TOOL SET E

Running Effective Meetings

Contents

Purpose

Teams function more effectively when there is agreement among members about what is important. This requires Postsecondary Leaders to first develop a foundation of trust among members with clear norms and structures for mutual accountability. Postsecondary Leaders are more likely to run effective meetings when team functioning and trust are central to the planning process. Meetings should also incorporate time and space for reflection so team members can build on their successes and consider challenges.

How & When to Use

As teams are forming—whether it is introducing new members or simply starting another school year—Postsecondary Leaders should always reserve time to revisit the norms that govern the team's work and beliefs. Even seasoned teams should dedicate meeting time to see if anything has changed in their community or functioning. Tool Set E begins by asking educators to examine positive leadership experiences and specify what attributes from those experiences could become team norms. Regularly looking at data should also be a part of team meetings. The Modified ATLAS protocol can help team members look at student data and action plan next steps.

Educators must utilize meeting time to reflect on team processes and refine supports to meet the needs of students. The structured approach of a protocol, with clear expectations for conversation, creates a safe space for all participants to engage and move the work forward.

Attributes of a Learning Community

This protocol is designed to establish the basic attributes for a strong learning community through real participant experiences. The attributes become goals or guidelines to monitor progress as well as setting the stage for team norms.

Attributes of a Learning Community

This approach was used by the Foxfire Networks to train teachers in the Foxfire Approach. It was probably used by other groups as well, but that is where I learned it. – Marylyn Wentworth

Purpose
To establish basic attributes of good learning communities through real participant experiences. The attributes become goals/guidelines for checking on progress as a new learning community develops.

Time
One hour

Process
1. Participants write about a personal experience in a learning community that they *know* was a place of positive learning for them. It could be a club, a church group, a school experience, a course, or a support group; any group that was a positive learning community. Their writing should include the reason for the group's existence, how the group was structured, and what made it a positive learning place.

2. In groups of 3 or 4, participants share their stories with one another.

3. As each story is told, the group picks out the attributes that made that learning community productive and satisfying *(everyone really listened to each other, we worked cooperatively to get things done, there was a lot of respect for different opinions…)*.

4. Each group makes a list of the 4 or 5 attributes that seem to stand out for them. Sometimes they will be attributes that show up in all the stories, sometimes it will be an attribute that only appears in one story but seems really important to the group.

5. Each group names one attribute in turn while the facilitator records on a general list. Any repeated attributes get noted with stars (*).

6. When the list is complete (the facilitator can reword for a succinct list), the facilitator asks the group if this list seems like a good list of attributes to guide the group as it forms its own community of learners. Additions can be made at this time. If anything on the list seems hard to do, or inappropriate to the group, a note to that effect is written next to that attribute.

7. At different points during the seminar/workshop, the Attributes of a Learning Community are checked for development and progress.

Note: This same process can be used to look at the attributes of a good learning experience. It gets at the essential elements of what is going on when people know they are learning at a high and satisfying level. The initial question gets changed to "Think about a time when you know you were really learning a lot, and loving it. Write about that time…"

Forming Ground Rules

A protocol to support Counseling Departments or Postsecondary Leadership Teams to develop norms that will shape how they work together. Ground rules help teams establish trust and clarify expectations.

Forming Ground Rules (Creating Norms)

Developed by Marylyn Wentworth.

Gaining agreement around Ground Rules, or Norms, are important for a group that intends to work together on difficult issues, or who will be working together over time. They may be added to, or condensed, as the group progresses. Starting with basic Ground Rules builds trust, clarifies group expectations of one another, and establishes points of "reflection" to see how the group is doing regarding process.

Time
Approximately 30 minutes

Process

1. Ask everyone to **write down what each person needs in order to work productively in a group**, giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e. "to have all voices heard," or "to start and end our meetings when we say we will." (This is to help people focus on process rather than product.)

