

30-Minute Virtual Consultancy

Adapted by CLEE from the School Reform Initiative

Purpose: to help presenters think more expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma

Steps	Facilitator Tips
Prior to the Consultancy	Facilitator should pre-conference with the presenter. - Presenter should prepare supporting documents if needed. - Ensure that the focus question focuses on what the presenter can do to influence the dilemma; it should have the word “I” in it, e.g. What can I further do to... or How can I ...
1. Presentation of Dilemma (5 min) The presenter gives an overview of the dilemma with which they are struggling and frames a focus question for the group to consider.	- Participants should take notes on what they hear. - Facilitator/presenter should insert the focus question and supporting documents into the agenda.
2. Clarifying Questions (3 min) Participants have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions in order to get information that they feel would help them to understand the context for the work.	- Clarifying questions are matters of fact. - Establish a call order for asking clarifying questions. Person A: Person B: Person C: - The facilitator should limit the questions to those that are clarifying, judging which questions more properly belong in the probing question section.
3. Probing Questions (8 min) - The facilitator gives the group 1 silent minute to generate Probing Questions. - The group asks probing questions that enable the presenter to and expand their thinking to gain more clarity around their	Optional Provide a table in the agenda with a row for each participant to type their probing questions. Probing Questions

dilemma. Probing questions are not suggestions in disguise. • The presenter briefly responds to the group's questions as each question is asked. If a question is so probing that the presenter needs more time to think on it, they can let the group know they find the question very probing and will need more time to think about it. There is no discussion by the Consultancy group of the presenter's responses. Participants listen to the presenter's answers and can jot down notes. • At the end of the eight minutes, the facilitator asks the presenter to re-state the focus question for the group.	<table><tr><td>Person A:</td></tr><tr><td>Person B:</td></tr><tr><td>Person C:</td></tr></table>	Person A:	Person B:	Person C:
Person A:				
Person B:				
Person C:				
4. Group Discussion (8 min) • Participants talk with one another about the dilemma presented in order to define the dilemma more thoroughly and objectively. They can also make suggestions about what next steps the presenter might take. • During this time, the presenter is silent and takes notes on what they hear. • Participants should refer to the presenter only in the third person.	Facilitator guides the group discussion by using the questions in order below (these questions mirror the ladder of inference): • What did we hear? What didn't we hear that they think might be relevant? • What assumptions seem to be operating? • What questions does the dilemma raise for us? • What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma? What have we done in similar situations? Establish a call order to ensure equity of voice. Person A: Person B: Person C: Once everyone has had a turn to speak, discussion can continue popcorn style if time allows.			
5. Reflection by Presenter (5 min) Presenter reflects on what was said that was helpful, and how they are thinking differently after listening to the group.	• Participants are silent. • Focus presenter on sharing what they will do next (not further explaining their dilemma or justifying actions they have already taken)			

6. Debrief the protocol (5 min) Facilitator-led discussion of the consultancy process. How did this process expand your thinking and help you move beyond the culture of nice?	Focus on process, not content of consultancy.
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