Collaborative Group Work
Protocols

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Collaborative Group Work

Collaborative group work is the hub of the wheel of instruction. It engages and empowers participants and encourages them to construct knowledge in ways that can last a lifetime. The aim of collaborative group work is to bring people together to think and talk about a topic so they may deepen their understanding and generate new ideas. This collection of protocols captures some of the ways to structure group work in workshops. These protocols have been adapted from multiple sources and many, many educators throughout years of practice.

Before implementing a protocol, we suggest that you think about how many people will be in your workshop, how much time you have and the goals you would like to accomplish through using group work. You can modify each protocol to meet your needs and the needs of the participants in your workshop. Facilitators of group work should always remember that it is most successful when they carefully plan outcomes and are actively observing and engaging with groups at work.
Purpose
Use the 3–2–1 protocol to focus the discussion of an article and to encourage participants to join the discussion.

Process
1. Post the 3–2–1 questions:
   - What are 3 things you learned?
   - What are 2 things you found interesting?
   - What is 1 question you still have?

2. Have participants read the article and take notes in response to the 3–2–1 questions.

3. Ask participants to get into groups of 3 and ask each other the questions.

4. Once participants have answered all of the questions, have them create a visual to share with the group that represents their answers to the questions.

5. Bring the whole group together and have each small group share their visual.

6. Discuss the article and the answers to the 3–2–1 questions.

adapted from Lipton & Wellman
Collaborative Annotation

Purpose
Use Collaborative Annotation to go in-depth on a topic and to use writing-to-learn.

Process
1. Have participants read the article or articles.
2. Ask them to write 3–4 sentences to share with the group about their thoughts on the reading, what they found most important and any questions they have on the topic.
3. If the group is small, ask participants to sit in a circle. If the group is large, break participants into groups of 4–5 and ask them to sit in a circle.
4. Once in circles, have participants pass their writing to the person on their left.
5. Ask participants to read the writing they were given and to respond in writing on the same piece of paper, expanding on what previous participants wrote. Give participants 5 minutes to write.
6. Repeat this process until participants have back their original pieces of writing.
7. Then have participants read all of the comments on their writing.
8. After they finish reading, have participants write for 5–10 minutes about the comments answering the questions: what did I find the most interesting? What did I learn? What questions do I still have about this topic?
9. Ask for volunteers to share their writing, the comments they received and the answers to the questions in Step 8.

adapted from Greece Central School District
Collaborative Annotation
Four A Questions

Purpose
Use the Four A Question protocol to do a close reading of an article or articles and to generate discussion among participants.

Process
1. Post the Four A questions:
   - What Assumptions does the author of the article hold?
   - What do you Agree with in the article?
   - What do you want to Argue with in the text?
   - What parts of the article do you Aspire to?

2. Have participants read the article and take notes in response to the Four A questions.

3. Ask participants to get into groups of 4. Have each group member take one of the Four A questions.

4. Starting with the Assumption question, ask group members to answer their questions. Then have group members discuss the answers given and respond to each other.

5. Once each group has talked about all four questions, bring the whole group together for a discussion of the Four A questions.

adapted from National School Reform Faculty
Gallery Walk

Time: 60 minutes
Materials: Chart Paper, Markers, Post-its, Pens

Purpose
Use the Gallery Walk protocol to create a process for participants to learn about and respond to several articles on a topic. This protocol allows participants to move around and see information represented visually.

Process
1. Divide participants into small groups.
2. Assign each group an article to read.
3. After each group reads its article, have group members discuss the article and then write main ideas and questions from the article on chart paper.
4. Have the groups post their chart paper on the wall with a blank piece of chart paper next to it.
5. Ask groups to rotate around the room reading the main ideas and questions from each article. Have participants write responses on post-its as they read each chart paper and stick the post-its to the blank sheets of chart paper next to the ones on the articles.
6. After everyone has responded to each of the articles, have the groups return to their original chart paper and read and discuss the post-its left by other participants.
Graffiti

Time: 60 minutes
Materials: Chart Paper, Markers

Purpose  Use Graffiti to help participants brainstorm ideas and move around during the process.

Process 1. Using 4–5 pieces of chart paper, write one question about the topic on each piece.

2. Divide participants into 4–5 groups and give each group a piece of the chart paper, or post the chart paper around the room and have each group start at one piece of paper.

3. Have participants read the question on the chart paper and brainstorm answers to the question. Ask them to record their ideas on the chart paper. Give each group 5–10 minutes to record their ideas.

4. Once each group records their ideas, ask participants to move to another piece of chart paper and complete the same process.

