THE POWER OF PROTOCOLS,
THIRD EDITION:
ABBREVIATED PROTOCOLS

These abbreviated protocols are intended to assist facilitators in their planning and implementation after they have read the full protocol description in the book. They do not contain all the information necessary to successfully conduct a session. However, they are handy guides for facilitators as they facilitate, and for participants both before and while they engage with the protocol.

**ALL-PURPOSE GO-ROUND**

Used to open and close, and whenever there is a need to defuse, broaden participation, or deal with an issue. Rules are generally inferred—no interruptions or responses, just go around in turn with the option of passing. There is usually a time limit.

**ART DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS**

**Purpose**

To help novice artists meet two challenges associated with peer feedback. The first is learning to give feedback that is specific enough to be useful. The second is to help them recognize that the artist’s intentionality and the observer’s “take away” can be completely different. Both protocols (Getting Suggestions and What Do You See) are designed for discussing works in progress.

**Details**

Getting Suggestions takes 15–20 minutes per round, while the whole What Do You See can be completed in 15–20 minutes. Scripts are available on paper or through projection. Small works can be passed from hand to hand while larger pieces can be displayed.

**Steps for Getting Suggestions Protocol**

1. Student 1 exhibits her work along with these two sentences completed in a sketchbook: “I feel that the most successful aspect of my work is ________.” And “It would be helpful to hear your observations about ________.”

2. Students 2, 3, 4 read the sentences and examine the work. They complete the following in Student 1’s sketchbook: “You asked for feedback about ________. What I especially notice is ________. I can imagine your doing ________ next because ________.”

3. Student 1 reads all the peer comments, then responds as follows: “As I understand your response to my work, you suggested ________, ________, and _________. I think I will try ________ because ________.”

4. The process continues until all the students have presented.

**Steps for What Do You See Protocol**

1. Each of 4 student artists writes in a sketchbook: “I want to communicate ________ in my work. I think that I have done this by including ________.”

2. Each artist passes her small art work to the right but keeps the sketchbook. Each person has 1 minute to look at the peer’s work, then write on a Post-it: “This work makes me think ________ because I see ________ in it.” Then the reviewer attaches the Post-it to the work (on the back) and passes it to the right.

3. The process repeats twice, but the reviewers are urged to respond independently. The work goes around the circle and returns to the artist.

4. When all of the artists have their own work, they write in their sketchbooks: “My peer artists saw
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_________, _________, and _________. The most generative of these responses for me at this point in my work is _________, and I plan to follow up by _________.”

CLEARING

Beginning a meeting with time to clear any thoughts that are on people’s minds. Rules include: nothing is irrelevant; only speak twice if everyone else has already spoken; no dialogue; silence is okay.

COLLABORATIVE-ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

Purpose

To sharpen teachers’ perceptual skills by looking deeply at a single student’s work; to encourage a balance in perception; to help teachers see how they can act individually and collectively on what they learn in order to benefit their students.

Details

About 45 to 90 minutes. 5 to 30 people. Student work—one piece rich in detail or several pieces from the same student (e.g., a portfolio). Copies for participants or post around room.

Steps

1. Presenting. Teacher presents student’s work with minimal context. Participants examine the work, making notes.
2. Describing. Group members describe what they see in the work. No judgments.
3. Raising questions. “What questions does this work raise for you?” Participants respond. Presenting teacher listens and makes notes, but does not respond.
4. Speculating. “What do you think this student is working on?” Participants respond. Presenting teacher listens and makes notes, but does not respond. The facilitator presses for evidence.
5. Responding. Presenting teacher responds as he or she chooses: to offer additional context; to share thoughts about the student work; to respond to any other questions regarding the student, the context, the assignment, and so forth.
6. Reflecting and discussing. Open discussion for reflection on the experience. Participants may share what they found particularly helpful or difficult while participating in the activity, or ideas about use of the protocol in their own work with colleagues and/or students.

CONSTRUCTIVIST LISTENING DYAD

Purpose

To help participants become better at listening and talking, with a deeper goal of fostering tolerance for and delight in human difference.

Details

The Constructivist Listening Dyad is designed for dyads convened from a larger group. The key contract between the two is to listen to each other without responding.

Guidelines are as follows:

• Each person is given equal time to talk about whatever he or she chooses to talk about—with the exception that the talker may not criticize the listener or other mutual colleagues.
• The listener must listen intently, but may not break in with any sort of response.
• What is said and heard stays completely confidential.

Steps

1. Setting the focus. The facilitator begins by explaining that the protocol is designed to benefit the talker and engages the group in discussion of the characteristics of good listening in order to support that goal.
2. Setting the time. The facilitator sets the timeframes for the dyads, from a practice round of 2 minutes (1 for each partner to speak) for beginners to 4–10 minutes for a regular round (equally split for each talker) of experienced users.
3. Dyads proceed. Dyads talk and listen in accordance with the timeframes set forth in Step 2. The facilitator needs to be a strict timekeeper, including a signal to manage the shift between partners.

4. Reflection. The facilitator leads a discussion with prompts that may include: What came up for you? How did you feel as a listener? How did you feel as talker? etc.

CONSULTANCY

Purpose

To develop participants’ capacity to see and describe dilemmas associated with their work and to assist others in doing the same.

Detail

Thoughful preparation for the presentation of the dilemma is the key to success. Small groups of 3 to 7 are typical. Larger groups can be subdivided accordingly.

