



## Changing Judgment Into Neutral Questions

(Adapted from Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process)

How do you take an opinion that is embedded with judgment and turn it into a neutral question?

A constructive neutral question is:

- One that the person can answer
- One that invites honest reflection rather than defensiveness
- A meaningful, authentic question for you, the questioner
- Something you don't know the answer to
- Open ended

For example, you might reshape the comment, "This cake is too dry!" into a question, such as, "What kind of texture were you going for?"

### ***You Try It***

Take each of the following statements and rephrase them as a neutral question. (See the next page for some suggestions.)

- If you cared about the environment you wouldn't travel so much on airplanes.
- People need to go to graduate school after college to be successful.
- It would be good if we worked together on this project.
- This restaurant has the best Italian food in the city.
- Your writing would be better if you put more of yourself into it.

## ***Suggestions for Neutral Questions***

- Your writing would be better if you put more of yourself into it.  
*Feedback: How does the environmental impact of airplanes influence your decisions about travel?*
- People need to go to graduate school after college to be successful.  
*Feedback: What might people do after college to increase their chances of success?*
- It would be good if we worked together on this project.  
*Feedback: What potential benefits and challenges do you see in us working together on this project?*
- This restaurant has the best Italian food in the city.  
*Feedback: What do you think about the food at this restaurant? What makes really great Italian food?*
- Your writing would be better if you put more of yourself into it.  
*Feedback: What were you going for with this piece of writing? What would you like the role of the author's voice to be in this writing?*