Praise, Question, Suggestion

Purpose

This protocol can be used to offer critique and feedback in preparation for revision of work. It should be used after a draft of what will become a finished product is completed. This process will help students see what is working and then ask questions and offer suggestions, leading to revision and improvement. It is important for students to understand that the focus should be on offering feedback that is beneficial to the author. Explicit modeling is necessary for this protocol to be used successfully.

Materials

- Product descriptors and rubrics
- Revision checklist or questions
- Anchor chart for protocol norms (see Practice #15: Critique and Feedback in Part 1 for suggested norms)

Procedure

1. Provide product descriptors and rubrics as clear guidelines of the expectations and criteria for the piece of work that will be critiqued. If the work is written, providing copies for the critique group is helpful.

2. As a whole group, create or refer to a list of revision questions based on the criteria for the piece of work.

3. Model the procedure with the whole group before allowing small independent feedback groups.

4. Have students work in groups of two to five.

5. The first student presents or reads the draft of her piece. She may ask peers to focus on a particular revision question or two that she is struggling with from the list.

6. Peers first focus on what is praiseworthy or working well. Praise needs to be specific. Simply saying, "This is good" doesn't help the author. Comments such as, "I notice that you used descriptive picture captions" or "You have a catchy title that makes me want to read your piece" are much more useful.

7. Next, ask questions and offer helpful suggestions: "This part is unclear. I wonder if it would be better to change the order of the steps?" or "I can't tell the setting. Maybe you could add some details that would show the reader where it is taking place?" or "I wonder if adding a graph to highlight your data would be effective."

8. Feedback should relate to the revision questions identified by the group or presenter.

9. After each member of the group has offered feedback, the presenter discusses which suggestions she wants to implement and thanks the group.

10. Others then present their work in turn and cycle through the feedback process.

Variations

- Give time guidelines for each part of the protocol so students don't get "stuck" on a particular type of feedback.
- Feedback can be written on sticky notes and given to the author.

Protocols and Strategies