric
  - Student work
  - Score sheet
  - Score sheet for recorder
- **Roles:** Choose a facilitator, timekeeper, and recorder

**Process:**

1. The facilitator reviews the protocol process with the group and describes the context of the task.

2. **Examination:** Group members silently examine the prompt (including any associated texts or graphics), student work, the rubric (paying particular attention to the differences in performance descriptors for each level), and the score sheet.

3. **Clarifying questions:** The group members ask clarifying questions about the materials and process.

4. **Read and score:** Using the rubric, group members independently and silently read the student work, ranking them as high, average, or low based on their overall impression. Student work is then scored and scores are recorded on the score sheet. Scorers should note words and phrases in the rubric’s performance level descriptors that best describe the qualities of the work and make notes to explain and justify their scores. It is important to note that there won’t always be an example of every score point within a given set of student work. The scoring rubric and evidence in the student work should always be the basis for the score, rather than the relative strength or weakness of a piece. The student work sample must be truly aligned to the description of the assigned score for the integrity of the exercise to be preserved.

5. **Score sharing:** One at a time, team members share their score for each of the rubric categories – without explanation – as the recorder completes the group’s score sheet.

6. **Discussion:**
   - a. The facilitator invites the group to consider where the differences in the scores occurred and why people scored differently for each rubric area – particularly the highest and lowest scores.
   - b. Group members explain and justify scores by pointing to specific language in the rubric and evidence in the student work.
   - c. Discuss each piece of student work, resolving issues centered on either the meaning of the rubric or the merit and validity of the evidence in the student work until consensus is reached.

7. **Debrief:** Discuss the following questions after the calibration:
   - What did we notice about scoring student work and using the rubric?
   - What would be the next steps for instructing this student?
   - What revisions should be made to the task and instructions?
   - What are the implications for our instructional practice?

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Adapted by Jeri Thompson, Center for Assessment (2013) from *Quality Performance Assessment: A Guide for Schools and Districts* (2012) (Permission to reproduce and use is given when authorship is fully cited.)