Liz Lerman's CRITICAL RESPONSE PROCESS (CRP)® (adapted for writers, as I understand it). Three roles in each feedback session: **Writer**, **Responder**(s), and **Facilitator**. Facilitator begins session by welcoming group and reviewing the roles/process so everyone is onboard. **A work in progress is presented.** The writer reads their work or presents printed copies to the group (an excerpt, if it is long). The piece can be read silently or aloud by the writer or someone else, as writer prefers.

WRITER ROLE	RESPONDER(S) ROLE	FACILITATOR ROLE
PREPARING FOR THE PROCESS		
... invested in continuing to work on the piece you are sharing and open to the possibility that you might change it. ... thinking about what you want to learn related to where you are in the process of developing the work you are sharing. ... refraining from long explanatory preambles. ... in an open frame of mind about what you will hear.	... invested in the potential for the writer to do his/her best work. ... thinking ahead to how you will participate in the steps of the Process as you observe the presentation of the writer's work.	... considering what kind of preparation will be appropriate for this writer, taking time, if needed, to meet with the writer in advance. ... assuring that all understand the sequence of the steps and the concepts of the **neutral** question and **permissioned** opinion/suggestion.
STEP 1: STATEMENTS OF MEANING BY RESPONDERS		
... suspending the need to hear, "This is the greatest thing I've ever read." ... suspending the need to question the sincerity of positive comments. ... attending to your own internal reactions to the comments in terms of how they inform the steps to come: • Are responders answering the questions I have about my work? • Are they suggesting that I need to probe deeper on any subject? • Are they raising my sense of curiosity about something new in my writing? • Are they reflecting a consensus reaction to my writing or a diverse response?	... making comments that add new perspectives to what has already been stated. ... limiting your statement of meaning to one or two points when many responders are participating (or time constraints if sessions for other writers will also be held.) ... if you have a strong opinion that you would eventually like to make, addressing a related aspect of the work in your step one statement. ... noting the meanings that others have found in the work, observing how those comments are expanding your own perception of the work. ... observing your own preferences and points of reference. …refraining from negative opinions or suggestions for fixes	... encouraging a broad response with an opening that suggests many possible kinds of reactions, such as, **"What did you find stimulating, moving, memorable, surprising, startling, shocking, evocative, etc., about what you just read/heard?"**) ... intervening when responders jump to negative opinions or suggestions for fixes, reminding them of the opportunities they will have later in the Process. ... drawing the group's attention to the variety of responses elicited.

STEP 2: WRITER ASKS RESPONDERS QUESTIONS (responders reply to each question)

... building on the information you have heard in Step 1. ... refraining from long explanatory preambles. ... considering possibilities for two-part questions or general questions. ... ready to narrow questions down when they spill out in groups. ... ready to hear opinions, including negative ones, when they are in direct response to the question you have posed.	... keeping your answers honest and specific to the writer's question. ... expression opinions, even negative ones, IF they are in response to the writer's question. ... listening carefully to the areas of interest and concern that are directed by the writer. ... staying interested in the conversation, even when it is about an aspect of the work about which you may not have a strong opinion.	... encouraging writers to limit their preambles to questions. ... encouraging the writer to phrase in more general or specific terms if the question isn't leading to a useful response. ... helping the writer refine very general questions, or sort through multiple questions that she/he may want to pose all at once. ... encouraging responders to respond to the question by being honest and specific, but staying on-topic with the question. ... intervening when responses to the writer's questions contain fix-its (suggestions for change).

STEP 3: RESPONDERS ASK WRITER NEUTRAL QUESTIONS (writer responds to each question)

... attentive to possibilities and issues that may not be prominent in your current thinking. ... using the dialogue as an opportunity to advance your thinking about the work rather than to repeat what you already know. ... not working too hard to divine the opinion behind the question.	... framing a NEUTRAL question about the area of your opinion. ... considering options from general to specific and the possible merits of posing a more general question before a specific one. ... listening to the writer's response for indications that the opinion you have in mind may either be very valuable or irrelevant to the writer's concerns. ... being curious about aspects of the work that aren't related to strong opinions (that is, being open to asking questions that are not opinion-driven.)	... reminding responders about the protocol of asking for the writer's consent to state a particular opinion. ... checking to see if writer wants to hear suggestions (fix-its) as well as opinions. ... asking responders to restate when their permission statements have the content of an opinion loaded into them. ... directing opinions to be stated to the writer, not as seconds or rebuttals to other responders. ... intervening when responders engage in a dialogue that does not include the writer or when they become sidetracked.

STEP 4: PERMISSIONED OPINIONS / SUGGESTIONS BY RESPONDERS (writer's choice)

... listening to the content of the permission requests as well as the opinions.

