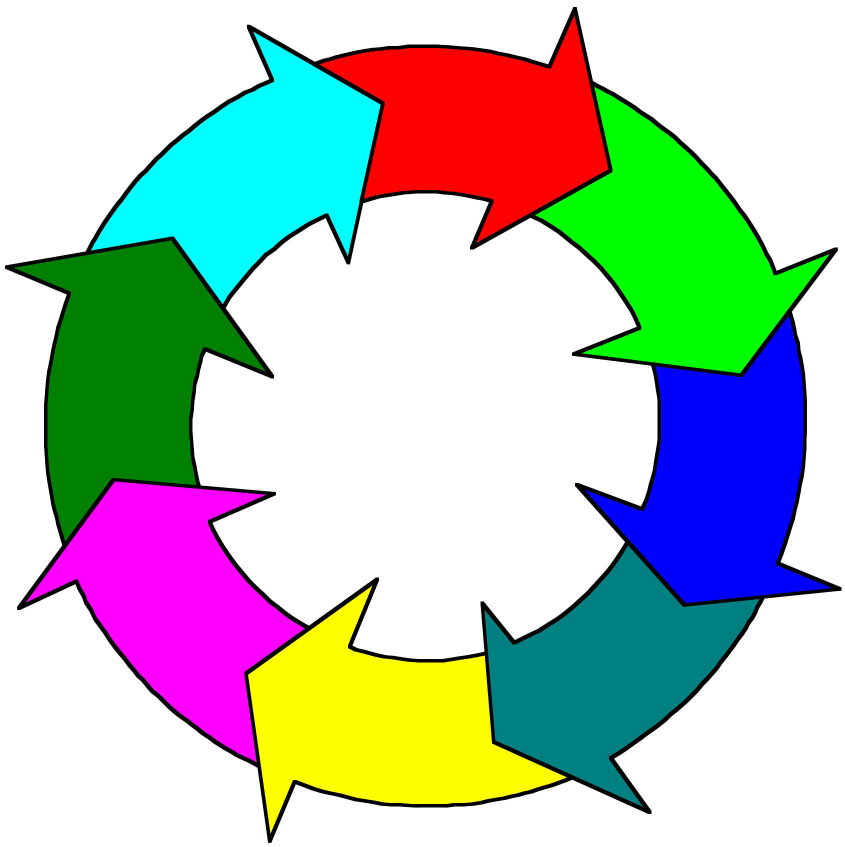
Group
Facilitation Skills:



A Toolbox for Effective Meetings

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“Pop-up” Survey Strategy 1

Purpose
This strategy helps to convert fatigue or despair into positive energy. It gives information to the group about how to work most effectively. Use it as a transition activity after lunch, between tasks, or when a group has worked very long and hard.

Materials
Flip chart, paper, pencils, masking tape, markers

Procedures
1. Chart some survey questions on a flip chart.

2. Explain that “pop-up meetings” help groups to learn from their experiences. Pop-ups are time-outs from the group’s task so members can lift their awareness to examine how effectively the group is working.

3. Seat members in groups of four to six. Instruct them that during the next 5 minutes they are to interview persons from other groups.

4. After surveying others, return to home groups. Share information and prepare to report a finding or conclusion.

5. Hear summary reports from groups. Ask how this information should influence the way the group works.

Tips
Some examples of survey questions are:
- What I like about our work is …
- What I wish we would do more of is …
- What I wish we would do less of is …
- What I’d like us to do differently is …
- We seem to be good at …

Limit the number of questions to three to five.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Numbered Heads Together Strategy 2

Purpose

This strategy helps to promote full attention, interdependence, and accountability. It can be used to check for understanding of key concepts, gather ideas and perspectives from all participants or publicly rehearse a summary of a meeting.

Materials

Paper or index cards numbered 1-5 or one die, markers

Procedures

1. Group participants in teams of four or five.
2. Number off so that each person has a number.
3. Give a topic for conversation. For example, "How would you summarize the work of today's meeting? Or "What should be the next aspect of a situation this group should address?"
4. After 4-5 minutes, call for a pause in the conversations.
5. Draw a card or roll the die. The person in each group with that number does a summary paraphrase of the conversation to that point.
6. Members from individual groups may report to the whole group if the goal includes checking for total group congruence or generating new ideas.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Getting Clear & Handling Baggage   Strategy 3

Purpose
This strategy enables group members to get clear and more focused at the start of a group session so they can freely and effectively participate in the process.

Materials
Paper bag, one slip of paper for each participant, pencils

Procedures
1. Form pairs and share, for two minutes each way, anything which might get in the way of you not being fully present in your group, including anything which happened immediately before coming to the group.

