

Brainstorming Possibilities Protocol

Source: *Facilitating for Learning – tools for teacher groups of all kinds*, by David Allen and Tina Blythe

Purpose

To share a puzzle, problem, or question and gather ideas from colleagues about possible action plans, solutions, or responses.

Time allotted

Varies. On average a “round” is 15-minutes.

Group format

The protocol needs one facilitator, with understanding of and experience with the protocol, a group of teachers to share problems or questions and gather feedback in a single meeting. A group can be small or large.

Facilitation tips

- This protocol works best if one person, preferably someone who is familiar with the protocol, acts as the facilitator. This person will not be part of a group that discusses the question(s).
- The facilitator should begin the session by restating the importance of the trust and respect that this protocol requires. Discussions and feedback that take place in the session are professional conversations between the participants and the teacher seeking feedback.
- The facilitator should also explain that the protocol will be implemented with fidelity to the process and the constructive spirit of the process. The facilitator may ask participants to reword or withdraw comments that are evaluative or judgmental.
- The protocol follows the following steps:
 - Introduction (protocol goals, guidelines and schedule): 5 – 10 minutes
 - Each teacher briefly identifies the problem or question and provides a little context for the group (group is silent): 4 minutes
 - Clarifying questions (group asks a few, brief clarifying questions): 3 minutes
 - Brainstorm ideas, solutions, resources, and possible ways of responding to the issue (the group brainstorms, the teacher does not participate but may take notes): 6 minutes
 - The teacher thanks the group for their thoughts (but does not give a response)
 - Debrief (open discussion of the experiences of the group): 1-2 minutes
 - Begin next round