

Tuning Protocol

The Tuning Protocol was originally developed as a means for the five high schools in the Coalition of Essential School's Exhibitions Project to receive feedback and fine-tune their developing student assessment systems, including exhibitions, portfolios and design projects. It has since been adapted as a tool for looking collaboratively at both teachers' and students' work and used extensively in the work of the National School Reform Faculty.

Often the presenting teacher begins with a focusing question or area about which she would especially welcome feedback, for example, "Are you seeing evidence of persuasive writing in the student's work?" or "Does this lesson accommodate different learning styles?" The overarching purpose of a tuning protocol is to give teachers critical feedback on a single aspect of their practice again, either through their work or the work of their students.

Participation in a structured process of professional collaboration like this can be intimidating and anxiety producing, especially for the teacher presenting work. Having a shared set of guidelines or norms helps everybody participate in a manner that is respectful as well as conducive to helpful feedback.

Guidelines:

- Be respectful of teacher-presenter(s). By making their work more public, teachers are exposing themselves to kinds of critiques they may not be used to. Inappropriate comments or questions should be reworded or withdrawn
- Contribute to substantive discussion. Many teachers may be used to blanket praise. Without thoughtful, probing "cool" questions and comments, they won't benefit from the tuning protocol.
- Be respectful of the facilitator's role, particularly in regard to following the guidelines and keeping time. A tuning protocol that doesn't allow for all parts (presentation, feedback, response, debrief) will do a disservice to the teacher-presenter(s) and to the participants.

Tuning Protocol (Continued)

Steps for Tuning Protocol:

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| 1. Introduction | 5-10 minutes |
| Protocol goals, guidelines, and schedule | |
| 2. Teacher Presentation | 10-15 minutes |
| Context for work, focusing question, group is silent | |
| 3. Clarifying Questions | 5 minutes max. |
| This is not the time for warm/cool feedback | |
| 4. Examination of work sample(s) | 5-15 minutes |
| 5. Pause for reflections | 2-3 minutes |
| Participants reflect on potential contribution | |
| 6. Warm and Cool Feedback | 15 minutes |
| Group shares feedback; presenter is silent | |
| 7. Reflection | 10-15 minutes |
| Presenter speaks to issue(s) deemed appropriate | |
| 8. Debrief | 10 minutes |
| Open discussion on the experiences of the group | |