BOURNE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SCHOOL CULTURE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: DECEMBER 17, 2012

TIME: 6PM

PLACE: BOURNE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

AGENDA

1. Accept Minutes
2. Discuss PR Outreach Process List
3. Review 'Teacher Leadership' Articles
4. Discuss how best to improve trust
5. Plan SC Outreach to employees
6. Explore what venues exist to encourage collaboration
7. Future agenda items

"The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law."

Members:

Heather DiPaolo
Anne-Marie Siroonian
Matthew Stuck, Chairman

Bourne School Committee
Culture Sub Committee Meeting
December 17, 2012

Members Present: Matthew Stuck, Heather Dipaolo. Anne-Marie arrived at 6:20pm
Others Present: Mrs. Bar, Susan Quick

1. Reviewed and accepted minutes.

2. Discuss PR Outreach Process List Progress. Reviewed existing plans from other districts. Determined that initial plan should be simple and accessible.

3. Review 'Teacher Leadership' Articles – postponed until January meeting.

4. Committee generated a list of definitions of trust:
   - Feeling supported/people 'have your back'
   - When one can be taken at their word
   - Ability to speak freely without judgment - voice valued
   - Observed follow up on what's said will be done
   - Building integrity through predictable and reliable processes
   - 'Say what you mean'/follow through
   - In it for the long haul/accomplishing together
   - Leave the ego at the door/everyone keeps focused on the "Big Purpose" (student centered)

5. Susan will pull together a process to facilitate discussions in a group to help discuss and address hard-to-reach topics.

6. Current venues that exist in the district that promote collaboration:
   1) Department Head Meetings
   2) Grade-Alike Meetings
   3) Team Meetings
   4) Staff Meetings (a lot of state mandates take up faculty meeting time)
   5) B.B.T.L.T.s
   6) PD Teams
   7) School Councils
   8) CD Teams
   9) Teacher Evaluation Teams
   10) T3 Training
   11) Housekeeping Meetings/District & Schools
   12) Sub Committee work

Future Agenda Items:
Developing Trust
Hardest Discussion Protocols
Administration PR Process List
Article about Teacher Leadership
Planning SC Culture Presentation

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Suggestions for Bringing a Dilemma

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

A dilemma is a puzzle, an issue that raises questions, an idea that seems to have conceptual gaps, something about process or product that you just can't figure out. Sometimes it will include samples of student or adult work that illustrate the dilemma, but often it is just a dilemma that crosses over many parts of the educational process.

Some dilemma examples:

1. The teaching staff seems to love the idea of involving the students in meaningful learning that connects the students to real issues and work in the community, but nothing seems to be happening in reality. *Question: Why is interest/theory not translating into practice?*

2. The community is participating in visioning work, but the work doesn't seem to relate to the actual life of the schools and the community — it is just too utopian. *Question: How do you mesh dreams and reality?*

3. A lot of community people came to the first few visioning meetings, but now only a handful come and there is growing resentment on the part of those who do come about those that don't. *Question: How do you sustain interest in visioning?*

4. Teachers and community people love doing projects with the students, but they never seem to connect together or have very coherent educational goals or focus, they are just fun. *Question: How do you move from projects to deep learning about important concepts and still stay connected to hands-on work?*

5. You keep getting grants to do specific projects with students and the community, but when the money is gone, the work doesn't continue. Question: *How does sustainability actually work? What needs to change for it to work?*

6. No matter how hard you try to be inclusive and ask for everyone's ideas, about half of the people don't want to do anything new — they think things were just fine before. *Question: How do you work with the people who don't want to change without alienating them?*

7. There are many wonderful place-based learning efforts underway, but you are noticing that students are less and less competent at basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics. They are great at public speaking, using resources, creative planning, environmental and social concepts. *Question: How does a change in learning context change what become basic skills? How do we become more inclusive of a range of basic skills?*

So... What is YOUR Dilemma?

