

Inquiring Introductions Protocol Instructions

(This protocol was originally developed by Anne Jones and is used with permission.)

Purpose

This protocol allows participants to practice skills of inquiry, listening, and responding to evidence. As a side benefit, it also gives members of a team an opportunity to get to know one another.

Notes

- This protocol takes about 30 minutes to complete; feel free to adapt suggested times as needed.
- If necessary, break group into subgroups of three to five people each (four is ideal).

Steps

1. **5 MINUTES.** Tell participants that, in effective collaborative work, team members frequently inquire about the practices, experiences, and beliefs of their colleagues so that they can develop deep and shared understandings of where everyone is coming from. Explain that this protocol will help them develop skills of inquiry, listening, and responding to evidence that they will need in their ongoing collaborative work.

Explain that this protocol involves one round for each person in the group. Ask for a volunteer from each group to get things started. This person will be the “introducer” in the first round. Also ask for a time keeper.

Provide the instructions of the protocol:

- **The introducer states *only* his or her name, subject taught, and grade level taught.** For example: “My name is Anne Jones. I teach earth science in the eighth grade.”
- **The other people in the group may only respond with questions, and questions must be related to evidence given in the introducer’s most immediate statement.** So, in response to the example above, a colleague may ask, “How did you get interested in earth science?” or “What is it like teaching eighth graders?” but not “Where are you from?” or “I used to teach science.” This rule is designed to help participants stay with evidence they heard rather than going off on a tangent or connecting the introducer’s sharing to something about themselves.
- **Colleagues cannot ask a second question until all colleagues have asked their first question.** This rule is designed to help participants share airtime and listen.
- **When the time keeper announces that five minutes are up, begin the next round with a new**



introducer. Continue with the protocol until everyone in the group has had a chance to be the introducer.

2. **20 MINUTES.** Tell subgroups to self-facilitate the protocol. This exercise takes about 20 minutes to complete with four people in one group; feel free to adapt suggested times for different group sizes. Keep an eye on the clock and remind groups to switch introducers, if necessary.

3. **5 MINUTES.** Ask participants what they noticed during the protocol. This step of debriefing the activity helps people to capture and share their learning about inquiry and listening.

Tip

- This protocol can easily be modified to help teams explore a variety of topics by changing the introducer's opening statement. For example, if a team needs get a sense of their collective experience in using data, the instruction to the introducer could be to give his or her name and an example of a situation in which collaborative discussion of data helped improve learning and teaching in his or her classroom.

