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Developed by: School Reform Initiative. Community of Learners; adapted to the European context by University of Tartu

Title

PEELING THE ONION Defining a Dilemma Protocol

Sources

School reform Initiative. Community of Learners
<http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/>

Purpose of the protocol

To avoid the wish to “solve” the problem before the dilemma has been defined.

Most of people are eager to solve dilemmas before understanding what their true meaning is. This exercise is designed to help peel away the layers of the problem in order to address the deeper issues that lie underneath the surface.

Materials

A dilemma concerning the teacher’s belonging to the group, professional activity, his/her problem at hand.

Time

You will need approx 40 minutes. This can be adjusted to fit the available amount of time and the number of people in the group.

Roles

Facilitator, presenter, group members

Process

1. The teacher with a dilemma/ problem - the presenter - describes it and asks a question to help focus the group’s responses. (5 min)
2. Group members ask clarifying informal questions from the presenter (3 min).
3. In turns, each participant speaks to the same prompt. During the turns the presenter remains silent and takes notes. Facilitator may choose to repeat a round if new responses are emerging.

Examples of prompts

“What I heard (the presenter) say is... “



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- “One assumption that seems to be part of the dilemma is ...,” or, “One thing I assume to be true about this problem is ...”
 - “A question this raises for me is ...”
 - “Further questions this raises for me are... “
 - “What if ...?” Or, “Have we thought about... ?” Or, “I wonder ... ?”
4. Presenter reviews her/his notes and reflects aloud on what he/she is learning. The group members are silent and take notes.

References

Exemplification

Teachers participating in PLC of Linpilcare partner schools were satisfied in clarifying their professional dilemmas by using this protocol. The protocol supported avoiding thinking on solutions at too early stage of discussion.