5. Ask each group to return to their original piece of chart paper. Have them read the graffiti on the paper and summarize the ideas on a separate piece of chart paper to share with the whole group.
Let's Do Lunch

Process

Let's Do Lunch is a protocol for establishing a set of partners who will work together to discuss a subject and/or complete a particular project. Participants are given a daily schedule and must find a partner to have lunch with thereby filling in each appointment date listed on the schedule. This protocol is best used with large groups.

Individuals are expected to exchange lunch date times with one another and lock in their mutual appointments. The facilitator determines the amount of time participants have to discuss and complete an assignment. This exercise is completed when all luncheon dates have been fulfilled.

The number of lunch date partners one has to obtain is predetermined by the amount of time that will be used to discuss a topic as well as the number of partners that each participant must meet with in order to complete the exercise.

My Luncheon Appointments

Name: ____________________

First Luncheon Appointment ____________________

Second Luncheon Appointment ____________________

Third Luncheon Appointment ____________________

Fourth Luncheon Appointment ____________________
Pause

Purpose
Use the Pause protocol to provide an opportunity for participants to discuss and reflect on the concepts and ideas introduced by the article or articles. This protocol also helps participants make connections to prior knowledge and seek clarification.

Process
1. Write two sets of questions on chart paper: one set to help participants connect the reading to their prior knowledge and one set to clarify their thinking about the reading.
   - Connection Questions: What connections can you make to what you already know or have done? What does this article remind you of? What would round out your understanding of this topic? What can you add?
   - Clarification Questions: What is not clear about this topic yet? What is confusing? Where are you struggling to connect to this article or articles? How can you probe for deeper insights?
2. Have participants read the article or articles.
3. Ask participants to get into groups of 3–4 people to discuss the main ideas and concepts from the reading.
4. Then ask participants to connect their prior knowledge and experience to the reading by answering the Connection Questions.
5. Once they have completed the Connection Questions, have participants answer the Clarification Questions.
6. After they complete the Clarification Questions, have participants pause and reflect in writing about what they read and their group discussion.
7. Ask for volunteers to share what they wrote with the whole group.

adapted from Jay McTighe
Play the Role

**Purpose**
Use Play the Role to give each participant in the group an opportunity to explore and gain a deeper understanding of an article. This protocol is best used with longer articles.

**Process**
1. Label 4 note cards with the group roles and their definitions:
   - Summarizer: highlights key ideas in the article
   - Questioner: poses questions about the article
   - Clarifier: addresses confusing parts of the article and attempts to answer the questions posed by the Questioner
   - Predictor: makes guesses about where the article is going next

2. Have participants get into groups of 4.

3. Give each participant a note card that identifies his/her role in the group.

4. Have participants read a few paragraphs of the article. Ask them to take notes on post-its as they read to prepare for their roles in the discussion.

5. Once they have finished reading the paragraphs from the article, have participants play their roles in the discussion.

6. The Summarizer begins the discussion by highlighting the key ideas at this point in the reading. The Questioner then poses questions about the selection. The Clarifier addresses confusing parts and attempts to answer the questions that were posed. The Predictor then offers guesses about where the article will go next.

7. The roles in the group then switch one person to the right and participants read the next few paragraphs.

8. Participants repeat the process using their new roles. This process continues until participants read the entire article. Have the group debrief their process.

*adapted from Reading West*
Tea Party

Purpose
Use the Tea Party protocol to encourage and generate discussion about a topic. This protocol is best used with large groups.

Process
1. Write quotations or questions about the topic on index cards. Have enough cards so each participant can have one. Place the cards in a box or on a table.

2. Have participants select a card and individually reflect on its content and how it connects to them.

3. Then ask participants to mingle and share the quotation or question from their cards in pairs. Encourage participants to spend 5 minutes in each pair.

4. After participants have shared for 15 minutes, have them form triads or quads to further discuss the topic and its implications for them.

5. Bring participants back into the whole group to share questions and ideas raised by the process.

adapted from National School Reform Faculty
The Final Word

Purpose
Use the Final Word protocol to give participants an opportunity to have their ideas, understandings, and perspectives enhanced by hearing from others. With this protocol, participants can explore an article, clarify their thinking, and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding.

Process
1. Have participants read the article and underline or highlight the idea from the text they believe is the most significant. Have them also identify a second idea as well.

2. Ask participants to sit in groups of equal size.

3. The first person begins by reading the idea he or she identified as significant in the article. Have the person refer to where the idea is in the text. Then, in 3 minutes, this person describes why the idea is significant to him or her.

4. Then continue around the circle having each person respond to what the first person said in less than a minute. The purpose of the response is:
   - to expand on the idea presented
   - to provide a different perspective on the idea
   - to clarify the idea
   - to question the idea or issues raised about the idea

5. After going around the circle with each person responding, the person that began has one minute to have the final word and respond to what other participants said.