2. Write down key words which symbolize your concerns and upsets and put them into the paper bag which is being passed around.

3. Tell participants that after the session they can retrieve "their baggage"on the way out if they want to.

Variation
Do this exercise as a visualization. Take the group on a guided fantasy in which the participants take any issues, concerns or upsets to a safe place where they can store them until later.

Tip
This tool is useful for all groups and can also be used as an icebreaker to get the meeting started. Remember that we all have baggage in our suitcases. Baggage is not right or wrong, it just is. It does help to be aware of your own baggage.

Given everything you take into a group, it is not surprising that being part of one is often a challenging experience loaded with possibilities and pitfalls.

Adapted from: Hunter, D. (1995). The Zen of groups: A handbook for people meeting with a purpose. Tucson, AZ: Fisher Books.

Corners Strategy 4

Purpose
This strategy is used to assess different perspectives held by group members, identify who agrees with whom, and learn reasons for the positions.

Materials
Flip chart, masking tape, markers, signs indicating the 4 positions

Procedures
1. Show the group the statement about which they will take a position.

2. Designate corners in the room for persons to stand in to represent their position on the topic. (e.g., strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree; accept as is, modify slightly, modify greatly, start over).

3. Ask them to support their positions or report, with empathy, why they believe others are standing in a different corner.

4. Ask the group to summarize what they have learned about themselves.

5. Record information on flip chart

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Sort Cards Strategy 5

Purpose
This strategy activates and engages prior information on a topic. It honors participant knowledge, levels the playing field of information, equalizes member status, and saves meeting time by surfacing information relevant to the topics under deliberation.

Materials
3 x 5 cards, pencils, markers, flip chart paper, tape for each group, masking tape

Procedures
1. On your own, generate the following:
   - Knowledge or feelings you have about a topic the group is about to address
   - Standards or values that you believe should drive a piece of work

   Use 3 x 5 cards. Write one idea per card. Be specific so that others will know exactly what you mean.

2. In table groups, share, categorize, label categories, and make a display.

3. Discuss the work. How does this information inform you about how to proceed?

Tip
In order for each table group to gather additional ideas and have a sense of the whole group, add a museum tour.

1. Each group selects one person to stay at their display and explain items to visitors.

2. Others tour the displays and search for new ideas.

3. Members return to home base and exchange information.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Brainstorming Strategy 6

Purpose
This strategy is used to collect ideas from all participants without criticism, judgment, or questions. It separates idea generation from analysis and decision making.

Materials
Paper, pencils, big and bold colored markers, flip chart, post-it notes

Procedures
1. Name the topic, time frame, or goal (e.g., 5 minutes or until the group gets 20 ideas).

2. Remind the group that the goal in brainstorming is quantity, not quality. Encourage all ideas, even if silly or wild.

3. Remind group of brainstorming guidelines—hot ideas only, no questions or disagreements, tag-ons are fine. Opportunity for clarification and advocacy will follow.

4. Check for understanding of the topic which is the focus of the brainstorming and the process itself. Allow 1-2 minutes for each participant to silently reflect.

5. Begin brainstorming. Record all items on flip chart (write big, alternate colors). Use more than one recorder to speed up the recording process.

AFTER BRAINSTORMING
A group can get overwhelmed by the number of ideas generated in a brainstorming session. Here are several things a group can do after a brainstorm:

- Create categories.
- Sort data into predefined categories.
- Sort the items by *necessary* and *nice* or *what we can control* and *what we cannot*.
- Reflect on the list as a whole
- Discuss what to do now.

Tip
Why, how, or *what* questions lend themselves best to brainstorming. Although any form of brainstorming is useful in generating ideas, some limitations of this approach are that it may (a) produce only superficial ideas and (b) work best when the problem is simple, specific, or limited.

One good use of brainstorming is to brainstorm a list of questions a group could be asking. Many groups tend to favor one or two question categories and create unintentional blind spots in their work. Try brainstorming for the following:
- Green questions—for possibilities of imagination
- Red questions—for descriptions of facts
- Blue questions—for judgments and opinions of value and need. "What if?" "What should?" "What is the best?"

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Brainstorming - Continued

Variations

Carousel Brainstorming – is used to generate a large number of ideas, alternatives, or responses. This physically active exercise is especially good for times when participants' energy level is low.

