Fishbone Generation Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the problem before jumping to solutions.

Click here for a [model](#) to unpack prior to engaging in the protocol.

Norms:
- **Avoid Solutionitis**… the goal is to understand the issue, not solve it (yet)
- **"Yes and"**… the goal is to generate lots of ideas, and not fixate on one
- **Embrace "definitely incomplete; possibly incorrect"**… you can (and should) revisit and revise
- **Share the air**… step up, step back, invite others in

1. **Generating our Problem Statement** (5-7 minutes)
   - *Individual*: What is the problem we need to solve? Express the problem in one sentence.
   - *Share around*: Share problem statements.
   - Choose one or create a new one (without getting hung up on the perfect wording). Write your group's problem statement at the "head" of your fishbone diagram.

2. **Initial Brainstorm of Causes** (5 min.)
   Based on your work digging into the problem (i.e. empathy interviews, expert convenings, relevant data, research, etc.) and your own ideas/experiences, *individually brainstorm* as many causes as you can that might contribute to the problem/issue. Write each cause on a different post-it.

EQUITY PAUSE

Take a moment to consider the power of "we" instead of "they". **As you brainstorm causes, ask yourself "How might <u>we</u> be contributing to the problem?"** *and keep asking "why?" to drill down to the roots. Thinking in "we" helps move us from blaming others or engaging in deficit thinking, and encourages us to identify forces within our control. For example, if students have trouble working effectively in groups, it could be because some students disengage and others take over. It could also be because <u>we</u> have not created an environment where all students feel their contributions are valued, or provided students with enough opportunities or scaffolds to work together well.*

3. **Share & Categorize** (15-20 min)
   - *Share around:* Each person shares one cause contributing to the problem. If others have a similar cause, you can start to group those post-its together on your poster.
   - *Continue to share* your initial brainstorm, building on each other's ideas and adding new causes that may contribute to the problem.
   - **Cluster on your Poster:** Group related causes together, and give each category a title. (The stuff on the post-its are the details/bones on the fishbone).

4. **Post & Reflect** (5 min)
   Post your poster to the wall. Does your diagram capture the root causes you think are important? Anything missing? Then *each person* gets to vote with *one heart* and *one star*:
   - *High Leverage*: Put a **heart** by the factor, that if addressed, you think would have a significant impact on the problem.
   - *Practical*: Put a **star** by the factor that your team could address with little effort.

5. **Debrief** (5 min)**:** How did we do upholding the norms? How might we adjust this protocol in the future? What perspectives might we be missing?