



The Multiple Perspectives Protocol

Developed in the field by educators.

Purpose

Used for problem-solving — can be adapted for other uses.

Knowing that protocols help us to develop the habits we wish we had to begin with, this protocol was designed to help make the process of using multiple perspectives to enrich our conversations transparent and to make our learning more powerful. This means more than bringing various voices together. It also means purposefully seeing what each voice contributes to the whole.

Time

50 minutes

Process

1. Participants introduce themselves with their name and point of view. Facilitator points out that point of view can be broadly defined — “woman” or “African-American” or, more narrowly, “first-year teacher” or “second-year teacher.” Participants are encouraged (and helped) to select their identifying perspectives according to the group’s purpose. Clearly this involves judgment, but no one’s self-selected perspective should be argued with; however, all should be willing to negotiate. It must be stressed that we all have multiple ways we could describe ourselves and, for the purposes of this protocol, we will settle on 1 or 2. E.g. “I am a principal who is committed to the 10 Common Principles.” (7 minutes)
2. Facilitator presents a question which has emerged from the work of the group or which has emerged as an important one to the group. E.g. “What is rigor, actually?” (3 minutes)
3. All write their first thoughts. (5 minutes)
4. Each participant, in turn, gives their preliminary thinking on the question, prefaced with their point of view: “From the point of view of a student, I think...” (10 minutes)
5. Then there is a second round, with each person giving their thinking based upon what they heard from the other participants: “Having heard all of the other points of view, I now think...” (10 minutes)
6. A final round to reflect on the quality of the responses: “I noticed that my/our responses...” (15 minutes)