

Guiding Principles Discussion Guidelines

Defining your guiding principles of practice as an adult educator can be hard to do. We know in our hearts what is important and we often tacitly know what to do when we are engaged in our practice. However, it is helpful to make explicit what we know to be true and what we know about ourselves as practitioners.

The purpose of this activity is to work with others to identify patterns and themes for creating your Guiding Principles statement. In order to understand your own tacit strengths, capacities, and sources of engagement, the activity is structured to allow you the opportunity to reflect on and discuss with others the people, communities, and experiences that have inspired and engaged you.

Phase One:

Spend 5-10 minutes noting your responses to the questions below. You do not have to write down full answers, just enough so that you can talk about your responses to others.

Phase Two:

In groups of two or three, discuss your responses.

Speaker: Each person will spend 15 minutes sharing their responses.

Interviewer: Your role is to prompt the speaker to share their responses in such a way that you can understand the *kinds of values and criteria* that are embedded in their decision-making and responses. You should listen for thoughts and insights that occur to you as you are listening to the speaker's responses. Write down any themes or values that came to mind. For instance, "love of community," passion about learning," "integrity in tough situations" and so on. When the speaker finishes, share the themes you identified and examples of how they are relevant to speaker's actions and decision-making.

Observer: listen to the interaction and take notes as described in the interviewer role and give feedback.

Guiding Principles Questions

Questions	Responses
When have you felt deeply engaged or purposeful? Describe at least 2 experiences of deep engagement? Experience 1: • What was the context? What were you doing and why was it engaging? • Describe an “aha” moment or an experience of challenge. • What was the result? Experience 2: • What was the context? What were you doing and why was it engaging? • Describe an “aha” moment or an experience of challenge. • What was the result?	
Who are the people, groups, and/or organizations you admire and why? How have they influenced how you think, relate and/or act?	
Describe an experience when someone motivated and/or inspired you. Who were they and how did they inspire/motivate you? What did you think or do differently as a result?	
If you had a magic wand and could influence or change the world in any way, what would you do? What specific changes would you create?	

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