

Figure 1. Teaching With Attention to Equity

This tuning protocol can be used across contexts where educators work with students to facilitate discussion between professional educators. Examples include community of practice groups, professional learning communities, and teacher development spaces where individuals seek deeper understanding about planning for and teaching with attention to equity. Ideally, individuals meet regularly so that the responsibility for sharing a lesson or activity can be rotated among group members over a series of meetings.

Selecting a topic for discussion

Select a lesson, activity, or topic to discuss with the group that you wish to improve or wish to receive feedback on through an equity lens. Provide enough detail to elicit good discussion. Include the context, student learning objectives, a description of the activities in which teachers and students engage, the standards being addressed, and all necessary information to provide the members of the community a sense of the goals for the lesson.

Structure the presentation to include the following:

- a statement of the problem
- a statement explaining what you want the group to focus their feedback on
- identify the connection to equity

Facilitating the protocol (30 minutes)

Roles

- Presenter: individual whose lesson is being discussed by the group
- Facilitator and Timekeeper: individual who keeps the conversation flowing according to the group norms and provides helpful reminders to participants on timing
- Respondents: collaborative group members. Outside perspective is critical to the effectiveness of this protocol; therefore, the other individuals in the community of practice will help the presenter deepen their thinking throughout the steps below.

Steps

- 1. Presentation (10 minutes).** The presenter describes the focus of the discussion, without interruption. The presenter should
 - Share general information about the context. Use of person-first and affirmative language is most appropriate. Identifying information about students or colleagues must be omitted.
 - Focus the respondents on a specific question. (The facilitator will post this question(s) for the group to see).
- 2. Clarifying questions (5 minutes).** Respondents have an opportunity to ask “clarifying” questions to get information that may have been omitted in the presentation that they feel would help them understand the context. Clarifying questions are matters of “fact.” The facilitator should be sure to

limit the questions to those that are “clarifying,” judging which questions more properly belong in the warm/ cool feedback section.

3. Discussion – Warm and cool feedback (10 minutes).

Respondents share feedback with each other while the presenter is silent. 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 meet the desired goals; cool feedback may include possible “disconnects,” gaps, or problems. Often participants offer ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work presented. The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter’s focusing question, which should be posted for all to see. Presenter is silent and takes notes.

Constructive responses may begin with the following prompts:

- “I wonder what would happen if _____”
- “If the goal is _____, then it would seem important to _____.”
- “This makes me think about _____.”
- “I agree that _____, but _____...”
- “I disagree that _____, because _____....”

Respondents may provide statements or questions that tune the presenter into areas of disconnects, gaps, dilemmas, or other experiences that connect to the focus question. Respondents may also connect the ideas under discussion to other research, similar practices, or other good leads. Individual experiences may be used to support a point; however, the respondents should be careful to keep the conversation focused on the presenter’s context and focus question(s).

Remember that the goal is to advance the presenter’s thinking about their teaching with attention to equity.

4. **Reaction (5 minutes).** The presenter responds to any aspect of the discussion that they choose. During this step, respondents may not speak unless invited by the presenter.

5. **Debrief (optional).** Afterward, participants may debrief the process, but the facilitator may remind everyone that discussion about the presenter’s work has ended.

Adapted from:

- McDonald, J.P., N. Mohr, A. Dichter, and E.C. McDonald. 2015. The power of protocols: An educator's guide to better practice. *Teachers College Press.*
- Settlage, J., and A. Johnston. 2014. *The crossroads model.* *Educational Leadership* 71: 67–70.