

Critical Friends Group Tuning Protocol

Based on the National School Reform Faculty protocol

developed by Joseph McDonald and David Allen

Adapted to fit into a 45 minute time period by Emma Chiappetta

1. Introduction (2 mins)

- The facilitator briefly introduces the protocol.
- Each participant reviews his/her role.

2. Presenter shares dilemma and asks for feedback (5 mins)

- The presenter shares the context of the artifact he/she has brought.
- The presenter explains the learning goals for this assignment.
- The presenter identifies what s/he needs help with. What's not working? What is the dilemma? The presenter tries to frame this as a *focusing question*.
- The facilitator restates the presenter's focusing question to confirm.

3. Clarifying Questions (5 mins)

- Participants ask clarifying questions in order to gather information that may have been omitted from the presenter's explanation. Clarifying questions are nonjudgmental and ask for facts: *How many days did you spend on this unit? Was this the first test of the year?*

4. Silent Examination of Artifact—unit plan, lesson plan, student work sample, or assessment (5 mins)

- Participants now look closely at the work, silently taking notes on where it seems to be in tune with the learning goals the presenter described and how they understand the work in light of the presenter's focusing question.

5. Probing Questions (10 mins)

- Participants ask probing questions in order to give the presenter an opportunity to reflect further on the work and the focusing question: *What were you hoping would happen when. . . ? What are your assumptions about. . . ? What would you have to change if you wanted to. . . ? What is the connection between _____ and _____ ?*
- Presenter responds to probing questions as they arise. The goal is for the presenter to deepen his/her understanding of why this unit/ lesson/student work/assessment is a dilemma in the first place.

6. **Pause to reflect on warm and cool feedback (3 mins)**
 - Participants take a few minutes to jot notes on what they would like to contribute to the feedback session, thinking in terms of warm and cool feedback.

7. **Warm and Cool Feedback (7 mins)**
 - Participants share warm and cool feedback, speaking about the presenter in the third person. Presenter is silent and may take notes.
 - *Warm* feedback may include comments about general strengths of the work and how the work presented seems to meet the desired learning goals.
 - *Cool* feedback may include comments about possible disconnects between the desired learning goals and the work itself, as well as other gaps or problems the participants perceive. These may be phrased as observations, questions, or suggestions for strengthening the work.

8. **Reflection (3 mins)**
 - The presenter responds to the feedback; participants are silent. This is not a time for the presenter to rebut or affirm each point, but rather for the presenter to think aloud about what s/he learned and what questions remain.

9. **Debrief (3 mins)**
 - The facilitator leads a discussion of this tuning experience. What worked, and what needs work?