

fine tuning Helpful Hints.

- 1. Make the students comfortable.** At the beginning, this activity is rough because students are projecting their work for everyone to see and getting feedback that they don't always want to hear. Remember they have been working on this for several weeks or months, so proceed with caution.
- 2. Beware of sacred cows.** First, the person who did the spread should talk about what they love about it. This is crucial because if what they love about their spread is the first thing that gets negative attention, they will shut down and listen to nothing else. I would avoid critiquing this element in front of the whole group. If it needs to change, the editor and adviser can discuss it with them privately.
- 3. Let them speak.** Allow the person who did the spread to do most of the talking. After they have discussed what they love, then let them tell the staff the things they see that need to be corrected or changed. You will be surprised at how much they see. Because they are the first ones to critique their own work, they will be less sensitive when the other staff members begin to provide feedback.
- 4. Criticize constructively.** As each staff member talks about the spread make sure the feedback is based on scholastic journalism principles and not just opinion.
- 5. Save the best for last.** The editor should be the second to last one to speak followed by the adviser. This allows the entire staff to be involved. You will also see that most of the things that you noticed will be discussed by the time it is your turn, so you won't have as much to say, which makes it a student-directed activity. In addition, by listening to their comments, you will be able to assess their knowledge and understanding.
- 6. Look for positives.** While the purpose of this activity is to improve the spread, try to find the positives and finish by saying something great about the spread, even if it is minor. You don't want your students leaving class feeling like they were attacked by the rest of the staff.
- 7. Before and after.** Post the spreads on the wall or present them with the improvements. This reinforces the work that was done and students will feel proud of how much their spread has improved.