

Critical Incident Protocol

This protocol provides an opportunity for a teacher to reflect with colleagues on an incident from his or her work that was particularly rewarding, puzzling, or devastating in order to gain new insights into teacher practice and student learning. It is a formal process for critical friendship using a variation of Costa and Killick's model.

A facilitator should be assigned for each round. The facilitator's role is to keep the conversation moving through each phase and to facilitate the final conversation. The facilitator should also keep time.

The "learner" or presenter presents a critical incident from and within the context of his or her work—as a text for learning. The learner also frames a professional outcome toward which he/she is working. The group listens carefully to understand the incident and the context, and then asks clarifying questions. As the learner listens, the "friends" then discuss and raise questions as advocates for the learner's success. The learner responds and the group talks together about the content and/or process of the conversation.

Learner presents critical incident	10 minutes
Friends ask clarifying questions	5 minutes
Friends raise questions, note the significance of the incident in the context of the learner's work, and discuss as advocates. Learner listens.	15 minutes
Learner responds, then the group engages in general conversation about the content and/or process.	15 minutes
Debrief the process	5 minutes