

Facilitation Difficulty: 

 60 min.

 Up to 15

 Preconference in advance

Purpose – Since its trial run in 1992, The Tuning Protocol has been widely used and adapted for professional development purposes in and among schools across the country. It is best suited to look at a piece of work (from a student, teacher, administrator, etc.) in order to “fine tune” or improve it in some way.

Group size – Up to 15

Preparation – Preconference to ensure that artifacts are available and Tuning is the appropriate protocol to use. With the presenter (or presenters), develop a focusing question. Presenter will need to bring in sufficient copies for all participants, or technology to show any other media. Instruct participants to bring notetaking materials.

Possible pitfalls – Ensure that Step 2 is limited to clarifying questions and that other questions are delayed if they belong in the warm/cool feedback step. Separating the presenter from the group in Step 6 is vital. Also instruct participants to couch cool feedback in “I wonders” and direct presenter to avoid “defending themselves” during the reflection step.

Prerequisite activities – [Giving and Receiving Feedback](#), [Zones of Comfort, Risk and Danger](#) (or [Zones Pie Chart Activity](#))

Steps:

1. **Setup** – (5 min.) Review the purpose and steps of the protocol so participants know what to expect. If this is the first time a group is experiencing the Tuning, talk about the importance of giving warm and cool feedback, and why the presenter moves away from the table in Step 6.
2. **Present** – (Up to 15 min. but usually around 7 min.) *Without handing out any materials or showing media*, the presenter shares the context around the piece of work. This can include information like the work’s purpose, its audience, what outcome the presenter would like to achieve, and what they believe doesn’t work well. The presenter should end with a focusing question that specifically gives the group parameters for their feedback, and this question should be charted for all to see throughout the next steps. If the presenter does not use up all of their time, the extra time may be rolled into the next step for clarifying questions.
3. **Clarify** – (5 min. or up to 10 if Step 2 was shorter) Remind participants that they cannot and do not need to know everything about a project in order for this protocol to work successfully. Then open a round of clarifying questions so participants may gather additional information they feel they need to understand the work better.
4. **Examine** – (Up to 10 min.) Distribute the artifacts (copies of the piece of work) or play the video/ media. Instruct participants to review the work with the focusing question in mind. Participants should take notes on where the work seems to be “in tune with” the stated goals (“warm feedback”), and where there might be a problem regarding the focusing issue (“cool feedback”). This step is performed silently.
5. **Clarify again** – (2-3 min.) Now that the participants have begun to review the piece of work, they may have a few more questions about it.

6. **Separate** – (1 min.) The presenter should now physically move away from the group but stay close enough to hear, and ideally, turn so they aren't making eye contact with anyone. The presenter should bring materials for taking notes. For the next step, instruct everyone to imagine the presenter has left the room, to avoid eye contact with the presenter, and to speak of the presenter in the third person. ("They said" rather than "You said.")
7. **Warm and cool feedback** – (15 min.) Remind participants that warm feedback may include comments about where the work seems to meet the desired goals, and cool feedback offers ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work in an area defined by the focusing question. Participants will share feedback with each other while the presenter is silent and takes notes.

Begin with a round of warm feedback. Then transition into cool feedback around the focusing question, couched in "I wonder..." statements. If the feedback begins to stray, you may need to remind participants of the presenter's focusing question (which is posted for all to see).

8. **Reflect** – (5 min.) Invite the presenter to return to the group, and speak to whatever comment/questions they choose while the participants are silent. Assure the presenter that they do not need to defend or comment on every point, but should use this time to reflect aloud on those ideas or questions that seemed particularly interesting and/or helpful. Facilitator may intervene to focus, clarify, etc.
9. **Debrief** – (5-10 min.) Many of these questions are only asked the first time a group uses the Tuning Protocol, but always begin with the presenter.
 - *How did it feel to bring a piece of work to the group for Tuning? How was the experience of presenting?*
 - *What did you think of turning your chair away and listening silently?*
 - *Was the outcome of this protocol different than other attempts to improve the work?*
 - *Do you have a different appreciation of the protocol rules now that you have presented?*

Then open to debrief with the rest of the group.

- *How did the experience feel from your point of view?*
- *Did anything the presenter said surprise you?*
- *Have you learned anything you may use in your work, or when facing your own dilemmas?*