

Writers' Workshop

Participants read the pattern.

The author stands, reads a selection from the pattern, then becomes a “fly on the wall,” outside the circle. No eye contact is made. The author's name is never mentioned; refer only to “the author.”

A summary of the pattern is given by someone other than the author or moderator. Others may add to this.

Begin with positive comments. Say what the author should leave alone.

Next, suggestions for improvement. State the opportunity and then the suggested improvement. Begin these comments by saying, “I suggest the author...”

Those who know the pattern should not clarify or speak for the author. The pattern must stand on its own. The moderator constrains discussion to the pattern at hand, usually with, “point noted.” Save meta issues for later.

Trivial comments and typos can be made on a marked-up copy and given to the author after the workshop.

End with a positive closing comment or two.

Invite the author back into the circle.

The author (1) thanks the group for the feedback and (2) asks any questions to clarify comments from the group. Nothing else should be introduced by the author at this time. Save discussion for later. The author should never apologize, explain, or answer any comments.

The author owns all comments. The author is considered an expert and is assumed to act appropriately to suggestions.

The group stands and applauds the author's contribution.

If another pattern is to be workshopped, everyone takes a different seat and someone tells an unrelated story.