1. Write your dilemma with as much contextual description as you feel you need for understanding. One page is generally sufficient. Even a half page is often enough.

2. Frame your question thoughtfully. What do you REALLY want to know? What is your real dilemma? For example, with dilemma #7, the real question might be: *How do we explore what we actually mean by basic skills and come to consensus about what we mean?* A question that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" generally provides less feedback for the person with the dilemma, so avoid "yes" and "no" questions.

3. Make five copies of your dilemma.

4. If you prefer not to write it out, you can make notes for yourself and do an oral presentation only.

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Consultancy Protocol
Facilitation Tips

Step 1
The success of the Consultancy often depends on the quality of the presenter's reflection in Step 1 as well as on the quality and authenticity of the question framed for the Consultancy group. However, it is not uncommon for the presenter, at the end of a Consultancy, to say, "Now I know what my real question is." That is fine, too. It is sometimes helpful for the presenter to prepare ahead of time a brief (one-two page) written description of the dilemma and the issues related to it for the Consultancy group to read as part of Step 1.

Step 2
Clarifying questions are for the person asking them. They ask the presenter "who, what, where, when, and how." These are not "why" questions. They can be answered quickly and succinctly, often with a phrase or two.

Step 3
Probing questions are for the person answering them. They ask the presenter "why" (among other things), and are open-ended. They take longer to answer, and often require deep thought on the part of the presenter before s/he speaks.

Step 4
When the group talks while the presenter listens, it is helpful for the presenter to pull his/her chair back slightly away from the group. This protocol asks the Consultancy group to talk about the presenter in the third person, almost as if s/he is not there. As awkward as this may feel at first, it often opens up a rich conversation, and it gives the presenter an opportunity to listen and take notes, without having to respond to the group in any way. Remember that it is the group's job to offer an analysis of the dilemma or question presented. It is not necessary to solve the dilemma or to offer a definitive answer.

It is important for the presenter to listen in a non-defensive manner. Listen for new ideas, perspectives, and approaches. Listen to the group's analysis of your question/issues. Listen for assumptions — both your own and the group's — implicit in the conversation. Don't listen for judgment of you by the group. This is not supposed to be about you, but about a question you have raised. Remember that you asked the group to help you with this dilemma.

Step 5
The point of this time period is not for the presenter to give a "blow by blow" response to the group's conversation, nor is it to defend or further explain. Rather, this is a time for the presenter to talk about what were, for him/her, the most significant comments, ideas and questions s/he heard. The presenter can also share any new thoughts or questions s/he had while listening to the Consultancy group.

Step 6
Debriefing the process is key. Don't short-change this step.

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What? So What? Now What?

Gene Thompson-Grove, National School Reform Faculty, 2004

This protocol allows participants to quickly connect one another to their work, while at the same time allowing them to get useful feedback from one another.

Introduction
There is an overall introduction of protocol goals, norms, and agenda. The group is then divided into groups of 3 or 4, each with a designated participant/facilitator, who also participates.

Small Group Activity — completed in groups of 3 or 4
Participants have a segment of time devoted to examining an area of growth or challenge in their work. Facilitators gently but firmly keep the group focused on task and mindful of time.

Step 1 (5 minutes)
Participants individually outline a current challenge or success related to their work.
They answer two questions:
WHAT? (What did I do? What am I working on?) and
SO WHAT? (Why is this important to me?).

[optional] Talking points are briefly recorded on the top half of a sheet of newsprint by each participant.

Step 2 (15 minutes per person)
Individual Presentations (total of approximately 15 minutes per person)

a. First presenter explains what they've written to their group. Participants take notes/write questions.
b. Group asks two or three clarifying questions (only).
c. Participants reflect back: "What we hear you saying is..." and "Why this seems important to you is...."
d. Participants reflect back: "What we wonder about is..." or "The questions this raises for me are..." or "What this means to me is..." — along with any other focused discussion the group decides to have – i.e., "How could this presenter learn about this question?" "What could this presenter bring to a group of colleagues as a way to learn more about what is important to him or her?"
e. Presenter silently considers next steps; some groups may decide to hear a couple of minutes of reflection out loud by the presenter.
f. Repeat for each participant

Step 3 NOW WHAT? (5 minutes)
Each participant either writes silently of completes the bottom half of their own newsprint chart with some possible next steps, listed as NOW WHAT?