Guidelines for carousel brainstorming

- Write a series of topics or questions related to the issue being explored on the top of separate sheets of newsprint.
- Post the newsprint on the walls, five to seven feet apart.
- Divide participants into groups (four or five members are best) and ask each group to stand at a sheet of newsprint. Explain that each group will remain together throughout the exercise.
- Have each group choose a recorder while the remaining members brainstorm ideas on the topic for two minutes. The recorder writes the generated ideas on the newsprint.
- At the end of two minutes, signal the groups to move one sheet to the right to the next sheet of newsprint. Groups read what is already written, brainstorm and record their ideas at this new sheet for two minutes. Movement continues until all groups in the room have brainstormed on all the sheets of newsprint. Each group adds to the ideas of the group before them.
- At the end of the exercise, participants do a "gallery tour" to circulate and read what other groups have generated for each piece of newsprint in the room.

Round Robins brainstorming:

- The leader or scribe asks each member, in turn, for an idea.
- Members may pass on any round.
- The session continues until all members have passed during the round.
- Ideas are recorded as in basic brainstorming.

Slip Method brainstorming:

- The leader asks members to write down their ideas on small slips of paper or index cards.
- The ideas are then collected and organized.

Adapted from: QStP Tool Kit For Quality. (1995). Columbus, OH: Ohio Office of Quality Services.

Small Group Brainstorming Strategy 7

Purpose

When a larger group is having trouble hearing the different perspectives that individuals within the group bring to an issue, conflict or tension can emerge. A tool for working with groups to address this kind of situation is "small group brainstorming" on the central or major concerns of individuals related to the larger topic being discussed. This technique does not provide solutions to the issue – rather, the technique serves the purpose of opening the dialogue to the broader concerns around an issue.

Materials

Paper and pencils for small groups, flip chart and markers to record sharing (optional)

Procedures

1. Divide (or have the group self-select) into subgroups of three people, each representing different perspectives, backgrounds, or belief systems.
2. Instruct the small groups to spend 10-15 minutes determining the three (or five) most important concerns regarding the larger issue. Clarify that each subgroup is to discuss the various concerns that each individual brings to the table.
3. Have each subgroup identify three (or 5) concerns that seem to be the most central or important to them.
4. Have each group record their concerns.
5. After the time limit is completed, have groups randomly share one of their issues of concern. Do a quick check after each idea to see if other groups had the same or similar concerns.

Note

Prepare the participants for the small group discussion by pointing out that the different perspectives might lead to different opinions on what the core concerns are or how they might be interpreted.

Think-Pair-Share Strategy 8

Purpose
This strategy is used to instantly engage participants in a topic. It provides participants with the opportunity to think about a question or issue and generate a verbal response. It also places a value on individuals'prior knowledge and beliefs, yet allows for ideas to be extended by listening to the view of others.

Materials
None

Procedures

1. Pose a question to participants.

2. Give everyone 1-2 minutes to think about their response.

3. Instruct participants to pair with 1-4 neighbors to discuss their responses. If you are looking at a relatively simple idea or concept, have them share for 2-3 minutes. For complex and/or controversial topics or tasks, have them share for 30-45 minutes.

4. Invite participants to share their responses with the large group

1-2-6 Strategy 9

Purpose
This strategy involves each member of large groups in generation and shaping of ideas for consideration of the whole group. It works well in group sizes from 25 to 150.

Materials
Paper, pencils, markers, flipchart paper, masking tape, tacks

Procedures
1. Each person writes an idea in response to a question (2 minutes). Questions that work well in this process sound like the following:
   - What one improvement focus should we have this year?
   - Which objective in our strategic plan should be our primary focus this year?
   - What is the most important problem to solve?

2. Pairs get together, share, and agree to one idea (4 minutes).

3. Sixes get together, share, and agree to one idea (8-12 minutes).

4. Post ideas for discussion and next steps. Each idea is written in eight to twelve words.

5. Facilitator assists the full group in clarifying and unduplicating the items.

6. Statements of advocacy are heard.

7. Each member selects a third of the items as most desirable.

8. Each item is polled. Who has this item on their list?

9. The group decides how to treat the top items.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

“Why” Technique Strategy 10

Purpose
This strategy is designed to help a group discover the root cause of a problem.

Materials
Flip chart, magic markers, paper, and pencils

Procedures
1. Identify the problem.
2. Analyze why the problem occurred.
3. Peel back the layers to discover the root cause of a problem by asking “why.”
4. Continue the process by asking “why” and keep asking “why” until you get to the root cause.

Note
By asking “why” you peel back the layers to discover the root cause of a problem. This may require you to ask “why” more than once – sometimes as many as five or six times. Keep probing to find why the symptom (or “effect”) is occurring. You’ll eventually come to a root cause.

Once you have identified a problem ask the question “Why did this problem occur?” (This is your first layer.) Then take the answer to that question and ask the question “why” again. Continue to do this until you have uncovered the possible root causes of the problem.

