The Charrette Protocol
~from the National School Reform Faculty~
www.nsrfharmony.org

The purpose of the Charrette is to improve a piece of work. Charrettes are used in
a low stakes/no stakes environment, where the presenter of work has much to
gain from the process and virtually nothing to lose. In short, Charrettes are used to
scrutinize and improve work while it is still in progress, before it is ever placed in a
high stakes environment. They can be used whenever an individual or small group
has a design problem or issue.

The Charrette is used when there is sufficient trust present in a group, and when
the prevailing atmosphere is one of cooperation rather than competition.
Underlying the successful use of the Charrette are two fundamental beliefs:
a) Individuals or groups working together can usually produce better work
   than individuals or groups working in isolation (“none of us is as smart as all
   of us”), and
b) There is not piece of work that with more time, thought and effort couldn't
   be improved (“with learning there is not finish line”).

Steps for the Modified Charrette:
1) The presenter describes his/her “work in progress” while the group listens.
   Sometimes, the group needs to ask two or three clarifying questions (not
   judging questions). (3 minutes)

2) The presenter states what he/she needs or wants from the Charrette,
   thereby accepting responsibility for focusing the discussion. This focus is
   usually made in the form of a specific request or question. (2 minutes)

3) The group then discusses the piece of work while the presenter listens and
takes notes. The emphasis is on improving the work, which now belongs to
the entire group. The atmosphere is one of “we're in this together,” and our
single purpose is to make a good thing even better. (10 minutes)

4) When the presenter is at a point at which she/he has gotten what she/he
   needs from the group, they stop the process, briefly summarize what was
gained and thank the group. (1 minute)