Silent Gallery Walk (approximately 10 minutes) [optional]
All participants will bring their completed sheets of newsprint to the "Gallery" and all will have an opportunity to view our collective work. All participants will be encouraged to use available post-its to place comments/questions on posted newsprint.

Feedback on process (5 minutes)
The full group provides feedback on the process.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.

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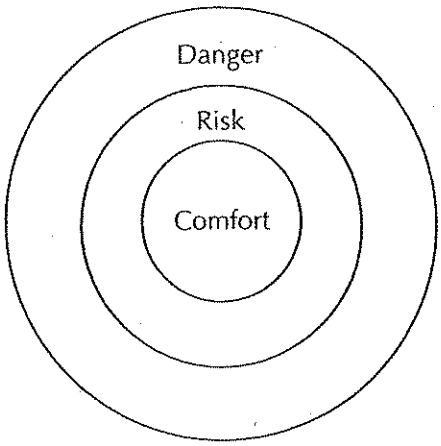
Zones of Comfort, Risk and Danger:
Constructing Your Zone Map

The Zones Exercise comes from an unknown source (to me) within the NSRF organization. I first experienced it at the Fall, 2000, Critical Friends Group Symposium in Boca Raton, Florida. I have found the exercise useful and have tried to make notes for others. I hope the originator will claim the invention, and that others will add to this useful exercise as they discover new applications. Marylyn Wentworth, January, 2001.

1. Draw a diagram of concentric circles in the following manner:
   a. The middle circle is Comfort, the second is Risk, the third is Danger.
   b. Consider the various aspects of your work (as a CFG Coach, for example). Think about the aspects that feel really comfortable to you, those that feel like there is some risk involved, but generally positive, and those aspects that you know get your hackles up, make you feel defensive, cloud your judgment, make you want to retreat.
   c. Decide on the size of each Zone based on your consideration. Do you work a lot in your Comfort Zone, your Risk Zone? Do you work only a little in your Danger Zone? Make the size of the Zones reflect the quantity of time you work there.

2. Think about the different activities you do and/or affective domains in which you work (i.e. facilitating groups, leading protocols, designing meetings, guiding peer observation, responding to conflicts between group members...). Make a list if it helps.

3. Put each activity or affective domain into the Zone that best represents your sense of relative Comfort, Risk or Danger.



Observations on the Zones

1. **The Comfort Zone** is usually a place where we feel at ease, with no tension, have a good grip on the topic, like to hear from others about the topic, know how to navigate occasional rough spots with ease. It is also a place to retreat to from the Danger Zone. For example, one of your Danger Zone aspects may be when people start disagreeing with passion and even disrespect. You might find that when that happens you retreat into your Comfort aspect of listening and not intervening, or even find a way to divert the conversation to a topic that is in your Comfort Zone.

2. **The Risk Zone** is the most fertile place for learning. It is where most people are willing to take some risks, not know everything, or sometimes not know anything at all, but clearly know they want to learn and will take the risks necessary to do so. It is where people open up to other people with curiosity and interest, and where they will consider options or ideas they haven't thought of before.

3. **Generally it is not a good idea to work from either your own Danger Zone or anyone else's.** That area is so full of defenses, fears, red-lights, desire for escape, etc, that it requires too much energy and time to accomplish anything from that Zone. The best way to work when you find yourself there is to own that it is a Danger Zone and work on some strategies to move into the Risk Zone (either on your own or with colleagues).

