Modified Ping Pong Protocol

A protocol that fosters a team discussion on an issue that all members are collectively facing.

Modified Ping Pong Protocol
(with elements of the Consultancy Protocol)

Purpose

The purpose of the Ping Pong protocol is to assist a group in having a discussion about an issue that all of its members are collectively facing. The protocol may also be used by a group to explore a topic of interest. It is important that all members of the group enter into this protocol in the spirit of self-reflection and improvement. Everyone should be prepared to change his/her practice if the protocol reveals an opportunity for improvement on his/her part. The next steps, determined at the end of the protocol, might include actions for all or just some of the members. Everyone should engage in the protocol with a willingness to take personal steps to address the issue at hand. We are collectively taking responsibility to participate in this process.

Guidelines

• Ensure confidentiality
• Watch air time and patterns of participation

Step One: Pose the problem (25 minutes)

A member or small group presents the issue to be addressed. The member or small group will then pose a question to explore together with the audience. (10-15 minutes)

The audience has an opportunity to ask one round of clarifying questions. The audience then has an opportunity to ask probing questions. (10 minutes)

Guide on Types of Questions

Clarifying Questions

These are simple questions based on facts. They clarify the information given and the answers provide more context so that better probing questions can be asked. Clarifying questions do not solicit new information but expand the understanding of the information that is on the table.

Examples of Clarifying Questions:

• How many students were assessed?

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• Were all students given the same assessment, assignment, etc.?

• How often is this data gathered?

• How current is this information?

• What criteria were used?

Probing Questions

These questions are intended to help the group think more deeply about the data, information, or student work being shared. Probing questions get the group thinking in a way that moves beyond the data or work and into the application or impact on students. Probing questions must be: relevant to the receiver, keep students at the center, and avoid directive or judgmental language.

Examples of Probing Questions:

• What's another way you could…?

• What sort of impact would there be if you…?

• What would have to change in order for…?

• Would it be possible to…?

• Is there a way to…?

• How would it work if you…?

• Do you think there needs to be…?

Step Two: Silent reflection (5 minutes)

• Everyone writes about the issue from their own point of view.

Step Three: Share reflections and chart main points (20 minutes)

• If there is a large number of participants, work in groups of eight.

• Assign a scribe to take notes.

Table Facilitator:

• Everyone in the group shares some highlights of his/her reflective writing. Make sure everyone has a turn. (15 minutes)

• Scribe notes key ideas or questions in bullets that emerge for the presenters on chart paper. (5 minutes)

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Step Four: Share out (15 minutes)

- Each group has the opportunity to share out the main points that emerged from their conversations. (2 minutes each)

- The member or group that presented can take notes on what they hear. Do new questions arise? Is there something that furthers your thinking on the issue? Is there something you had not thought about before?

Step Five: Questions from the presenter(s) (5 minutes)

- The presenting member or group asks clarifying and/or probing questions of the audience.

Step Six: Synthesize what we've heard (5 minutes)

- The presenting member or group makes sense of what's been said in front of the audience. This reflection can be used to inform the next steps.

Step Seven: Conversation on next steps (7 minutes)

- Everyone works together as a group to identify and share some ideas or next steps toward addressing the issue. Be sure to chart these ideas and next steps.

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