Steps

1. Framing the dilemma. The presenter offers an overview limited to key features. The presenter may also offer artifacts—for example, student work. (5–20 minutes)

2. Clarifying questions. Consultants ask questions to elicit details they need in order to offer better consultation. (5 minutes)

3. Probing questions. Consultants ask questions that they hope will provoke deeper thinking by the presenter about the issues perceived as underlying the dilemma and about possible steps toward resolution. In some versions presenters may respond on the spot, though in most versions the presenter gets to think through responses prior to step 5. (10 minutes)

4. Discussion. Consultants discuss freely the dilemma itself and possible resolutions.

5. Presenter’s reflection. The presenter shares what she has learned from the consultancy.

COSMOPOLITAN PROTOCOL

Purpose

To help participants explore “strange” cultural material without rushing to judgment.

Steps

1. Introduction. The facilitator introduces the protocol as an exercise in thinking—putting aside one’s own values for some moments in order to explore someone else’s values. The point is not to agree but to understand.

2. Introducing a text. The facilitator introduces a reading, image, video or other text that the participants will read or view together. It is one that represents aspects of a less familiar culture. The facilitator prompts: “What do you need to ask in order to understand this other culture better?” Participants can share any answers they may have. In an online or blended version, some research can be done. In any case the questions serve to explore the strangeness rather than jump to conclusions.

3. Believing in. The facilitator asks participants to “believe in” some aspect of the culture. The believing is not necessarily genuine. Participants share—by volunteering or in a go-round—to share a comment that derives from this effort to “believe in.”

4. Expressing doubt about. Step 3 is repeated but this time the sharing is about doubting some aspect of the culture.

5. Open discussion. Participants reflect on what they have learned from the exercising of their doubting and believing “muscles.”

DESCRIPTIVE CONSULTANCY

Purpose

To help someone think through a problem through framing and reframing the issue.

Details

About 40 minutes. Group of 10 to 12 or small groups of 3 to 5.
Steps

1. Problem presentation. Presenting group member describes the problem, laying out its different dimensions, and including attempts to address it. Others are silent.

2. Clarifying questions. Other members of the group (consultants) ask questions to get needed information.

3. Reflecting back. Group members share their perceptions of the problem, trying to gain a shared understanding. Presenter is silent. They begin with “What I heard you say was . . . .”

4. Responding. Presenter briefly responds to the consultants’ expressed understanding of the problem, and provides further clarification of the problem if needed. Consultants are silent.

5. Brainstorming. Consultants brainstorm possible solutions or next steps. Presenter is silent.

6. Response. Presenter talks about his or her current thinking after listening to what has been said to this point. Consultants are silent.

7. Debriefing. “How did it feel to be the presenter? How did it feel to be the consultant?” Also, “Besides the presenter, who else gained something from this consultation?”

DIVERSITY ROUNDS

Purpose

To acknowledge the various ways in which we are diverse and explore the implications for our work.

Detail

Best in a group of at least 20 people—can be up to 200. If groupings become overly large, they can be divided into smaller groups for discussion purposes.

Steps

1. Introduction. Part of the explanation is that the directions will be “vague” and that it will be up to the group to define for themselves which subgroup they will go to.

2. Grouping. The facilitator chooses categories, generally going from lesser to greater levels of sensitivity. Categories should fit the group’s purpose. Once the group has formed, they have a brief discussion about the impact of this particular identity on their work. Examples: Where you are from; the kind of high school you went to; birth order; the kind of student of mathematics you are; your gender; your ethnicity.

3. Reporting. After members of each grouping have talked among themselves, they report out.

4. Regrouping. The facilitator announces a new category. Groups reform and have the same discussion about impact of this new identifier. 3 to 5 rounds.

5. Debriefing. Participants discuss feelings that emerged during the activity, along with any insights about the meaning and impact of diversity and its effects on professional experience.

DO WHAT YOU MEAN TO DO

Purpose

To help change-minded educators construct a theory of action relevant to a current or planned undertaking, with the proviso that a good theory is always open to reconsideration.

Details

The protocol as written is designed for small groups of educators jointly engaged in planning or carrying out a reform or change project. It can be adapted (see full protocol in the book) for groups whose participants are engaged in different projects.

Steps

1. Introduction. It’s particularly important in this challenging protocol that the facilitator walks everyone through the steps and/or asks them all to silently read through them. It’s also important that the participants have access to the full description of the protocol, including Donald Schön’s algebraic expression.

2. Figuring out the theory. Participants reread the introduction, puzzling in particular over Schön’s
algebraic expression, along with the ideas about feedback. They are encouraged to clarify both what they think they understand and need to understand before applying it to their own work. A notetaker creates visual (projected or charted) highlights of the conversations, including questions. (10 minutes)

3. Clarifying questions and answers. The facilitator leads an effort by the group to clarify their collective understanding and to answer their own questions. The tone should be to reach adequate understanding to proceed (as opposed to striving for authoritative understanding). The facilitator pronounces the step complete when there is consensus that they are ready to move on. (10 minutes or longer)

4. Applying the theory. In pairs or triads, the participants flesh out the algebraic expression in a visual format (chart or projection) that can be shared. (10 minutes or less)

5. Presentations. Each pair or triad presents their result from step 4. This is done straightforwardly, without elaboration, questions, or debate. (5 minutes overall)

6. Working toward consensus. The facilitator leads and effort to develop an adequate expression of the project’s theory of action—that is, one that is sufficient for moving forward with the understanding that it will change over time in response to feedback. Yet the stakeholders should leave the process with roughly the same intentions. (10 minutes)

**EQUITY PROTOCOL**

**Purpose**

To look at student and teacher work in order to understand its relation to promoting equity.