For example, if I feel my anger rising and my body getting rigid when someone says it's time we really clamped down on standardized tests and taught to them right now before the kids failed any more and it is suggested that our CFG should work in that direction as our main focus, I recognize the signs of being in my Danger Zone and know I probably won't be rational when I speak. Therefore I need a strategy. In this case, my strategy will be to ask calmly, "What are the advantages for the students if we do that? What are the advantages for teaching and learning? What are the disadvantages?" Then I have to listen and list. I can't trust myself to do more than ask questions until I become more rational and this isn't such a high level Danger Zone for me.

How to Apply the Zones Productively: Connection to Dilemmas

The Consultancy

1. Review your Zone Map and select a dilemma represented there.

2. Make some notes to give more detail to the dilemma. Notice what Zone the dilemma appears in, or if it is a complex dilemma and has aspects in several Zones.

3. Break into triads and plan your order and time for three Consultancies.

4. As you present your dilemma, use your Zone Map as a reference for the group. They may find fertile ground for probing questions or feedback in your Map, and can see how your dilemma relates to other aspects of your work.

Alternative to the Consultancy

1. Write a dilemma about your work before you come to the Zones Workshop.

2. After you have done the Zones Map, divide into triads.

3. Take turns reading your dilemmas aloud to each other.

4. Discuss the following questions for each person (20 minutes each):
   a. How does your dilemma relate to your Zone Map? What Zone(s) is the dilemma happening in for you? For others related to your dilemma?
   b. Are you working in your Danger Zone? Someone else's? Do you need to know about other people's Danger Zones?
   c. If your dilemma is in your Danger Zone (or someone else's), how can you move those issues into a Risk or Comfort Zone? How might this movement contribute to solving the dilemma?
   d. What would the other people who contribute to or are affected by your dilemma say about your dilemma?

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Barriers or Bridges: A Matter of Perspective and Attitude

Adapted by John Pieper, Oshkosh, WI, from a presentation by the Wisconsin FACETS Parent Involvement Group at the 2004 Fall EOCA Conference

It is easy to identify the many obstacles that create frustrations in education. It is just as easy to identify what we feel would be the solutions to eliminate those barriers. The trick is to learn how to create the bridges between the barriers and the solutions.

We may not be able to knock down the walls created by institutionalized practice, prejudice, and bureaucratic mandates, but we can learn how to open windows of opportunity within the existing framework. Even small rays of light can become empowering. Collaboration and communication are the brick and mortar we can use to reshape the wall into bridges of diversity, equity, and meaningful learning.

Purpose: This activity can be used as a way to help a group focus on the importance of perspective and attitude. It also serves as a reminder to participants of the need to build relationships if we are going to create meaningful change. (Recommended for groups of 20 – 50 people)

Procedures for the activity: (Approximately 5 - 10 minutes)
Materials: Markers and two lunch bags for each participant
Each participant is given two lunch sized paper bags. On one side of one bag the participant will write down a word or phrase related to barriers facing education. On the other side of the same bag, the participant will write down a word or phrase related to bridges for success in education.

Both bags are opened up. Slip the blank bag inside the bag with the responses. You now have a brick. Participants will build a "wall" out of the bricks. Barriers should all be on one side of the wall, and bridges should be on the other side. There is a brief sharing of the identified barriers and bridges.

The wall will remain as a visible reminder of the work the group is doing. For closure at the end of the meeting or activity, participants can choose to knock down the barriers, create windows, or open doors.*

*As a stand alone activity, the protocol could be modified in any number of ways:

- It could be used as a springboard for brainstorming strengths and weaknesses
- Participants could reflect on their own perceptions and attitudes in regard to barriers and bridges in their own work
- Students could create bridges of understanding, or break down walls of inequity
- Teams might physically construct action plans based on the activity

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The Constructivist Listening Dyad

Adapted from the National Coalition for Equity in Education by Victor Cary

Purpose
To create a safe space to become better at listening and talking in depth. Constructivist listening dyads help us as we work through feelings, thoughts, and beliefs that sometimes produce anger, passivity, undermine confidence, or cause interference in relationships with students or colleagues.

