

### Assignment Protocol

Source: *Turning Points: Transforming Middle Schools* ([www.turningpts.org](http://www.turningpts.org))

#### Purpose

This protocol provides insights into how an assignment, project, unit, or other piece of teacher work will enhance student learning.

#### Time allotted

About 60 minutes.

#### Group format

The protocol needs one facilitator, with understanding of and experience with the protocol, a documenter to capture the groups' thinking, the presenting teacher, and a group of 5-10 colleagues.

#### Facilitation tips

- This protocol works best if one person, preferably someone who is familiar with the protocol, acts as the facilitator. This person will not be part of a group that discusses the question(s).
- The facilitator should begin the session by restating the importance of the trust and respect that this protocol requires. Discussions and feedback that take place in the session are professional conversations between the participants and the teacher seeking feedback.
- The facilitator should also explain that the protocol will be implemented with fidelity to the process and the constructive spirit of the process. The facilitator may ask participants to reword or withdraw comments that are evaluative or judgmental.
- The protocol follows the following steps:
  - Introduction (protocol goals, guidelines and schedule): 5 – 10 minutes
  - The presenting teacher describes his or her objectives, the context for the assignment, and how it fits into the overall plan for the semester: 10 minutes
  - The participants ask clarifying questions (the presenter responds briefly to each): 5 minutes
  - The facilitator asks the group to outline how they would respond to the assignment: 10 minutes
  - The facilitator asks the group to look at and discuss the assignment (the discussion should balance warm and cool feedback) (The presenter listens but does not participate): 10 minutes
  - The facilitator asks the presenter to respond to the discussion (restating what he or she heard. The teacher may identify change to make, or decide to come back at a later date with changes): 10 minutes
  - The facilitator leads a general discussion (general comments and whether there are any curriculum connections for others): 10 minutes
  - Debrief (open discussion of the experiences of the group): 10 minutes
  - Thank the presenting teacher