PROJECT TUNING

Norms:

- Hard on the content, soft on the people

- Share the air (or "step up, step back")

- Be kind, helpful and specific

Protocol:

1. **Overview** - Presenter gives an overview of the work and explains what goals he/she had in mind when designing the project. The presenter might choose to also put the project into context so the critical friends understand how it fits into the larger scope and sequence of the class. Participants then have an opportunity to look at "the work" (e.g. project handouts, rubrics, student work, etc.). The presenter then shares a dilemma by *framing a question* for the critical friends group to address during the discussion. (10 min)

2. **Clarifying Questions** – Critical friends ask *clarifying* questions of the presenter. Clarifying questions have brief, factual answers and are intended to help the person asking the question develop a deeper understanding of the dilemma. An example of a clarifying question is "How were the groups chosen for this activity?" (5 min)

3. **Probing Questions*** – Critical friends ask *probing* questions of the presenter. Probing questions help the presenter expand his/her thinking about the dilemma. However, probing questions should not be "advice in disguise", such as "Have you considered…?" Examples of probing questions are "How did each student demonstrate their understanding through the final product?" or "What evidence did you gather to determine the extent to which the goals of your project were met?" (5 min)

4. **Discussion*** - The presenter reframes the question if necessary and is then physically removed from the group. The group discusses the dilemma and attempts to provide insight on the question raised by the presenter. It may help to **begin with warm feedback**, such as "What went well with the project?" and then move on to cool feedback. Cool feedback includes a more critical analysis of the work, using the question proposed by the presenter to frame the discussion. For example, "What isn't the presenter considering?" or "I wonder what would happen if…". *The presenter does not speak during the discussion, but listen and take notes. It is a good idea for the presenter to physically sit outside of the circle and for the group to close in the circle without the presenter. Resist the urge to speak directly to the presenter. The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter's focusing questions. It can be helpful to ask after 8 minutes, "Did we answer the presenter's questions?"* (10 min)

5. **Response** – The presenter has the opportunity to respond to the discussion. It is not necessary to respond point by point to what others said. The presenter may share what

struck him or her and what next steps might be taken as a result of the ideas generated by the discussion. *Critical friends are silent.* (5 min)

6. **<u>Debrief</u> –** The facilitator leads a conversation about the group's observation of the process. One mark of a good facilitator is his or her ability to lead a good debrief. Questions posed to the group might include: Did we have a good question? Did we stick to the question? When was a moment when the conversation made a turn for the better? Was there any point where we went off track? Did our probing questions really push the thinking of the presenter? *Resist the urge to turn the debrief back to a discussion of the dilemma.* (5 min)

7. **Closing the Loop (optional) –** Participants write in their journals about what they have learned from participating in this protocol and how it could inform their own practice. If time allows, participants share one of their take-a-ways with a partner or everyone in the group shares out one take-a-way. (5 min)

*During both the of these sections, it may be helpful to take 2 minutes and have participants turn to a partner to either generate probing questions or discuss their response to the question that was framed by the presenter.

Total time: approximately 45 – 50 minutes

<u>Tips for facilitation:</u>

Work with the presenter to frame a good question beforehand ~ meet beforehand to discuss the dilemma and wordsmith a question that is open-ended and not easily solved. Write the question on the whiteboard so that it is visible during the entire conversation.

Stick to the time for each section ~ if you need help with keeping time, ask someone to volunteer to help you and/or use a timer.

Don't be afraid to keep the group focused on the protocol ~ if a probing question is asked during clarifying questions, gently ask the participant to write it down and wait until you have moved on to that point in the conversation.

Redirect the conversation when necessary (without unnecessarily monopolizing airtime) ~ if the discussion jumps to cool feedback before warm feedback is shared, make sure to take time to celebrate the work first.

Resist the urge to skip the debrief ~ the debrief is a crucial way to deconstruct the conversation and improve the quality of our dialogue w/colleagues over time.

BE COURAGEOUS & CONFIDENT ~ strong facilitation is the key to having successful dialogue about our work and is appreciated by everyone in the group. If it helps to literally read each step to the group, by all means do so.