6. The next person in the circle then shares an idea from the article. Proceed around the circle in the same way as with the first person. Continue this process until each person has had a turn.

7. Have the groups end by debriefing their process and the ideas presented from the article by each group member. If time permits, ask each group to create a list of ideas to share with the whole group.

adapted from National School Reform Faculty
Think, Pair, Share

Purpose
Use Think, Pair, Share to help participants in the group to formulate their own ideas and to share these ideas with other participants.

Process
1. Post the essential questions for the workshop.

2. Have participants read the article or articles on the topic. Ask them to highlight main ideas while they read and to write down any questions they have about the topic.

3. Once they have completed the reading, ask participants to get into groups of four and number themselves from 1–4.

4. Give participants 5 minutes to THINK about the reading and to write about their ideas.

5. Announce discussion partners. Group members #1 and #2 will be partners and group members #3 and #4 will be partners.

6. Ask participants to PAIR with their partner to discuss the reading, their ideas and the essential questions.

7. Then ask group members #1 and #3 and #2 and #4 to PAIR and have a new discussion about the reading, their ideas and the essential questions.

8. Once participants have completed their second discussion, ask group members to come back together as a group of four and create a visual of their discussions to SHARE with the whole group.

adapted from Saskatoon Public Schools
Purpose

Use the 1–3–6 protocol to create a forum for participants to develop their own ideas and opinions about an article or articles and to share their ideas and opinions with a group.

Process

1. Give participants an article or articles to read.

2. Have participants write their responses to the article.

3. Then have participants move into groups of three where they share their ideas with the group. Have each group cluster their ideas together and write a list of them on chart paper.

4. Join groups of three together to make groups of six. Again, have participants share their ideas in groups of six.

5. Have the groups of six write a list of their ideas and bring them together and clarify the lists of ideas from the groups of three.

6. Ask each group of six to share their list with the whole group.

adapted from Joanne McCabe
READ

WRITE

SHARE

LIST

SHARE

LIST

REPORT OUT
Any Questions?

**Purpose**
Use the Questions protocol to examine a list of questions about a topic and to generate thinking about the questions by all participants in a workshop. This protocol can be used with any number of questions.

**Process**
Groups are pre-selected for this protocol by coding that appears on the back of the participants’ nametags. We suggest that three participants be assigned to each group.

1. Post the questions for the workshop individually around the room.

2. Ask participants to locate their group members by the coding on their nametags.

3. Hand out the list of questions for the workshop and have group members look them over.

4. Ask each group to choose a question to answer and remove it from where it is posted around the room. (10 minutes)

5. Have group members walk around the room and talk to other participants about their question to gather as much information as they can about it. (15-20 minutes)

6. Then have the original group members come back together to discuss what they learned by talking to other participants and to synthesize the information they gathered about their question. (20 minutes)

7. After discussion, ask group members to creatively construct a visual that shares the answer to their assigned question with the whole group. Have group members post their charts around the room for viewing. Ask them to attach their question to their chart. (30 minutes)

8. Then ask group members to start at their chart and travel together around the room to read the posted charts. Have participants discuss what they see on the charts and ask each group to contribute to the chart’s substance by writing a post-it note that adds to the information already presented. Ask groups to post their notes on the charts. (3 minutes per chart)

9. If time permits, have each group return to their original chart and discuss the notes left for them by other participants. Ask participants to share one thing from the notes posted on their charts.
Carousel Brainstorming

**Purpose**
Use the Carousel Brainstorming protocol to activate prior knowledge of a topic through movement and discussion.

**Process**

1. Generate a set of questions on a topic and write each question on a separate piece of chart paper. The number of questions should reflect the number of groups you intend to have during this activity. Post the question sheets around the room and number each question sheet in clockwise order. Each question sheet is a question station.

2. Divide the workshop participants into groups of 4 or less.

3. Ask each group to stand in front of a question station. Give each group a colored marker for writing their ideas at the question stations. Use a different color for each group.

4. Tell the groups that they will have 3 – 4 minutes to brainstorm and write ideas at each question station. When time is called, groups will rotate to the next station in clockwise order. Group 1 will rotate to question station 2; Group 2 will rotate to question station 3 and so on.

5. Using a timer, begin the group rotation. Continue until each group reaches their last question station.

6. Before leaving the final question station, have each group select the top 3 ideas from their station to share with the whole group.

*adapted from Lipton & Wellman*
Fishbowl

Purpose
Use the Fishbowl protocol to create dynamic group involvement and stimulate discussion.

Process
1. Based on the articles you want participants to read, choose a set of questions about the topic for participants to explore.