2. **Each participant names <u>one</u> thing from her/his written list**, going around in a circle, with no repeats, and as many circuits as necessary to have all the ground rules listed.

3. **Ask for any clarifications** needed. One person may not understand what another person has listed, or may interpret the language differently.

4. **If the list is VERY long — more than 10 Ground Rules — ask the group if some of them can be combined to make the list more manageable**. Sometimes the subtle differences are important to people, so it is more important that everyone feel their needs have been honored than it is to have a short list.

5. **Ask if everyone can abide by the listed Ground Rules**. If anyone dislikes or doesn't want to comply with one of them, that Ground Rule should be discussed and a decision should be made to keep it on the list with a notation of objection, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and check it again.

6. **Ask if any one of the Ground Rules might be hard for the group to follow**. If there is one or more, those Ground Rules should be highlighted and given attention. With time it will become clear if it should be dropped, or needs significant work. Sometimes what might appear to be a difficult rule turns out not to be hard at all. "Everyone has a turn to speak," is sometimes debated for example, with the argument that not everyone likes to talk every time an issue is raised, and others think aloud and only process well if they have the space to do that. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective Ground Rule.

7. **While work is in progress, refer to the Ground Rules whenever they would help group process**. If one person is dominating, for example, it is easier to refer to a Ground Rule that says, "take care with how often and how long you speak," than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group.

8. **Check in on the Ground Rules when reflection is done on the group work.** Note any that were not followed particularly well for attention in the next work session. Being sure they are followed, refining them, and adding or subtracting Ground Rules is important, as it makes for smoother work and more trust within the group.

Modified ATLAS Protocol

A protocol designed for use when data is a focal point for discussion. The protocol supports equity of voice and allows all members to describe the data, make inferences, and share implications for future work.

Modified ATLAS Protocol

Group/Team:	
Data being reviewed and analyzed:	
Individually review the data and then, as a group, answer the following questions. (5 minutes)	
What do you see? • What is the data showing us? • State only facts and numbers. Avoid inferences or conclusions. (5 minutes total)	Record:
What does the data suggest? (5 minutes)	Record:
What are some implications or next steps? (5 minutes)	Record:

Based on the School Reform Initiative ATLAS Protocol.

Modified What? So What? Now What? Protocol

This protocol allows participants to connect with one another and receive useful feedback about the work. The protocol creates space to acknowledge successes as well as recognize and reflect on how challenges can become opportunities.

Modified What? So What? Now What? Protocol

Purpose

This protocol allows participants to connect to one another and to each other's work, while at the same time allowing all group members to receive useful feedback.

Introduction from Facilitator

Today, we are doing a modified version of the *What? So What? Now What?* protocol. Our goal is to connect to our team's work. This means acknowledging our successes but also recognizing and reflecting on how our challenges can become opportunities. We are going to engage in the protocol using the steps below.

1. Presenters will set the context and ground the team on "What did we do? What are we working on?" The focus in on successes and challenges.
2. Then, the presenters will take us through the "So What? Or, why is this important to us?" As the other team members listen, they take notes using the note catcher:

Context Setting	What?	So What?	Now What?
Outline success(es), challenge(s), and the opportunities they present.	What did we do? What are we working on?	Why is this important to us?	What can we do?

Based on the School Reform Initiative What? So What? Now What? Protocol.

3. Presenters introduce key highlights on student enrollment and persistence data to provide additional background. Team members are given time to process quietly and can markup the text with their thoughts.
4. The presenters answer any clarifying questions. In small groups (two to three people):
   - Team members discuss what they heard in the “What?” and “So What?” portions. (“What I heard the presenter say was...” Why this seems important to us...” “I wonder...”)
   - Team members spend time discussing “Now What?” Remember, the team owns this work collectively.
5. The team comes back together to discuss the “Now What?” Presenters take notes on what they hear and share their thoughts.
6. Debrief the protocol and process.

Based on the School Reform Initiative What? So What? Now What? Protocol.