**Details**

A presenter brings work for feedback. Nine to 12 participants.

**Steps**

1. Presentation. Teacher presents the assignment, describing its context, and his or her expectations concerning the student work the assignment will produce.

2. Go-Rounds. One question per round. Possible questions:

   - What do you see in this assignment that would be engaging to many different students?
   - What do you see that would meet more than one learning modality?
   - What do you see that would support/hinder students with special needs?
   - What do you see that would support/hinder English language learners?
   - What do you see that could be considered bias in the language used in the assignment?
   - What do you wonder about with respect to this assignment?

3. Student work. The presenter distributes student work samples that resulted from this assignment. Participants review the work.

4. Final Go-Round. Participants reflect on the relationship between the questions raised earlier and the student work reviewed.

5. Reflection. The presenter reflects on all that he or she has heard, and comments on any new insights or opportunities that have arisen. (5 minutes)

6. Open conversation. “What do we think we have learned from this?”

**FEARS AND HOPES**

**Purpose**

To acknowledge the fears and hopes that participants bring to a meeting and by doing so to build a sense of shared expectations.

**Details**

Time: 5 to 20 minutes. Size of group: up to 25. Supplies include writing materials for individuals, chart paper, markers.

**Steps**

1. Introduction. Write briefly your greatest fear/your greatest hope.
2. Pair-share. Share with a partner, if time permits.
3. Listing. Facilitator charts fears and hopes.
4. Debriefing. Did you notice anything surprising? What was your reaction to expressing negative thoughts? Would you use this activity?

FINAL WORD

Purpose

To expand the interpretation of one or more texts by encouraging the emergence of a variety of interests, viewpoints, and voices.

Details

Unlimited number of groups of 3 to 5. Participants highlight passages that have special meaning for them. Copies of text have been distributed before or during meeting. Thirty to 60 minutes depending on group size and time available.

Steps

1. Introduction and selection. Facilitator explains all steps briefly. Text is read in advance if possible—time for review given in any case. Participants (as individuals) identify passages that have meaning for them.
2. Arrangement. Tight circles of 3 to 5 members are formed. The order of presentation for participants is established and a timekeeper is identified.
3. Presentation. First participant shares the selected passage and explains why it is meaningful. (2–3 minutes)
4. Reflecting back. Each listener in turn has 1 minute to reflect back on what he or she understands the presenter to have said about the passage and its personal significance.
5. Final word. First round ends with 1 minute for presenter to reflect on what has been said by others.
6. Round repeats. Each participant has a turn to start a new round as described in previous steps.
7. Written reflection. Following the completion of all rounds, participants write for 5 minutes and then share in a Go-Round (time permitting). Reflection prompts can include things learned from rounds, challenges and advantages of protocol, or applications.

ISSAQUAH COACHING PROTOCOL

Purpose

To develop good coaching habits.

Details


Steps

1. Presentation. A participant presents an authentic, unresolved problem.
2. Clarifying questions. Other group members (called consultants) get needed information.
3. Active listening/reflecting back. Each consultant briefly restates the problem in consulting terms—no interpretation or speculation. Presenter waits to speak.
4. Check-in. Presenter responds to: “Quickly, are we hearing you correctly? If not, what would you change/add?”
5. Interpretive listening/reflecting back. Consultants, in turn, finish the sentence: “What I think is going on in this problem is . . . .”
6. Check-in again. Presenter responds to: “How does our thinking sound to you? Does it make sense?”
7. Probing questions. Consultants pose questions designed to help the presenter think more deeply about the problem. No immediate response to questions—presenter is silent.
8. Response. Presenter reacts to the questions, not necessarily answering them. “Has your thinking changed about the problem? What are your current thoughts on the issue?”
9. Suggestions. If presenter agrees that suggestions are desired, consultants may offer some suggestions. Presenter is silent.
10. Response. Presenter responds with thoughts about next steps.
11. Debriefing. Beginning with presenter, all respond to: “What was it like to go through these steps? Which kind of question was most useful/least useful?”

**JIGSAW PROTOCOL**

**Purpose**

To allow participants to learn from a greater amount of text than time permits everyone to read or view.

**Details**

Any size group can participate. Copies of texts are distributed. They should be parts of the same whole (chapters of a book or separate articles on same topic) and can be verbal, visual or a mix of media. Chart paper, markers, smaller Post-it notes, and pens are needed.

**Steps**

1. Introductions and grouping. Facilitator creates the groups, assigns the texts.
2. Reading and individual highlighting. Participants read the text for their group and highlight the points that interest them as individual readers and that they think others should attend to.
3. Discussion and group highlighting. Each group has a discussion and constructs a list of key points for posting and sharing with others.
4. Gallery walk. Groups move as individuals or as a group depending on logistics of time and space. Participants create Post-its with questions, affirmations, comments, and examples and attach them to what they see in the gallery walk.
5. Revisit and response. Participants return to their initial group to review and discuss comments posted on their chart by others. A spokesperson for each group shares reactions.
6. General discussion and debriefing. Participants share general comments about the topic of discussion and/or the process.

**LOOKING AT DATA**

**Purpose**

To gain collective insight from a data set, focusing on implications of equity and inequity.

**Details**

This protocol can be completed in 1 hour or less, depending on the number of participants and the time allocations for the steps. It is best if the norms of a professional learning community are in place (e.g., common purpose and joint responsibility, willingness to ban blame and defensiveness, openness to speculation, and generosity towards others’ perceptions). If such norms do not yet exist, the protocol should begin with a similar list and a request for consensus in maintaining them.

