

CRITICAL FRIENDS

Within this structured process, students seek to understand what each other is struggling with and would like feedback on. Afterward, students give “warm” (positive) feedback, “cool” (constructive) feedback, and suggestions for resources and ideas.

DIRECTIONS:

Have students think through what they would like feedback on related to their project. For example, this could relate to whether their idea is defined enough, they have too many ideas, or there is anything missing from their solution.

Afterward, have students divide into small groups of 3-4 (each round of the critical friends protocol lasts approximately 20 minutes so plan your group size based upon how long you have to devote to this process). Ideally, place students into groups where each person is from a different team.

One at a time, have students go through the protocol on the following page.

It is important that as you go through this protocol you stick to the time limits, both to make sure that students do not go long and they do not cut the time short. Often, new ideas and comments will be sparked if students are allowed to use the entire time, even when it appears there is nothing left to offer.

Critical friends is a protocol developed by the National School Reform Faculty (<http://www.nsrffharmony.org/>).

STEP 1: SHARE YOUR IDEA/ISSUE (4 MIN.)	STEP 2: PROBING/ CLARIFYING QUESTIONS (2 MIN.)	STEP 3: WARM FEEDBACK (I LIKE) (4 MIN.)	STEP 4: COOL FEEDBACK (I WONDER) (4 MIN.)	STEP 5: REFLECTION (2 MIN.)
The presenter shares their idea and provides context for what they will be doing. Others within the group are silent.	Group members ask clarifying/probing questions related to the idea. This is not time to give advice or critique. The point is simply to gain clarity.	Group members share “warm” feedback with the presenter. Typically this begins with the phrase “I like . . .” Presenter is silent and takes notes.	Group members share “cool” or constructive feedback with the presenter. Typically this begins with the phrase “I wonder . . .” Presenter is silent and takes notes.	Presenter reflects aloud with the group members on the feedback that they received.