Example
Problem: Supply Orders Aren’t Filled on Time

1st layer **WHY** aren’t supply orders filled on time?
Because the supplies are not in stock.
2nd layer **WHY** aren’t the supplies in stock?
Because the supply shipment has not been received.
3rd layer **WHY** hasn’t the supply shipment been received?
Because the order was placed late.
4th layer **WHY** was the order placed late?
Because the order/request for supplies takes 3 week to get approved.
5th layer **WHY** does the order/request for supplies take 3 weeks to get approved?

Root
Cause: Because it is in transit for 12 days, going from one approval authority to another (total approvals needed = 5).

Adapted from: QStP Tool Kit For Quality. (1995). Columbus, OH: Ohio Office of Quality Services.

Cluster Strategy 11

Purpose
This strategy is designed to help participants understand relationships and interactions. Group members preview consequences for different courses of action.

Materials
Paper and pencil or flipchart paper and markers

Procedures
1. Categorize elements of an issue to be addressed, such as components, assessment, stakeholders and training.
2. List concerns or goals within each category.
3. Identify connections of items across categories.
4. Consider consequences of intervening at various starting places.

Tip
Often best done by a subgroup.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Sharing and Closing Strategies   Strategy 12

Purpose
These strategies provide a quick way to assess progress or bring closure to a meeting.

Materials
None

Procedure
Select one or more of the following options:

7-11 meetings: Perfect for hitting the highlights. Imagine you are coming out of a convenience store with your hands full and you see someone you know. You only have a brief moment to talk before you drop your belongings. What will you say?

Elevator meetings: Image you get onto an elevator with a colleague or boss. You only have from the second to the seventh floor to share with this person your point of view. What would you say are the most important points from today's session?

Balcony View: This strategy allows participants to take a step away from the project or process. Ask participants to examine their work/thinking by standing on an imaginary balcony looking down. What do they notice? From this elevated viewpoint, how would they describe the groups' work? Strengths? Weaknesses?

Toy Analogy: Provide participants with a variety of toys. Ask a key question related to the whole group's work and have them use a toy to answer the question in a metaphor. Examples may be:

- How is your watershed like your toy?
- If you were to gauge the community's reaction to streambank stabilization, which toy would you choose to describe it and why?
- The work today has been mind-boggling: share your thoughts on our work today by choosing a toy that best demonstrates how you feel about our accomplishments.

Say One Word: As an end of the day or final program celebration, gather participants into a circle. Ask each participant to summarize their work on the project/workshop in one word. Go around the circle asking each participant to share their one word. If time allows, they may explain why they chose the one word.

Adapted from: Science and Math Network. (2000). Teacher leader program facilitation strategies workshop. Columbus, OH.

Decision-Making Strategies Strategy 13

Purpose
This strategy outlines a continuum of decision-making approaches based upon the percent of agreement among participants. The group may select a strategy to always use or one specific to a given decision situation.

Materials
Handout of range of approaches.

Procedure
1. Review decision-making options as listed below. The percentage indicates the "level of agreement" among participants.

   Consensus (100%): Legitimate needs and interests of all parties are explored. All interests are fairly presented and considered. A creative, unified team solution emerges which all members agree to actively endorse and support.

   Super Majority (80%): Decision made by a large percentage of the group but the solution does not satisfy all members. All members' interests are considered and heard. Fair treatment is given to all legitimate solutions, but the small minority of those who disagree does not delay the action of the large majority.

   Majority Vote (51%): Decision made by a simple majority vote. Minimal discussion and consideration of minority viewpoints occurs. Members with minority viewpoint agree to the outcome selected by the majority.

   Compromise (40%): The total group or subgroups agree to trade-offs on key aspects so each group gets something it wants while giving up less important items. The whole group does not vote on the issue.

   Minority Decision (20%): Decision is made by a powerful individual, expert, or subgroup. The opinions or input of other members are not always sought or not always considered carefully.

   Authority (1%): Decision is made by a single person with position of authority in the organization without overt regard to others' opinions or external information.

   No Decision (0%): All members avoid making a decision. Spoken or unspoken agreement exists not to discuss the issue.

2. Select the appropriate method, through consensus, if possible or super majority, if necessary.

Tip
Encourage groups to include their preferred decision making approach as part of their meeting "ground rules."

Adapted from: National Staff Development Council. (October-November, 1997). <u>Tools for schools</u>. Oxford, OH.

Rule of One-Third Strategy 14

Purpose
This strategy helps to cull items from a proposed list for deeper consideration by polling the groups preferences among options. This technique is quick, does not require extensive discussion of items, and will provide an accurate reflection of a group's top and bottom items. Ranking of items below the top ones is unnecessary when the purpose is just to cull a list.