**Steps**

1. Planning. The presenter familiarizes himself or herself with the data set, including consultation with the school’s data coach or other colleague.
2. Orientation. The presenter offers an orientation to the data set and asks that questions are held for Step 4. (3 minutes)
3. Focus question. The presenter suggests a focus question to guide the group’s reading of the data, based on current priorities. The question may not be entirely answered with the data set alone, but could be part of a larger inquiry. (3 minutes)
4. Clarifying questions. Participants ask questions on matters that they find unclear or confusing. If neither the presenter nor collective pondering yields a satisfactory response in some cases, those questions get deferred for later expert consultation. (5 minutes)
5. Flagging. Participants work in teams of two or three to call attention to particular data that appears to be especially relevant to the focus question. A hunch about relevance is good enough. The recorder in the team notes the items, perhaps by highlighting cells. (10 minutes)
6. Making inferences. The same teams of two or three make inferences (in the spirit of brainstorming without questioning) regarding the data items. The facilitator encourages low-level inferences related to the focus question. (10 minutes)

7. Discussion. The facilitator now invites discussion of the results from Steps 5 and 6 and the recorder continues to capture them.

8. Stepping back. In a go-round, participants state what they see as next steps for the group, based on their analysis and discussion. (5 to 10 minutes)

LOOKING AT STUDENT WORK
(WITH EQUITY IN MIND)

Purpose

To embed a focus on equity in the collaborative examinations of student work, spurring equity-minded action as a follow-up.

Details

The protocol takes roughly one hour. The group should typically include 10 to 15 participants, but is best undertaken as a regular activity of a smaller ongoing professional learning community.

Steps

1. Introductions. The facilitator welcomes the presenter and other participants and raises the protocol’s orienting question: “What possible traces of inequity of any kind and from any source do you see in this student work sample?” The facilitator says that the purpose is to practice noticing inequity and to speculate about ways to address it. The purpose is not to assess blame.

2. Presentation. The presenter has brought an assignment and several responses to it that cover a range of accomplishment levels and include a diverse selection of students (by race, gender, disability status, etc.). The presenter describes the assignment and provides any relevant data that is pertinent to the focus on equity; for example, the gender/racial identities of the selected students in the context of the achievement data of the classroom or school as a whole.

3. Quiet review. Participants quietly examine the work with the question in mind.

4. Description. The participants say what they see that may be relevant to the focus question, offering no more that low-level inferences. The presenter remains silent throughout this step.

5. Student empathy. The participants speculate on how one or more of the students seem to have related to the assignment in any sense—interest, intellectual challenge, prior knowledge, level of engagement and so on. Presenter remains silent.

6. Speculations. Participants speculate on ways to enrich the learning opportunities of one or more of the students represented in the work samples. For example, a participant might offer that “Student 3 might benefit from opportunities to read her writing aloud with a partner or small group of peers.”

7. Presenter responds. The facilitator introduces this step by reminding all to ban blame—which implicitly also bans defensiveness: “Inequity is everywhere—including in all our work—and we’re training ourselves to notice it.” The facilitator then invites the presenter to respond to anything he or she chooses from what the participants have shared.

8. Open conversation. The protocol ends with open conversation about the sample in light of the focus question, with an opportunity for the presenter to have the final word.

MARS/VENUS PROTOCOL

Purpose

To help people learn from contrasting points of view, represented in two different texts.

Details

One hour long. Participants have read one full text in advance. Facilitator preselects 4 or 5 substantial quotes from each of the contrasting texts. Any size group broken into subgroups of 4 (homogeneous with regard to the full text read).
Steps

1. Introduction. Facilitator explains process and provides a prompt similarly worded to this one: “Based on your reading of your assigned text, how do you think the author would respond to each of these quotes? Would the two agree or disagree? What underlying beliefs of your author does each quotation either tap or challenge?”

2. Reading. Members get quotations from the “other” text and read them silently with the prompt in mind.

3. Facilitation and discussion. Group members take turns leading a brief discussion of reactions to each quotation.

4. Summarizing. Each group prepares a brief summary of their discussion.

5. Open conversation. Groups report the highlights of their summaries, and others react or ask clarifying questions.

6. Reflection. Group shares thoughts regarding the value and challenges of the activity.

MARVIN’S MODEL

Purpose

To facilitate rapid communication about a topic at hand; to get to many points of view in a short time.

Steps

1. Introduction. Form groups of 5 to 7 and instruct groups that they will be answering a series of prompts and should answer in turn, with each person taking only 30 seconds. Groups should gauge their own time.

2. Questions. These can range from course-specific queries to ones that serve to debrief an experience. Give the group a minute to think before beginning. “What do you think of when you think of women’s studies?” “What is one thing that the book made you think about differently?”

3. Debriefing. First in groups, and then, if time, in the large group. Discuss implications/learnings from this first exploration of topic for the longer-term work of the group.

MINNESOTA SLICE

Purpose

To help answer a question raised by a school, school district, college, or other educational program.

Details

Takes one-half to 1 full day. Significant preparation time. Work collected over a 24- to 36-hour period. Parent permission when appropriate. Space to display material collected.

Steps

1. Preparations. Work collected following guidelines and displayed appropriately.

2. Introductions. Introductions and review of guiding question. An overview of the slice is given. How representative is it? What were the parameters for the collection—for example, does it include photos and xeroxed copies of notes and jottings?

