TEXT-BASED DISCUSSION PROTOCOL

Purpose

Text-based discussions give participants an opportunity to extract different meanings and ideas from a text and to discuss important issues related to the text. This protocol can be used to explore assessment practice through QPA publications or other texts to develop assessment literacy and build a common language for performance assessment.

Preparation

- Time length: 30-50 minutes depending on length of text and whether reading in advance. Facilitator determines length of protocol based on length of text and time allowed.
- Text is selected and distributed in advance.
- Facilitator provides a guiding question to focus reading that connects to assessment, teaching and/or learning. Example Guiding Question: What are the implications of this text for our school’s assessment work?

Ground Rules

1. Listen actively.
2. Build on what others say.
3. Don’t step on others’ talk. Silences and pauses are OK.
4. Let conversation flow as much as possible without raising hands or using a speaker’s list.
5. Make the assumptions underlying your comments explicit to others.
7. Watch your own airtime – both in terms of how often you speak, and in terms of how much you say when you speak.
8. Refer to the text; challenge others to go to the text.

Procedure

1. Select the text:
Choose an article or book excerpt that will have implications for assessment, teaching, and learning.

2. Read/review the text (varies based on length of text and whether participants have read in advance)
The text should be distributed before the meeting. Five minutes of discussion time should be provided to review text even if read in advance. While reviewing participants should take notes and underline or highlight important ideas, and record questions the text raises for them.

3. Begin the discourse (5 minutes)
Each member of the discussion will take turns reading aloud a sentence or two that has particular significance to them, and share why they responded to that particular excerpt.

4. Focus on the guiding question: (15 minutes)
Facilitator focuses discussion on the guiding question and how the reading informs the question.

5. Closing (5 minutes)
The facilitator closes the discussion about the text highlighting two or three main points of the discussion and thanking participants for their perspective. The result is that all participants leave the discussion with a deeper understanding of the text.