... exercising the options of saying "**YES**" or "**NO**" or "**NOT NOW**" to a proposed opinion or suggestion (fix-it)

... considering how content of this and previous steps is informing your thinking about how you want to continue with the piece you are working on.

... always prefacing permissioned opinions or suggestions by saying, "**I have an opinion about____,** would you like to hear it?" and then waiting for consent and honoring writer's response. Or,
"**I have a suggestion about____,** would you like to hear it?" and then waiting for consent and honoring writer's response.

... indicating, in your request to the writer if your opinion contains a suggestion or fix-it.

... not loading the content of your opinion into the permission request.

... engaging the writer directly rather than dialoging with the other responders about the writer.

... reminding responders about the protocol of asking for the writer's consent to state a particular opinion.

... checking to see if writer wants to hear suggestions as well as opinions.

... asking responders to restate when their permission statements have the content of an opinion loaded into them.

... directing opinions to be stated to the writer, not as seconds or rebuttals to other responders.

... intervening when responders engage in a dialogue that does not include the writer or when they become sidetracked discussing something other than the current work under consideration.

STEP 5: WRAP–UP / CLOSURE

... consolidating the most useful information you've heard.

... observing the quality of the contribution you and your fellow responders have made.

...returning the piece of writing back to the writer.

... asking the writer to say what his/her next steps are.

... checking to see whether writer is open to hearing more from the responders outside the formal session.

... pulse check on writer's motivation and enthusiasm for continuing with their work in progress. (Ideally, a feedback session leaves writer excited to get back to writing.)

... thanking all participants.

... seeking group feedback to see if process is providing value; plan for next session.

(STEP 6: WRITER CONSIDERS FEEDBACK, CHOOSES WHETHER/HOW TO APPLY CHANGES AND <u>CONTINUES WITH THEIR WORK!</u>)

The Purpose of Asking NEUTRAL QUESTIONS

NEUTRAL QUESTIONS are designed to encourage thoughtful reflection from the writer by asking questions that are purely informational and avoid stating opinions or judgments, thereby minimizing defensiveness and allowing them to better explain their creative choices and intentions without feeling attacked.

The practice of trying to restate opinions into neutral questions enables the Responder to recognize and acknowledge personal values (including conscious or subconscious biases and judgements) at play.

Key points about **NEUTRAL QUESTIONS** is that they:

- o **Focus on understanding.** Neutral questions aim to gather information about the writer's thought process and reasoning behind their work rather, than directly critiquing or criticizing it.

- o **Avoid embedded opinions.** Neutral questions refrain from stating personal opinions, biases, or judgements. Neutral questions are OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS that invite the writer to elaborate.

- o **Facilitate deeper discussion.** Neutral questions encourage the writer to articulate their thought process and can lead to a more productive and insightful feedback session.

EXAMPLES OF FORMING NEUTRAL QUESTIONS

OPINIONATED QUESTION →	EMBEDDED OPINION →	>> NEUTRAL QUESTION <<
Why is the cake so dry?	The cake is so dry.	What kind of consistency are you aiming for in this cake?
Why is the book so long?	The book is so long.	How are you thinking about time in relation to the reader's experience?
How do you expect a reader to comprehend this passage?	The passage is incomprehensible.	How are you hoping the reader will experience this passage?
What made you put the entire cast in green costumes?	The green costumes don't work. Or, there are too many green costumes.	What is the significance of the color green to your concept? Or, can you talk about your costume choices?
Are the illustrations in the story intentionally bad?	The illustrations in your story are bad. Or, I don't like your illustrations.	What kind of reaction are you hoping to elicit from a reader with the illustrations in the story?
Have you thought about hiring a copy editor?	Your story needs copy editing.	Where are you in the process of developing your story?
Have you thought about getting an actor to read your poetry for you?	Your poems are good but your reading is bad.	What would you like to add to our experience of your poetry through your use of voice and gestures?
Why do you think you need to tell the moral at the end of your story?	The moral is obvious, you don't need to tell it.	Where do you want your readers/listeners to be at the end of your story?
Why would you ever want to write such a graphic story?	This writing is too graphic for me.	What ideas do you hope to convey through your choice of subject matter?
Do you really understand what this story/fable is about?	Your interpretation of the story/fable shows you don't understand its meaning.	How did you prepare your interpretation of the story/fable?
Do you always chew gum when you read aloud?	Chewing gum is distracting or inappropriate while performing a reading.	What is the role of gum chewing in your reading? Or, what attitude are you hoping to convey in your reading?
Why is this scene so boring?	This scene is so boring.	What was your intention in creating this particular atmosphere in this scene?