Tuning Protocol

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Description
The Tuning Protocol was originally developed as a means for the 5 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. Recognizing the complexities involved in developing new forms of assessment, the project staff developed a facilitated process to support educators in sharing their students' work (sometimes students brought their own work) and, with colleagues, reflect upon the lessons that are embedded there. This collaborative reflection helps educators design and refine their assessment systems, and supports higher quality student performance. Since its trial run in 1992, the Tuning Protocol has been widely used and adapted for looking at both student and adult work in and among schools across the country.

Note: If adult work (such as an adult developed document like a lesson plan, rubric, newsletter, etc.) is the focus and there are no student work samples, you may want to consider the Tuning Protocol: Examining Adult Work.

Process

1. Introduction (5 minutes)
Facilitator briefly introduces protocol goals, guidelines, and schedule

2. Presentation (10-15 minutes)
The presenter has the opportunity to share both the context for her work and any supporting documents as warranted, while participants are silent.

- Information about the students and/or the class — what the students tend to be like, where they are in school, where they are in the year.
- Assignment or prompt that generated the student work
- Student learning goals or standards that inform the work
- Samples of student work — photocopies of work, video clips, etc. — with student names removed
- Evaluation format — scoring rubric and or assessment criteria, etc.
- Focusing question for feedback (ex: To what extent does the student work reflect the learning standards? Or, How might the rubric be in closer alignment to the skills and knowledge present in the student work?) is shared and posted for all to see.

3. Clarifying Questions (3-5 minutes)

- Participants have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions in order to get information that may have been omitted during the presentation and would help them to better understand the work.
- Clarifying questions are matters of fact.
- The facilitator is responsible for making sure that clarifying questions are really clarifying and not warm/cool feedback or suggestions.

4. Examining the Work (10-15 minutes)

Participants look closely at the work, making notes on where it seems to be "in tune" or aligned with the stated goals and, guided by the presenter's focusing question and goals, where there might be a potential disconnect.

Note: It's possible that participants could have an additional clarifying question or 2 during this time. If so, the facilitator might offer an additional moment for these to be asked by participants and answered by the presenter.

5. Pause to Silently Reflect on Warm and Cool Feedback (2-3 minutes)

- Participants individually review their notes and decide what they would like to contribute to the feedback session.
- Presenter is silent.
- Participants do this work silently.

6. Warm and Cool Feedback (10-15 minutes)

- Participants share feedback with each other while the presenter is silent and takes notes. The feedback generally begins with a few minutes of warm feedback, moves on to a few minutes of cool feedback (sometimes phrased in the form of reflective questions), and then moves back and forth between warm and cool feedback.
- Warm feedback may include comments about how the work presented seems to align with the desired goals; cool feedback may include possible disconnects, gaps, or problems. Often participants offer ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work presented, so long as the suggestions are guided by the presenter's goals and question.
- It might be helpful for the facilitator to offer prompts for the feedback, such as:

  <u>Warm feedback</u>
  "It seems important …"
  "Considering the goal, I appreciate…"
  "I want to make sure to keep…"
  <u>Cool feedback</u>
  "I wonder if …"
  "One way to more closely align the goal/purpose is …"
- The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter's focusing question.
- Presenter is silent, listening in on the conversation and taking notes.

7. Reflection (3-5 minutes)

- Presenter rejoins the group and shares her/his new thinking about what she/he learned from the participants' feedback.
- This is not a time for the presenter to defend her/himself, but is instead a time for the presenter to reflect aloud on anything that seemed particularly interesting.
- Facilitator may need to remind participants that once the work has been returned to the presenter, there will be no more feedback offered.

8. Debrief (3-5 minutes)

Facilitator leads discussion about this tuning experience.

Note: See Tuning Protocol Guidelines for information on effective participation in a Tuning.