3. Norm-setting. Facilitator suggests norms for the reading time regarding note taking, discussion, and so forth.

4. Reading. Participants read through the slice and review all material, moving around as needed.

5. Seminar. Discuss in seminar format—about 1 hour.


7. Reflection on the process. Participants reflect on the protocol.

NEW DESIGN PROTOCOL

Purpose

To help reach consensus among teams working to design a solution to a commonly perceived organizational problem.

Details

Teams and Synthesizers appointed ahead of time. All participants need advanced preparation.
**Steps**

1. Preparation. Teams distribute packet describing their designs at least 24 hours in advance. Participants come to the session familiar with the design proposals.

2. Presentations. Teams present their design proposals, including a statement of the problem, a rationale for the approach, and an account of the design’s assets, challenges, and likely impact. (10 minutes per team)

3. Clarifying questions. Focus on essential details needed to understand the design. (5 minutes)

4. Warm feedback. Focus on specific design strengths. Feedback is recorded. (10 minutes)

5. Cool feedback. Focus on concerns regarding the design. (10 minutes)

6. Response to feedback. Presenters respond to any feedback. They may not comment on other teams’ designs during this step. (10 minutes)

7. Synthesizers convene/participants break. Synthesizers discuss perceived points of emerging consensus, perceived areas of tension, and possible next steps. (20 minutes)

8. Synthesizers report. When participants return from break, synthesizers report their perceptions, and suggest next steps. (10 minutes)

9. Questions and open discussion. Everyone present gets to ask and answer questions. The facilitator reminds the group that the goal is to build consensus.

10. New designing. First of two postprotocol steps. A delegated group creates a new design that attempts to incorporate the best and avoid the worst of the presented designs.

11. Coming to consensus. Group’s consensus-based new design is presented, and a new round of warm and cool feedback ensues.

**PAIR-SHARE**

“Talk with the person next to you for 3 minutes about________. Then we will share anything surprising/interesting that has come up.” A variation is a dyad in which each person has exactly 2 (or 3 or 4) minutes to talk on the topic while the other person listens. Time is kept by the facilitator.

**PANEL PROTOCOL**

**Purpose**

To structure the experience (for panel and learner), so that interaction with experts is meaningful.

**Details**

Lasts 2 to 2½ hours. Any size group broken into smaller groups of 4 to 10. Panel members design case study(s) in advance.

**Steps**

1. Introduction. The facilitator explains process. Panel members introduce themselves and give brief overview of their areas of expertise.

2. Case reading. Each group gets a case to read and is encouraged to make notes.

3. Case interpretation. Groups discuss the case and prepare a 2- to 3-minute presentation in response to: What is this a case of? What are the action steps we recommend to solve the problem in it? What are our points of consensus/divergence with respect to these action steps?

4. Expert consultation. Groups may call over experts to answer specific questions.

5. Presentations. Small groups present.

6. Expert reactions. Each expert has time to respond to the presentations, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, overlooked issues, principles for decision making, and so forth.

7. Questions and comments. Participants have opportunity to question each expert.

**PASEO OR CIRCLES OF IDENTITY**

**Purpose**

To initiate dialogue when a group would like to talk about issues of identity and the role that these play in educational work.
Details

This begins with silent reflection leading to an activity culminating in a large group discussion.

Steps

1. Mapping identity. Each participant draws a web with his or her name at the center, and identity descriptors linked to it. The facilitator prompts the participants to include those descriptors that have especially shaped them as people and affected their interactions with the world.

2. Preparing for the paseo. The group forms two concentric circles, facing each other. If there is an odd number of people, a volunteer can be observer and use the observations for the final step.

3. Dialogue in paseo. The facilitator begins a series of prompts that will lead to one-on-one dialogue between the facing pairs based on their webs. The outer circle rotates clockwise between questions in order to face a new partner. The facilitator allows brief wait time before each dialogue begins. Appropriate prompts include the following:

   - With which two descriptors do you most strongly identify and why?
   - With which descriptors do you believe others identify you most strongly, and how do you feel about this?
   - Talk briefly about a time when one of the elements of your identity worked to your advantage.
   - Talk briefly about a time when one of the elements of your identity worked to your disadvantage.
   - Talk briefly about a time when you noticed an inequity (involving you or others) but did not acknowledge it openly.
   - Talk briefly about a time when you noticed an inequity (involving you or others) and said or did something to address it.

4. Debriefing. The facilitator initiates this step by asking the observer (if there was one) to begin the debriefing with observations in response to the general prompt: “What have we gained from this dialogue in paseo about equity and inequity?” Other participants comment.

PEELING THE ONION

Purpose

To provide a structured way to develop appreciation for the complexity of a problem.

Details

Forty minutes; 10–12 people.

Steps

1. Sharing the problem or issue. Presenter shares a question that he or she would like help with.

2. Clarifying questions. Participants elicit additional information.

3. Active listening. Participants respond to: “I understand the question to be. . . .” The presenter is silent and takes notes.

4. Peeling/probing. New Go-Round to pose additional questions raised by having heard the first round.

5. Response. Presenter responds to: “Having heard these questions, please share any new thoughts about the problem you presented.”

6. Open conversation.

7. Debriefing. “How was this like peeling an onion? Why did we do this activity? What other onions are there to peel in our work together?”

PEER REVIEW

Purpose

The PICCS (Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools) Peer Review Protocol supports three purposes: the identification and sharing of exemplary instructional practices across the network; the awarding of special compensation to recognized practitioners; and a forum for further exploration and development of practice. The purposes can easily be adapted to other contexts.
Details

The PICCS Network–Level Review examines an instructional unit previously reviewed by a team of colleagues at the school level.