Time allotted: 2 to 30 minutes
Group format: Pairs.
Supplies: A timer

Facilitation tips: Talk about the purpose of a constructivist listening dyad.

The simplest form of doing constructivist listening is a **dyad**, which is the exchange of constructivist listening between two people....

> I agree to listen to and think about you for a fixed period of time in exchange for you doing the same for me. I keep in my mind that my listening is for your benefit so I do not ask questions for my information.

Start with two minutes — at first it may seem difficult. But participants, over the course of time, may work their way up to 5-8 minutes and more each. *Remind participants that the purpose of a constructivist listening dyad is that the listening is for the benefit of the talker.* This is an essential point to access the usefulness and power of a constructivist listening dyad.

Guidelines for Constructivist Listening:
1) Each person is given equal time to talk. (Everyone deserves to be listened to.)
2) The listener does not interpret, paraphrase, analyze, give advice or break in with a personal story. (People can solve their own problems.)
3) Confidentiality is maintained. (People need to know they can be completely authentic.)
4) The talker does not criticize or complain about a listener(s) or about mutual colleagues during their time to talk. (A person cannot listen well when she/he is feeling attacked or defensive.)

The Activity:
1. Each person will have two minutes or more to respond to a prompt. It is very useful to scaffold the prompts.
   Ex: When is the last time you remembered being fully listened too? How did it feel?
   Growing up, what was your experience as a learner? What felt supportive? What interfered with your learning?
   How did race, class or gender impact your experience as a learner in school?

Reflection questions following the activity:
- What came up for you using this structure? What came up for you reflecting on the prompt?
- What worked for you? What was difficult for you?
- What purpose do you think it might serve?
- When could it be used?

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Peeling the Onion
Developing a Problem Protocol

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

Purpose
To provide a structured way to develop an appreciation for the complexity of a problem in order to avoid the inclination to start out by "solving" the problem, before it has been fully defined.

Procedure
As with all protocols, it is important to identify a facilitator who is responsible for keeping the group to the allotted time. This allows the group to maintain focus, keep on track, and frees the group to do its best thinking. The facilitator reviews the process with the group and then it begins. The times for each step can be adjusted to fit the available amount of time and the number of people in the group.

Facilitation Tips
Most of us are eager to solve problems before we truly understand their depth. This protocol is designed to help us peel away the layers in order to address the deeper issues that lie underneath the surface. If the problem were easy to solve, it would not still be a concern to the group. The facilitator should keep to the times strictly and gently remind people when they are giving advice too early.

The Protocol
1. The keepers of the problem describe the problem/dilemma and ask a question to help focus the group's responses. (5 minutes)

2. Clarifying questions from group members to the presenters (these must be purely informational). (3 minutes)

3. A round where everyone says: "What I heard [the presenters say] is ..."
   (The presenters are silent and take notes.)

4. A round where everyone says: "One assumption that seems to be part of the problem/dilemma is..."
   OR, "One thing I assume to be true about this problem is ... " (The presenters are silent and take notes.)

5. Another round where everyone says: "A question this raises for me is..."
   (The presenters are silent and take notes).

6. [Perhaps] another round where everyone says: "Further questions this raises for me are..."
   (The presenters are silent and take notes.)

7. Another round where everyone asks: "What if...?" Or, "Have we thought about...?" Or, "I wonder...?"
   (The presenters are silent and take notes.)

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8. Presenters review their notes and say, "Having heard these comments and questions, now I think..." (The group members are silent and take notes.)

9. *Now what?* Together, the presenter and consultants talk about the possibilities and options that have surfaced.

10. Debrief the process. How was this like peeling an onion? What about the process was useful? Frustrating?

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The Issaquah Protocol

Developed by Nancy Mohr, Deborah Bambino and Daniel Baron.

