A Guide to Protocols That
Support Dialogue

The following chart references protocols from the School Reform Initiative that are powerful and proven strategies to guide deep dialogue about school redesign. This overview will help you quickly identify which protocol might best serve your intended purpose, taking into consideration the time available and group size. School Reform Protocols can be found online at **schoolreforminitiative.org/ protocol-alphabetical-list-2**

PROTOCOL	PURPOSE	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL PROMPTS	TIME NEEDED	GROUP SIZE
Affinity Mapping	To generate the best thinking of the group on topics that are important to its members	Each person's idea becomes community "property" and connected to other people's ideas	*What do our graduates need to know, understand, and be able to do to contribute to their community?*	45 min	Up to 30
Appreciative Inquiry www.centerfor appreciative inquiry.net	To generate rich questions	Storytelling about what works	*What is your most powerful learning experience ever? What were the defining qualities of that experience that made it so powerful?*	45–60 min	3–5 per group
Attributes of a Learning Community	To establish the attributes of personalized learning environments	Storytelling about learning environments in which all participants thrive	*I learn and work best and contribute the most in an environment that…*	45–60 min	8–20
The Best Ever	To define qualities of excellent work for groups	Participants reflect on and uncover their best work	*What was it about the work itself that made it so excellent?*	45–60 min	4–5 per group
The Block Party	To learn from each other as we reflect on different quotations	Participants have short conversations with multiple partners in a short period of time	Cull from the many online collections of quotations on education, learning and change	15–20 min	Any size over 8

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Chalk Talk	To have a rich and engaging dialogue with full participation	No one speaks, everyone participates	*What is the purpose of education? What does a student-centered classroom look like? What are 21st-century habits, skills, and dispositions?*	Up to 30 min	Any size
The Charette	To enlist the best thinking of others on a problem that the presenter is genuinely stuck in solving	The presenter stays out of the conversation as the group takes ownership of the issue	*I want to become a more student-centered teacher. I give students choice in what they write about. What more can I do for the students to really care about the quality of their work?*	15–20 min	8–12
Classroom Meeting	To take a quick pulse of a group on an important issue before digging deeper	Moving through the stages of defining, personalizing, and extending	*Define a 21st century school and its relationship with the community.*	30 min	15–30
Critical Friend Conversation	To ensure clarity of purpose, to question your own assumptions, and to develop a proposed course of action for addressing important questions	Moving from meaning making about external factors to eliciting resolution and next steps	*What is it about the current structure of school that falls short of preparing students to become contributing members of their community?*	60 min	Groups of 4
Compass Points	To gain an understanding of your natural role in a group, the mix of styles within your group, and why we need all types of contributors	The group discovers that each working style has a valid place on the team, as individuals become more conscious of their quick judgments of other people's working styles.	*Note the distribution of styles within our group: What would be the best possible combination to have? Why? How will we create balance of all points in our group?*	45 min	Up to 50
Constructivist Learning Groups	To move towards consensus on difficult issues	No one in the small group knows who will report out until the last moment	*Why are personalized learning plans important to the greater community?*	45 min	Up to 30