The review is conducted in an online environment asynchronously. A final synchronous meeting (Google Livechat or Skype) gives the reviewers (at least three per review) the opportunity to discuss the unit’s suitability for dissemination and to prepare a response for the presenter. One reviewer serves as facilitator and another serves as recorder.

Steps

1. Presenter preparation. This is a challenging step for the presenter so collegial support in terms of technology and feedback from colleagues (who are familiar with the work from the school level review) are important to the process.

2. Facilitator preparation. The facilitator’s initial challenge is to establish “the presence” of all reviewers on the site (PICCS uses Eduplanet21). Reviewers are asked to a professional photo of themselves (at school, home or office) with some information about their professional affiliations and some welcoming comments.

3. Introduction. The facilitator posts the steps and predetermined deadlines. The facilitator also posts a message communicating the tone of the communication to ensue—stressing the importance of a balance of appreciation and critique (warm and cool) and situating the process within the network’s larger efforts.

4. Presentation and reviewers’ questions. The presenter posts the instructional unit (following standards PICCS guidelines). The facilitator asks all reviewers to respond within one week with any clarifying questions.

5. Presenter’s response to questions. The presenter posts responses to the clarifying questions.

6. Warm and cool feedback. During the second week each reviewer posts warm and cool feedback with clear labels for each category and typically 2 or 3 comments of each type. The facilitator assigns posting days to each reviewer so that he or she has the opportunity to review and build upon the responses already posted.

7. Presenter’s response to feedback. The presenter responds to any part or all of the feedback as he or she chooses. The presenter has the option of a slightly extended timeline in order to confer with colleagues before responding.

8. Reviewer’s conference. In a final synchronous meeting, the reviewers discuss the unit in light of the PICCS Peer Review Rubric and decide if the unit as presented is ready for replication. If it is judged to be not ready, they provide the presenter with recommendations for revision (via email). If the unit is ready, they provide instructions for final submission and publication.

POSTCARDS

Black-and-white art cards used as an opener. Participants each pick an individual card and, in turn, explain why it represents their work, how it represents their apprehensions about this conference, how it represents their feelings about mathematics, and so forth.

PROTOCOL FOR SETTING NORMS

Purpose

The purpose is not only to establish expectations for behavior, but also to give “permission” for risk-taking and full participation.

Details

This can take 10 minutes or an hour, depending on how deeply the facilitator and the group want to go. Supplies: chart paper and markers.

Steps

1. Brainstorming. All ideas are listed; facilitator can add his or her own. Allow silence at the beginning.

2. Discussion. Acknowledging that this is only a brainstormed list, the facilitator invites discussion/questions.

3. Synthesis. The facilitator helps form norms where there may be some disagreement—“Can we agree to use judgment about use of cell phones?”
4. Consensus. The group agrees to use these norms and revisit them regularly. They also agree that it is a working list and can be revised at any time.

**PROVOCATIVE PROMPTS**

*Purpose*

To infuse a conversation about a particular topic with a quick and contrasting set of viewpoints on it—viewpoints that participants in a learning group can use to help elicit, shape, and reexamine their own perspectives and attitudes.

*Details*

Facilitator selects quotations (provocative prompts) in advance, and copies them for distribution. Reaction to quotes is followed by group discussion. Depending on format used of four described below, the group may need Post-its, chart paper, and a container for random drawing of quotations.

*Steps*

1. The facilitator distributes quotes. Each group member chooses one quotation and shares in a go-round why he or she chose it. (3–5 minutes each)
2. The facilitator distributes quotes. Each group member chooses a quotation that provokes him or her to think differently about the topic at hand, and writes a brief account of the difference. Partners are formed, and each has a turn to share thoughts while the other listens and reflects back what was heard. This can be done with several changes of partners. Each group member reads his or her quotation and responds on the spot.
3. The facilitator distributes quotes randomly, each written on a slip of paper.
4. Facilitator writes quotations on chart paper and posts sheets around the room. Participants use Post-it notes to respond with questions and comments as they choose.

**REFLECTION ON A WORD**

Each person first writes and then shares in a go-round his or her take on a word or a term. There is no dialogue or discussion of any kind. A variation can be to put reflections on chart paper and post them for a “gallery walk.”

**RICH TEXT PROTOCOL**

*Purpose*

To deal with a text that is particularly dense or ambiguous in meaning, complex in discourse, or complicated in structure.

*Details*

Groups of 5 to 15. Takes approximately 1 hour. Best with short, demanding text—can be photo, poem, video, and so forth. Facilitator must be very familiar with text. Chart paper and markers are needed.

*Steps*

1. Introduction. The facilitator explains the process, previewing the steps.
2. Reading and noticing. Participants review text and notice elements that interest, puzzle, or surprise them—they take notes.
3. Sharing. Each participant shares one to three elements they noticed. All are listed on chart paper.
4. Checking. Facilitator asks the group if there is anything on the list that needs verification before moving on. Notes regarding verification are made on chart paper.
5. Interpreting. Facilitator helps groups select two or three items to interpret. Use a Go-Round for each point selected. Interpretations are noted on chart paper.
6. Identifying a perspective. Participants select one idea from the text under study and write about it, based on a particular perspective or theory that they bring to it. The facilitator should define this theory or perspective as “some overarching idea.”
7. Pair-share. Participants share writing in pairs.
8. Final Go-Round. Participants say one thing about the whole text.