2. Before participants form the fishbowl, have them read 2–3 short articles or one long article about the topic.

3. Once they have finished reading the articles, ask participants to form two circles, an inner circle and an outer circle. The inner circle is the discussion group and should consist of at least 4 participants. The outer circle is the observation group and contains the rest of the participants. Just as people observe fish in a fishbowl, the outer circle observes the inner circle. The most participants you should ever have for this protocol is 20 (10 discussing and 10 observing).

4. Ask the inner circle to engage in a discussion about the article or articles they read and the questions that frame the workshop. Ask the outer circle to listen to the discussion and take notes to clarify and deepen the conversation about the topic.

5. After 10 minutes, ask the participants in the inner circle to become the outer circle and the participants in the outer circle to become the inner circle. Have the inner circle use their observation notes to continue the discussion and the outer circle observe and take notes on the inner circle discussion.

6. After 10 minutes, have the inner circle turn and discuss the questions with participants in the outer circle.

7. After 10 minutes, bring the circles together and discuss the main ideas and questions that emerged from the fishbowl.

adapted from Donald Clark
Jigsaw

Purpose
Use the Jigsaw protocol to encourage engagement in learning about a topic by giving each participant an essential role to play in the discussion of an article. This activity is best if you want participants to read a longer article.

Process
1. Divide participants into jigsaw groups of 4.

2. Divide the article into 4 segments and ask each participant to read a segment.

3. Form temporary “expert groups” and have participants from each jigsaw group join other participants who read the same segment. Have each group of experts discuss their segment and decide which ideas to take back to their jigsaw group.

4. Have the participants return to their jigsaw groups and ask participants to share the ideas from their segments of the article. Encourage the members of each jigsaw group to ask questions for clarification.

5. Ask each jigsaw group to create a list of main ideas and questions they would like to bring to the whole group and have a whole group discussion about the article.

adapted from The Jigsaw Classroom
The Wagon Wheel

Purpose
Use the Wagon Wheel protocol to stimulate powerful thinking among people who might not know each other and to create vivid images of a new idea in action.

Process
1. Based on the articles you want participants to read, choose 4 questions about the topic to explore.

2. Depending on the number of participants, place an equal amount of chairs in the center of the wheel back-to-back and the same amount of chairs on the outside of the wheel facing the chairs in the center. For example, if there are 8 participants, then you would put four chairs back-to-back in the center and four on the outside.

3. Before participants get into the wheel, have them read 2–3 short articles about the topic.

4. Have participants fill in the seats in the wheel. Ask them to take notes throughout the activity on their ideas as well as their partners’ ideas.

5. The participants on the outside of the wheel will be moving one seat to the right at each rotation; the participants on the inside of the wheel remain in their seats.

6. Explain that they will be discussing the questions with each partner for 10 minutes.

7. Have participants begin the discussion with their first partner. Have participants in the outside wheel rotate every 10 minutes.

8. Once the participants in the outside wheel return to their first partner, stop the rotation and bring participants back to the whole group. Ask them to write for 5 minutes to summarize their discussions from the wagon wheel.

9. Have a whole group discussion about the topic and the questions explored during the wagon wheel.

adapted from National School Reform Faculty
The Wagon Wheel

After: Write (Summarize). Discuss (Whole Group).
Workshop: Collaborative Group Work Using Protocols

Guiding Questions

- What makes group work collaborative?
- How can group work be used to invite, engage and involve students in their learning?
- How can a teacher/facilitator use protocols to institute group work in the classroom?

Materials

- Protocol Handbook
- Chart Paper
- Markers

Work Session 1: Collaborative Group Work
(30 minutes)

- **Write**: Ask participants to write for 5 minutes about their experience with group work.
- **Pair/Share**: Ask participants to get into pairs and answer the question, how can group work be used to invite, engage and involve students in their learning? Participants will then create a list of what makes group work an effective practice.
- **Discuss**: Have each pair share their list with the whole group and the facilitator will generate one list of what makes collaborative group work effective.

Work Session 2: Visualizing the Protocols
(50 minutes)

- If you have seven or less participants, have them work individually. If you have eight or more participants, have them work in pairs. If you have more than 16 participants, have them choose only one protocol to visualize.
- **Read**: Ask participants to read over the protocol handbook. Have participants choose 2 of the protocols to present to the group.
- **Visualize**: Ask participants to create a visual to go with each of the protocols they chose. Have them create the visuals as if they were trying to explain the protocols to someone who had no prior knowledge of them.
- **Present**: Have participants present their two protocols to the group using their visuals.

Workshop Closing: Using Protocols to Make Group Work Collaborative
(10 minutes)

- **Discuss**: Ask participants to discuss how the protocols they visualized could make group work collaborative. Facilitate group discussion about collaborative group work.
Bibliography