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Continuum Dialogue	A provocative yet non-threatening way to uncover perspectives, beliefs, and opinions on hard issues	People move along the continuum based on what they are hearing from others. Surfaces individuals' assumptions	*"Education's primary purpose is to prepare individuals for their future" to "the primary purpose is prepare students to contribute to the greater good"*	30–40 min	Up to 50
Dyads	To promote better listening and talking in depth	Highly personal sharing about emotional issues using double confidentiality	*Why should I care about our public school system? What can I, as a community member, add to the conversation? What action can I take?*	4–6 min	2 people
The Gap Analysis	To identify and to work on closing the gap between your your desired results and your current practice	Intentionally designed to bring a higher level of integrity to the work of classrooms, schools, and districts	*What is a student –centered approach to learning? What is currently in place and what gaps exist in our current practice?*	45 min	Groups of 4
The Kiva	To encourage participants to actively listen rather than automatically critique or analyze what is being presented to the group	Hearing from youth and adults working as partners sharing important stories about their work. The youth are considered "elders" by the rest of the community	*Describe a time where you and an adult worked together on a project that really mattered to both of you. Describe a time that you really felt ownership over your learning.*	45–60 min	20–60
The Making Meaning Protocol	To use storytelling as a rich source of data to make schooling more meaningful for teachers and students	Sharing of powerful growth experiences in small groups	*Tell a story about a time when the quality of your work was evaluated by a project rather than a test.*	45–60 min	Groups of 4
Microlabs	To address a specific sequence of questions in a structured format in groups of 3	Three rounds of increasingly deeper questions, with a focus on active listening	*1. Tell of a time that your interest was not recognized at school; 2. Tell of a time that you worked closely on a shared interest with someone at school; 3. What interests do you wish that you were able to explore at school?*	30 min	Groups of 3

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The Multiple Perspectives Protocol	To encourage multiple perspectives to enrich our conversations and to make our learning more powerful	Each person in a small group takes on a different role, but then reflects on any changes in perspective after listening to others' perspectives.	*What does proficiency-based learning look like from the perspective of a student, a parent, a teacher and a community member?*	45 min	Groups of 5
What's in a Name	To create a welcoming sense of belonging for each member of a new group and to appreciate our different origins	People share their intimate stories (with just one person) about their own names including nicknames they have had.	*What is the origin of your name? Think back as for as you can remember about the nicknames that you have had. How did your name come to you?*	30 min	8–20
The Talking Stick Ceremony	To provide a reflective closing experience for a group	Each person in the group has the opportunity to share their most meaningful learning that grew out of the group experience.	Participants might share a new insight or a question, describe some significant learning they had, or talk about what they propose to do in the future as a result of that learning.	30 seconds per person	5–50
The Success Analysis Protocol	To identify best practices in the classroom, school or district	An instance of success is analyzed by a small group and the lessons learned are applied to future practice.	*Describe a personalized learning plan that really built on student interests and passions. What made it work?*	30–45 min	Groups of 3–4
The 5 Whys	To help the group get at the foundational root of a question and uncover multiple perspectives on that question	Each round of "why" questioning gets closer and closer to the root cause of the issue	*Why must we remodel education for the future of our youth and our community?*	45 min	Groups of 5–6

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Wagon Wheels	To stimulate generative thinking in a short period of time	The dynamic physical movement of the group in which each person speaks with three other people at separate times	*What do you know and what do you want to know about: Personalized Learning Plans? Proficiency-Based Assessment? Multiple Pathways to Graduation? Dual Enrollment?*	45 min	As many as you dare!

Text-Based Protocols that can be adapted to use with videos, presentations, and text.

PROTOCOL	PURPOSE	DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS	POTENTIAL PROMPTS	TIME NEEDED	GROUP SIZE
The Four As	To co-construct with a group the meaning of a video, presentation, or text	Each participant chooses what was most important or perplexing and hears the thinking of others	*What do you **agree** with or want to **argue** with? What **assumptions** are at play and what **action** do you plan to take based on this experience?*	40 min	
The Final Word	To co-construct with a group the meaning of a video, presentation, or text	Each participant chooses what was most important or perplexing and hears the thinking of others	*What was the most significant part of the experience to you?*	40 min	Groups of 4
Save the Last Word for Me	To co-construct with a group the meaning of a video, presentation, or text	Each participant chooses what was most important or perplexing and hears the thinking of others	*What was the most significant part of the experience to you?*	40 min	Groups of 4
Three Levels of Text	To co-construct with a group the meaning of a video, presentation, or text	Each participant chooses what was most important or perplexing and hears the thinking of others	*What was the most significant to you? Why was it so significant for you? What action are you going to take based on this experience?*	40 min	Groups of 4