Purpose

To use a process which models the developmentally appropriate order for questioning in coaching/consulting situations. It can be especially useful for coaches who can look at their own work, and, at the same time, model and reinforce the steps they would use in the field. The progression of types of questions/responses follows the "ideal" progression a good coach uses —

- factual questions
- what I hear you say
- what I think it means
- am I getting it right?
- probing questions I now have
- ideas this brings to mind
- what do you think?

Time Allotted

approximately 60 minutes

Group Format

Can be used with 10-50 group members. If 10 to 15, use a regular large group format with rounds for each step (people can pass, knowing that you will come back to them at the end of the round). If 15-50, use small groups which first talk with each other and then respond as a group to each part of the protocol. Some people like a minute or so between steps to collect their thoughts and make notes before each new round begins.

Facilitation Tips

It is important to reinforce and reflect on the different kinds of questions and statements used and how that relates to work as a coach.

The Protocol

1. Presenter — someone presents a dilemma or problem they are working on. It must be an authentic dilemma and not be one for which the answer is already known. The presenter must be open about the issue. If the presenter can frame the dilemma as a question, the feedback will likely be more focused. (5-7 minutes)

2. Group asks clarifying questions. Truly informational, meant to more fully understand what is going on; clarify any places of confusion. (3 minutes)
   Note: These are the first kinds of questions we should ask in our work—showing our interest in learning more about what is going on and not leaping to judgment.

"Rounds" begin

3. Active listening by the group. (WHAT?) These are statements which restate what has been said already: "I heard [the presenter's name] say..." "What I'm hearing is..." (Go-round — 5-7 minutes)
   Note: The purpose of active listening is not only to understand better what you are saying but to help the person hear what it sounds like and give them a chance to say if it is what they mean to be saying.

4. Interpretive listening by the group. (SO WHAT?) "What this means to me is..." (Go-round 5-7 minutes)
   Note: The purpose of interpretive listening is to get at what meaning you are making from what you are hearing in order to help the presenter think/re-think about what they are conveying.

5. Presenter Check-in. Quickly, are we hearing you correctly? If not, what would you change/add? (2 minutes)
   Note: It is easy to think we know what we've heard and then find out we're wrong. Always good to check back.

6. Probing Questions by the group. We now go deeper into what is going on and name paradoxes and controversies that we hear, without asking or implying that there should be some reconciliation. (Go-round — 5-7 minutes)
   Note: It is important to not get to probing questions until we have done the previous steps — the ones which build up our "right" to go further since we now have a little understanding about what we are hearing.

7. *Presenter response. Which probing question was the one that made you think the hardest? Why? (2 minutes)*

8. Suggestions by the group. (NOW WHAT?) Finally, and only then, ideas to try, "What if she...?" "One thing I might consider/try/do..." (Go-round — 10 minutes)
   Note: Suggestions are only made when it is clear that they are welcome and that we have established a level of shared understanding about what is going on. It is a good idea to limit suggestions — too much is too much. As with the other rounds, the presenter is silent and takes notes.

9. Presenter reflects back. What the presenter is now thinking of doing, concrete steps that can be taken — if only first steps — and ways to bring it back to the group for further work together. (5-7 minutes)

10. Debrief: Starting with presenter, then all participants: (5-7 minutes)
    - What was it like to go through these steps? What kind of feedback did you get?
    - What was it like to use this process? How useful was it?

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Consultancy Protocol
Overview

The Consultancy Protocol was developed by Gene Thompson-Grove as part of the Coalition of Essential Schools' National Re:Learning Faculty Program, and further adapted and revised as part of work of NSRF.

A Consultancy is a structured process for helping an individual or a team think more expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma. Outside perspective is critical to this protocol working effectively; therefore, some of the participants in the group must be people who do not share the presenter's specific dilemma at that time. When putting together a Consultancy group, be sure to include people with differing perspectives.

