



Calibration in Action

This conversation is meant to give a glimpse of teacher conversation as part of the calibration protocol.

At Uptown High School, a group of teachers are in the midst of discussing what it means to demonstrate *perseverance* in the 11th grade team project. The school-wide rubric defines “perseverance” as a personal trait that involves the student making a concerted effort to complete an assignment in spite of difficulties encountered.

Helena: “Perseverance” is generally the most difficult part of me to assess on my own. I am interested in hearing how you rated Aurora Group’s performance. Who’d like to start?

Daniel: While the team completed their project on time, it felt that two members were more of a distraction than a support in completing the team’s project. Thank god Paul was there to drive the work for the team.

Len: Andy and Jorge struggle to stay in school. I’ve had prior conversations with them to help change their belief about overcoming academic difficulties. I was pleased with their self-confidence working with the open source software community to complete their project.

Daniel: Andy’s absences during the project almost derailed their project. He missed a day of school every week during the project, and his teammates were scrambling.

Len: The team met its goals. Isn’t perseverance about adjusting to changing conditions? While Andy missed class, it was my understanding he contributed to all areas of the project. He demonstrated a kind of perseverance not faced by his teammates.

Helena: It is a slippery slope for me to assess “perseverance.” I am concerned about giving a team rating. Students should be scored individually. What do you think?

Len: Students had to write self-reflections about how they persevered in this project. We have information about their experience and perceptions working through their difficulties. I was satisfied with Jorge’s explanation about his participation in the project. He had competing family demands and worked out an agreement with his teammates to lead the team’s 3D renderings of the solar GSP mobile app.

Daniel: I’m leaning with Helena. It’s not difficult if we make it an individual grade.

Len: Everyone needs to be pushing through to do his best to help the group attain success. Part of perseverance is knowing how to work through your challenges, and ask help from others to support your efforts.

Helena: [Looking at the jurors' notes] Cooper, from Bank of the Southwest, wrote he looked for evidence that all team members "owned" meeting timelines to ensure timely completion of the project. Cooper found the students persevered in their work.

Len: Perseverance isn't an issue of group excellence. It's working around challenges and everyone making their best effort. For that reason, I'd rate Aurora Group "proficient."

Helena: Any other thoughts?

Daniel: I do not believe "perseverance" is a group grade. The bottom line is the work got done in a timely way with the team navigating its challenges. I'd rate Aurora Group proficient too.

Helena: I agree the team met the rubric definition of "perseverance." But I'm not entirely comfortable. We still don't have a consistent approach to assess it as a group grade. I will forward a suggestion to the rubric revision subcommittee to review this matter. Do we have consensus on the rating? [Both Daniel and Len nod their heads.] Great! Aurora Group will be rated "proficient". Now, let's review Team Genesis' efforts... [Looking at the jurors' notes]