Materials
Paper, markers, stickers/dots

Procedures
1. Show the list of options to the group. Check to see if all members understand the options.

2. Advise the group that each person will identify a number of items most important to them. A hand tally will be made. The numbers will not determine the group's decision but will be a guide to the group to decide which items to keep for deeper consideration.

3. Calculate the number of votes each person will have by using the rule of one-third plus one. For example, from a list of 9 items, select 4 that are most important to you. From a list of 12, select 5.

4. The facilitator asks, "Who has number 1 on your list?" Members raise hand. That number is recorded on the chart.

5. The facilitator repeats this process until all items have been accounted for. The intent is to cull the list, not rank order it. This method is accurate for the top and bottom third of lists, not for items in the middle.

6. The facilitator asks members to study the recorded tallies. "Which items appear to be of greatest interest to the group?"

7. The facilitator asks the group how it wishes to act on the results. For example, the group might decide to act on all the top items, give the top items to a subcommittee for study and recommendation, and pick only the top two for pros-and-cons conversation.

Variation
1. Distribute an equal number of stickers/dots to each member.
2. Use the same process as above, but instead taking a number count, participants place stickers next to items.
3. Stickers can be spent in several ways to identify priorities.

a. Less choices prioritized	You can place as many dots as you want on a single strategy. You do not have to use all your dots.
b. More choices prioritized	Only one dot from you/strategy. You must use all of your dots.
c. Most choices prioritized	Only one dot from you/strategy. You can have as many dots as you want.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). <u>The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups</u>. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Weighted Voting Strategy 15

Purpose
This tool enables teams to quantify the various positions and preferences of team members. It differs from criteria forms in two ways. First, no decision factors or criteria are used. Second, votes by individual members are recorded; there is no effort to reach agreement on a single number.

Materials
Flip chart, magic markers, pencils and self-adhesive colored sticky dots

Procedures
1. Use a flip chart to display a grid, with the options listed horizontally and team members listed vertically. **Each person is given a number of votes to distribute according to their preferences. As a rule of thumb, the number of votes should be about 1_ times the number of options.** Members then decide how to distribute their votes among the options to indicate their preferences.

2. Encourage people to spread their votes to represent their relative feelings about the options, rather than lump all their votes on a single favorite.

3. Have members decide how they will distribute their votes (preferably on paper) before any votes are recorded on the chart.

4. Ask members to show their votes for each option all at once by raising the number of fingers that represent their vote.

4. Ask for and record votes by option, not by person. That is, call for the votes for the first option, the second, and so on. Record all votes so the team can see where the agreements and disagreements lie.

Team Members	**Option 1**	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
Totals				

Excerpted from: QStP Tool Kit For Quality. (1995). Columbus, OH: Ohio Office of Quality Services.

Weighted Voting - Continued

Tip

Weighted voting does not make decisions. It merely provides information about where individual members stand, and how strongly. This information makes it easier to bring opposing viewpoints to the surface.

This must be done if consensus is to be achieved.

Team Members	**Option 1**	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
Jim	2	1	2	1
Bob	1	0	1	4
Sandy	3	1	1	1
Michele	4	1	1	0
Mark	1	1	3	2
Jill	2	1	1	2
Totals =	13	5	9	10

NOTE

Some people prefer not to total the numbers for each option. This way, they guard against the risk that weighted voting will become just another mechanism for a win-lose outcome. This tool is not the decision maker…the team is the decision maker.

Regardless of whether you total the numbers, the most important thing is that you use weighted voting as a vehicle for moving more closely to consensus.

Nominal Group Technique — Strategy 16

See course reading “D”

Consensus — Strategy 17

See course reading “E”

Force Field Analysis — Strategy 18

See course reading “D”

Action Planning — Strategy 19

See course reading “D”

Responsibility Chart Strategy 20

Purpose
This strategy clarifies who will do what by when and produces an accountability system.

Materials
Flip chart, paper, markers

Procedures
1. List all major responsibilities on the left side of a chart. List team members' names along the top.

2. Review all team responsibilities and code "R" to mean responsible for task, "A" to indicate who must authorize decisions, "S" to indicate members providing support, and "I" for those who must stay informed.

3. Identify on the chart or a separate chart, the timeline for completion.

Tip
Because this strategy brings focus to the roles of each person, it can become cumbersome to complete. In some settings this may be done as a subgroup task with the provision that the group approves the final responsibility chart.

Adapted from: Garmston, R.J., & Wellman, B.M. (1999). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.