Framing Consultancy Dilemmas and Consultancy Questions
A dilemma is a puzzle, an issue that raises questions, an idea that seems to have conceptual gaps, something about process or product that you just can't figure out. Sometimes it will include samples of student or adult work that illustrate the dilemma, but often it is a dilemma that crosses over many parts of the educational process.

1. Think about your dilemma. Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling or that you are unsure about. Some criteria for a dilemma might include:
   - Is it something that is bothering you enough that your thoughts regularly return to the dilemma?
   - Is it an issue/dilemma that is not already on its way to being resolved?
   - Is it an issue/ dilemma that does not depend on getting other people to change (in other words, can you affect the dilemma by changing your practice)?
   - Is it something that is important to you, and is it something you are actually willing to work on?

2. Do some reflective writing about your dilemma. Some questions that might help are:
   - Why is this a dilemma for you? Why is this dilemma important to you?
   - If you could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would you/we see?
   - What have you done already to try to remedy or manage the dilemma?
   - What have been the results of those attempts?
   - Who do you hope changes? Who do you hope will take action to resolve this dilemma? If your answer is not you, you need to change your focus. You will want to present a dilemma that is about your practice, actions, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions, and not someone else's.
   - What do you assume to be true about this dilemma, and how have these assumptions influenced your thinking about the dilemma?
   - What is your focus question? A focus question summarizes your dilemma and helps focus the feedback (see the next step).

3. Frame a focus question for your Consultancy group: Put your dilemma into question format.
   - Try to pose a question around the dilemma that seems to you to get to the heart of the matter.
   - Remember that the question you pose will guide the Consultancy group in their discussion of the dilemma.

4. Critique your focus question.
   - Is this question important to my practice?
   - Is this question important to student learning?
   - Is this question important to others in my profession?

Some Generic Examples of Dilemmas

- The teaching staff seems to love the idea of involving the students in meaningful learning that connects the students to real issues and an audience beyond school, but nothing seems to be happening in reality.
  Question: What can I do to capitalize on teachers' interest and to help them translate theory into practice?

- The community is participating in visioning work, but the work doesn't seem to relate to the actual life of the school — it is just too utopian.
  Question: How do I mesh dreams and reality?

- Teachers love doing projects with the students, but the projects never seem to connect to one another or have very coherent educational goals or focus; they are just fun.
  Question: How do I work with teachers so they move to deep learning about important concepts while still staying connected to hands-on learning?

- We keep getting grants to do specific projects with students and the community, but when the money is gone, the work doesn't continue.
  Question: How does sustainability actually work? What needs to change for it to work?

- No matter how hard I try to be inclusive and ask for everyone's ideas, about half of the people don't want to do anything new — they think things were just fine before.
  Question: How do I work with the people who don't want to change without alienating them?

Preparing to Present a Dilemma in a Consultancy Protocol

Come to the session with a description of a dilemma related to your practice. Write your dilemma with as much contextual description as you feel you need for understanding. One page is generally sufficient; even a half page is often enough. If you prefer not to write it out, you can make notes for yourself and do an oral presentation, but please do some preparation ahead of time.

End your description with a specific question. Frame your question thoughtfully. What do you REALLY want to know? What is your real dilemma? This question will help your Consultancy group focus its feedback. Questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" generally provide less feedback for the person with the dilemma, so avoid those kinds of questions. (See the previous pages for a process for framing Consultancy dilemmas and questions.)

Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling — something that is problematic or has not been as effective as you would like it to be — anything related to your work. Consultancies give presenters an opportunity to tap the expertise in a group, and if past experiences offer any indication, you will be able to rely on the people in your Consultancy group to provide respectful, thoughtful, experienced-based responses to your dilemma.

A couple of caveats — we have found that Consultancies don't go well when people bring dilemmas that they are well on the way to figuring out themselves, or when they bring a dilemma that involves only getting other people to change. To get the most out of this experience, bring something that is still puzzling you about your practice. It is riskier to do, but we guarantee that you will learn more.

