

Critical Friends Group (CFG) protocol.

A consultancy protocol for examining student work

Roles

Presenter: teacher bringing student work and a question for the group to discuss.

Facilitator: colleague who coordinates the group process and monitors time while participating.

Participants: teacher colleagues who collaborate in the analysis of student work.

Protocol

Step	Description	Time
1	<p>Overview: Presenter gives an overview of the student work and the central question or dilemma. Please address the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Summary of findings from the analysis of student work including any patterns or trends seen in the data.○ Brief context of the lesson(s) and student(s) featured in the samples of work.○ Central question or dilemma that emerged from the analysis and is featured in the samples.	5 minutes
2	<p>Scientific evidence and explanation: What is a level 3 (see “Rubric for Analysis of Student Understanding of Evidence-Based Explanations”) explanation for this phenomenon? What might be students’ partial understandings of the phenomena?</p>	10 minutes
3	<p>Reading for partial understandings and listening: Group quietly reads and reviews the sections of student work pertaining to the presenter’s question, attending to students’ partial understandings and patterns within and across students. OPTIONAL: The group then watches a 5–7 minute video segment with students talking about scientific explanations.</p>	15 minutes
4	<p>Clarifying questions: Participants ask clarifying questions of the presenter. Clarifying questions have brief, factual answers. Presenter responds to the questions.</p>	5 minutes
5	<p>Probing questions: Participants ask probing questions of the presenter. Probing questions push the presenter to think deeply about assumptions and different perspectives. The goal is to use questions to help the presenter expand his or her thinking about the student work and the central question. Presenter responds to the probing questions, but there is no larger discussion.</p>	5 minutes
6	<p>Consultancy: Presenter is a silent listener while participants engage in a larger discussion of the student work, the central question, and the information gathered from the responses to questions. Participants are encouraged to include both “warm” and “cool” feedback in the discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Warm feedback:</i> Identify what you see or hear about successful first steps that students made (or that the teacher made) in these assignments.○ <i>Cool feedback:</i> Suggest an area that has some room for improvement and provide the next step that could be taken.	10 minutes
7	<p>Reflection: Presenter summarizes statement between student data and instructional conditions or opportunities for change. Presenter reflects on any new ideas, perspectives, or questions that emerged from the group discussion. Presenter also reflects on the central question in light of the discussion.</p>	5 minutes

8	<p>Debrief: Facilitator leads a conversation about the overall group process, reflecting on the dynamics of the group and the use of the protocol. Some ideas for debriefing include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Accountability to students' ideas:</i> How did group members give the student work a “generous reading” during the process? ○ <i>Accountability to science:</i> Did we reach any consensus about the science behind this activity? ○ <i>Accountability to one another:</i> Did everyone have a chance to participate? How did we use strategies such as paraphrasing and “wait time” to be active listeners? ○ <i>Overall:</i> How might we change the ways we are collecting, analyzing, and discussing student work? 	5 minutes
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The Consultancy Protocol, from which this was adapted, was developed by Gene Thompson-Grove, Paula Evans, and Faith Dunne as part of the Coalition of Essential Schools' National Re: Learning Faculty Program (NSRF 2008).

Reference

National School Reform Faculty (NSRF). 2008. *National school reform faculty resource book*. Bloomington, IN: Harmony Education Center.