SCHOOL VISIT PROTOCOL

Purpose

To assist colleagues in learning from visits to one another’s work sites.

Details

Three to 5 people (or more if site is willing and group is subdivided). School principal participates as chief host along with other staff. One of the visitors is pre-assigned to act as facilitator of the protocol.

Steps

1. Introductions. Participants introduce themselves. Principal gives brief overview of the school and provides visitors with a focus for the visit related to a challenge faced by the school.
2. Preparation for focus. Facilitator leads participants in imagining the potential evidence related to the focus: “What might we see or hear?”
3. Logistics for touring. Facilitator and host principal explain the logistical arrangement for the tour of the school.
4. Go-Round: evidence. Participants re-assemble. Facilitator leads a go-round for people to share what they perceived to be evidence and/or missed opportunities relevant to the focus. Facilitator summarizes feedback.
5. Go-Round: theory. Participants explain why they think they saw/heard what they did. Facilitator summarizes.
6. Go-Round: advice. Based on evidence and tentative theories, participants offer advice.
7. Host’s response. The host principal responds to what she or he has heard from the visitors. Time permitting, brief open discussion follows.
8. Debriefing. Go-round in which each participant says what she or he has learned from the visit.

SHADOW PROTOCOL

Purpose

To situate a student’s work within the context of his or her own complex work life, and thus to understand the student better and teach him or her more effectively.

Details

Student, parent (when appropriate), and all teachers involved must agree to participate in the process. Shadower must be a skillful observer and recorder, and capable of withholding his or her own interpretations of the findings. Shadower and facilitator stay in close communication.

Steps

1. Shadowing. The shadower spends an entire school day with the student, noting the most salient intellectual tasks that the student faces (within and outside the formal curriculum).
2. Preparation for presentation. The shadower selects four to six representative tasks, prepares a brief description, and collects an artifact relating to the student’s performance on each task.
3. Introduction. The facilitator presents the rationale for the protocol and introduces the shadower.
4. Presentation. The shadower presents an account of the student’s day in terms of several tasks and the performances that resulted.
6. Private speculation. Each participant writes several speculations concerning the student’s intellectual strengths.
7. Sharing. Participants read in turn what they have written, without commentary or questions from others.
8. Open conversation. Participants discuss the entire set of speculations, highlighting common threads as well as “out-of-the-box” insights.
9. Planning. Participants brainstorm teaching
strategies that build on their perceptions of the student’s strengths.

STANDARDS IN PRACTICE

Purpose

To increase the rigor of teachers’ assignments over time by aligning them with standards, and pressing toward increased student learning. Works not just with teacher-designed assignments but with assignments derived from any source: textbooks, school or district curricula, and so on.

Details

Teams of six to eight teachers meet for at least one class period a week—preferably 90 minutes. At the elementary level, teams may be vertical (teachers from grades 1 through 6, for example) or horizontal (all those who teach grade 4, for example). At the secondary level, teams may be organized by subject matter (mathematics, for example) or by teachers who all see the same students. Chart paper needed.

Steps

1. Introduction of the assignment. One teacher on the team brings copies of an assignment for each member of the team, and offers whatever contextual information may be useful—for example, when the assignment was given, and whether it was an in-class or homework assignment. The team examines the assignment in order to consider content and context.

2. Assessment of learning goals. Team members list what they take to be the required skills and knowledge needed to complete the assignment successfully. Facilitator keeps track of listed items on chart paper.

3. Identification of applicable standards. Team identifies standards that apply to this assignment—for example, school, district, or state. If team has difficulty matching the assignment with at least one content standard and at least one organizational writing standard, than it skips to step 6.

4. Development of a rough scoring guide. Using a scale from 1–4 (“fails to meet standard” through “exceeds standard”), team generates a rough diagnostic rubric or scoring guide for the assignment based on the applicable standards.

5. Assessment of student work. Using the rubric/scoring guide, each team member scores the student work individually. Then the team shares scores. In the sharing they discuss discrepancies and try to reconcile them.

6. Using student work to plan assignment improvements. Participants look closely at the student work that resulted from the assignment, and identify gaps in student learning or impediments to student learning that may result from the assignment design.

STUFF AND VISION PROTOCOL

Purpose

To help coplanning teachers integrate “stuff” that interests them with a vision to which they are collectively accountable.

Details

Up to 10 educators can effectively participate. Facilitation may be rotated if the team meets on a regular basis.

Steps

1. Introductions. The facilitator reviews the steps of the protocol before proceeding.

2. Vision input. A presenter presents a “vision” to the group of colleagues, based on a familiar document (state standards, grade level goals, etc.).

3. Vision go-round. Each participant shares a response to the prompt, “What do I think about when I think about this vision?”

4. Stuff input. The presenter shares some teaching “stuff” that might be part of a particular lesson or unit plan compatible with the vision.

5. Questions. Participants ask open-ended questions intended to help the presenter clarify the appeal of the “stuff” and its connection to the vision. Presenter is silent and takes notes.

6. Response. Presenter responds to questions posed by participants.
7. Designing on the spot. In a go-round—without passing, repeating or responding to another—each participant shares an emergent design idea. Presenter speaks last.
8. Open conversation.
9. Reflection. Presenter shares thoughts about next steps, or invites further input, or invites colleagues to observe or participate in implementation.

SUCCESS ANALYSIS PROTOCOL

Purpose

To engage colleagues in collaborative analysis of cases from practice in order to understand the circumstances and actions that make them successful ones, then to apply this understanding to future practice.