National School Reform Faculty

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Consultancy Protocol

The Consultancy Protocol was developed by Gene Thompson-Grove, Paula Evans and Faith Dunne as part of the Coalition of Essential Schools' National Re:Learning Faculty Program, and further adapted and revised as part of work of NSRF.

A Consultancy is a structured process for helping an individual or a team think more expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma.

Time
Approximately 50 minutes

Roles
Presenter (whose work is being discussed by the group)
Facilitator (who sometimes participates, depending on the size of the group)

1. The presenter gives an overview of the dilemma with which s/he is struggling, and frames a question for the Consultancy group to consider. The framing of this question, as well as the quality of the presenter's reflection on the dilemma being discussed, are key features of this protocol. If the presenter has brought student work, educator work, or other "artifacts," there is a pause here to silently examine the work/documents. The focus of the group's conversation is on the dilemma. (5-10 minutes)

2. The Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter — that is, questions that have brief, factual answers. (5 minutes)

3. The group asks probing questions of the presenter. These questions should be worded so that they help the presenter clarify and expand his/her thinking about the dilemma presented to the Consultancy group. The goal here is for the presenter to learn more about the question s/he framed or to do some analysis of the dilemma presented. The presenter may respond to the group's questions, but there is no discussion by the Consultancy group of the presenter's responses. At the end of the ten minutes, the facilitator asks the presenter to re-state his/her question for the group. (10 minutes)

4. The group talks with each other about the dilemma presented. (15 minutes)
   Possible questions to frame the discussion:
   What did we hear?
   What didn't we hear that they think might be relevant?
   What assumptions seem to be operating?
   What questions does the dilemma raise for us?
   What do we think about the dilemma?
   What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma? What have we done in similar situations?

Members of the group sometimes suggest actions the presenter might consider taking. Most often, however, they work to define the issues more thoroughly and objectively. The presenter doesn't speak during this discussion, but instead listens and takes notes.

5. The presenter reflects on what s/he heard and on what s/he is now thinking, sharing with the group anything that particularly resonated for him or her during any part of the Consultancy. (5 minutes)

6. The facilitator leads a brief conversation about the group's observation of the Consultancy process. (5 minutes)

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Framing Consultancy Dilemmas and Consultancy Questions

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

A dilemma is a puzzle, an issue that raises questions, an idea that seems to have conceptual gaps, something about process or product that you just can't figure out. Sometimes it will include samples of student or adult work that illustrate the dilemma, but often it is a dilemma that crosses over many parts of the educational process.

1. Think about your dilemma.

Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling or that you are unsure about. Some criteria for a dilemma might include:

- Is it something that is bothering you enough that your thoughts regularly return to the dilemma?
- Is it an issue/dilemma that is not already on its way to being resolved?
- Is it an issue/ dilemma that does not depend on getting other people to change (in other words, can you affect the dilemma by changing your practice)?
- Is it something that is important to you, and is it something you are actually willing to work on?

2. Do some reflective writing about your dilemma.

Some questions that might help are

- Why is this a dilemma for you? Why is this dilemma important to you?
- If you could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would you/we see?
- What have you done already to try to remedy or manage the dilemma?
- What have been the results of those attempts?
- Who do you hope changes? Who do you hope will take action to resolve this dilemma? If your answer is *not* you, you need to change your focus. You will want to present a dilemma that is about *your* practice, actions, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions, and *not* someone else's.
- What do you assume to be true about this dilemma, and how have these assumptions influenced your thinking about the dilemma?
- What is your focus question? A focus question summarizes your dilemma and helps focus the feedback (see the next step).

3. Frame a focus question for your Consultancy group

Put your dilemma into question format.

- Try to pose a question around the dilemma that seems to you to get to the heart of the matter.
- Remember that the question you pose will guide the Consultancy group in their discussion of the dilemma.

4. Critique your focus question.

- Is this question important to my practice?
- Is this question important to student learning?
- Is this question important to others in my profession?

Preparing to Present a Dilemma in a Consultancy Protocol

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