Details

Twelve to 30 participants in small groups of 3 to 6. Chart paper. Note pads for participants. 1 to 2 hours.

Steps

1. Preparing a case. Participants prepare to describe one area where they are finding success or making progress in practice. May be done in advance.
2. Sharing. In small groups, first person shares his or her case of successful practice. Others take notes.
3. Analysis and discussion. Group reflects on the success. Participants offer insights into what specifically contributed to success. Presenter is encouraged to participate and can be prodded through questioning.
4. Repeating the pattern. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each member of the group.
5. Compilation. Groups compile a list of specific successful behaviors and underlying principles that seem characteristic of the cases presented.
6. Reporting out. If there are multiple small groups, the groups report.
7. Discussion. Surprises, commonalities, underlying principles.
8. Debriefing. Applications to other areas of our own work? Uses with students?

TEXT-RENDERING PROTOCOL

(VIDEO VERSION)

Purpose

To enlarge a group’s understanding of a topic of common interest while using a relevant video as the “text” to explore.

Details

In the case of a written text, typical text-rendering focus is on sentence, phrase, and word. Here (for video), it becomes a focus on image, scene, and motif (recurring element).

The time required varies depending on the number of participants and the number of videos viewed. Sometimes the participants have each brought a video from their own teaching for feedback in the protocol.

The means of viewing can vary: large screen, laptops, tablets (for face-to-face settings) or uploading to share online asynchronously. The Teaching Channel (the source of much high-quality video) has a built-in annotation tool that can be incorporated.

Steps

1. Introduction. The facilitator reviews the steps of the protocol and establishes the focus for viewing—for example, teaching English language learners. For this protocol, an *image* will be defined as something that can be captured by a pause button; a *scene* as something that falls between cuts or shifts by the camera; and a *motif* as anything that recurs (for example, images of confusion).
2. Viewing and noting. Participants watch and note images, scenes and motifs of relevance to the focus (post-its, googledoc, or annotation tool).
3. Go-Round: Image. Each participant selects one image to discuss, sharing the perceived relevance to the topic. (1 minute)
4. Go-Round: Scene. Repeat Step 3 with each sharing a scene. (1 minute)
5. Go-Round: Motif. Repeat Step 3 with each sharing a motif. (1 minute)
6. Open discussion. The facilitator leads a discussion of what has been learned about the topic of focus.

TUNING PROTOCOL

**Purpose**

To provide direct and respectful feedback to presentations of ongoing practice. To tune the practice to larger and/or different perspectives or standards.

**Details**

Forty-five to 60 minutes. Six to 12 people (or larger, with modifications).

**Steps**

1. Introduction. Goals and norms reviewed, steps explained.
2. Presentation. Presenter shares the problem, or draft of a plan. Responders are silent.
3. Response. Respondents share warm and cool reactions. Presenter is silent.
4. Reaction. Presenter reacts to any responses he or she chooses to react to. Responders are silent.
6. Debriefing. “How did it feel hearing warm and cool feedback?” “How did it feel not being able to respond to the feedback?” “How can you apply this protocol in your ordinary work?”

WHAT COMES UP

**Purpose**

To focus attention on teaching and learning in situations where time is tight.

**Details**

About 30 to 45 minutes. Six to 20 people seated in a circle. Two or three pieces of recent student work.

**Steps**

1. Presentation. First piece of student work is presented (read or posted or copies distributed) by facilitator. Participants review.
2. Question. Facilitator prompts, “What comes up for you when you examine this piece of work?” Few moments think time.
5. Repeat. If time allows, a second piece of work is used for a repeat of the process.

WHAT DO WE KNOW? WHAT DO WE SUSPECT? WHAT DO WE NEED TO FIND OUT?

**Purpose**

To ground reform-action in data-focused conversation and planning, typically used with participants who are familiar with the context, but not necessarily.

**Details**

Groups of 5 to 10 (multiple groups can be formed, particularly in online or blended adaptations) work through the steps. The data can be quantitative, qualitative or a mix. The facilitator (or at least one member of the group) should be familiar enough with the data to orient the other group members.

**Steps**

1. Preparation. In collaboration with leaders of the change effort, the facilitator selects relevant data sets and makes them available to participants in whatever venue or platform makes sense. The data should include sufficient information about sources and properties, along with some advice regarding interpretation. The facilitator should also frame the next step for the group; for example, asking them to read the data and note four or five things of relevance to the focus they have been given.
2. What do we know? The facilitator starts by asking pairs to share their notes with each other for a short discussion before two or three rounds of sharing is opened for the whole group. A recorder notes the relevant evidence. When the sharing is complete, the facilitator invites group members to question the validity of any item that may not yet be a known but could be something suspected and hence better saved for the next step. Members are encouraged to be open to such questioning without feeling the need to defend their item.

3. What do we suspect? As in Step 2, participants share in turn one thing they suspect based on the data, which might begin with any of the challenged items from the list of knowns. The facilitator encourages members to remain data-focused while also taking risks, reminding them that no action will be taken until we know more.

4. What do we need to find out? This step begins with an invitation by the facilitator to study the list of suspicions generated in Step 3. Then rounds are conducted in which participants share one thing (per round) that they think would be valuable to pursue in order to strengthen the group’s confidence in the data that will inform their actions. A new, more focused and honed list is generated.

5. Final step. This will vary depending on the context. Graduate students in leadership might discuss what they learned from the case, while colleagues preparing for action might decide what inquiries they might pursue from Step 4.