Reading Guide, III

If you previously participated in Parts I and II of this series, *Facilitating Active Discussion in Applications* on February 19 and April 23, 2021, the new information for Part III (November 18, 2021) begins on page 9, under the Summary subtitle. **If you did not participate in Part I or II of this series**, please review the entire guide prior to the November 18th event. Thank you!

Facilitation Objectives

- Deepen critical thinking
- Facilitate lively discussion to surface the learning points of the application
- Use prompts to keep the discussion moving between teams/participants
- Maintain neutrality throughout discussion and avoid indicating whether participant statements are correct/incorrect in words and body language

Behavioral Indicators of Engagement

You may have noticed that we call our students participants, because that is what we want them to do: participate and be fully engaged in active learning. As an instructor you need to be able to assess if participants are engaged or not and decide if their level of engagement is adequate.

Engagement is a Pennsylvania Child Welfare Competency: "The child welfare initiates, interacts, and maintains professional relationships with children, youth, families, colleagues, and other team members to ensure participation in shaping decisions about needs, goals, supports, and services."

The behavioral indicators of engagement in practice are effective communication skills, respect, using strengths-based solution-focused approaches in working with team members, involving families in the process, and recognizing and respecting the needs and perspectives of team members, by engaging responsively to their diverse cultural values and experiences.

When we apply the definition of engagement to training it might be, "The participant initiates, interacts, and maintains professional relationships with their peers and instructor

to ensure participation in team and classroom discussions and decisions about classroom activities including the Readiness Assurance Process (the RAP), application activities, simulation planning, evaluations, and debriefs."

So, how do we recognize engagement? How do we navigate the ebbs and flows of engagement in the classroom when so much is distracting our participants? True engagement is much more than being in the room or online. Take a moment to think about what you observe when engagement is high. What is missing when engagement feels low? Engagement is an active, observable state, and as the instructor, you use your facilitation skills to direct participants towards active participation in their learning.

Here are some behavioral indicators to consider when assessing engagement in the classroom:

- <u>Paying attention</u> – Are people alert and focused? Are they tracking with their eyes? Are they making eye contact with other participants? What about with you?
- <u>Taking notes</u> – Are participants taking notes to record ideas or what to report out on?
- <u>Active Listening</u> – Are participants listening to the current speaker or are they having side conversations? Are participants doing other work or are they distracted by something else around them, on their computer, or on their phone?
- <u>Responding to questions</u> – Are participants responsive to instructor, team, and between team, questions and ideas?
- <u>Following requests</u> – Are participants following provided instructions?
- <u>Reacting</u> – Are participants reacting affectively by laughing, smiling, frowning, or offering support as others share information, ideas and feedback?
- <u>Noise</u> – Is the classroom noisy? An engaged classroom should sometimes be noisy as ideas are shared and responded to; lively debate between teams is not quiet!
- <u>Body language</u> – Are participants facing whoever is speaking? (Hint: if it is always you, monitor and adjust your facilitation and body language.) Are participants interacting with each other? Are they gesturing and moving along with their conversations?

- <u>Online engagement</u> – Are they looking at the screen and reacting to what their peers are saying and doing? Or are they focusing on another screen or task? Are participants clearly distracted when you ask questions?
- <u>Active Team Discussions in TBL Applications</u> - Are participants actively debating the reasons for their responses, with minimal input from the instructor? In TBL™ the instructor initiates discussion and then moves out of the center of the conversation, occasionally using thought-deepening prompts to encourage critical thinking and keep the discussion between participants going.

The Facilitator's Use of Prompts

One way to encourage participants to make their own learning discoveries is by using prompting questions. Prompts help participants organize their ideas and make connections to content and best practice. You might ask, "Why is this question important?" or "How did you come to consensus on your preferred answer?" You are asking participants to think critically and to share their thought processes with colleagues.

One of your goals when deciding when formulating questions is to move responsibility for the discussion from you to all participants. Facilitating Active Discussions in Applications and future Lunch and Learn sessions will touch on this theme of moving you out of the center of the conversation. It is like a game of 'keep the balloon in the air' in which you throw the balloon in the air and then moving out the way, so that the balloon remains in play between the participants and is not returned to you each time. The goal is for participants keep the balloon in the air and moving around within and between their teams, with only occasional strategic taps from you.

Behavioral Indicators of Active Debate in TBL™: Reaching the Tipping Point

1. The debate over response selection and rationales takes on a life of its own and the back-and-forth flows without your input, except for occasional questions and prompts.
2. A working model for this is when more than two consecutive statements (including questions) come from participants, without instructor input.

Tools for Getting There: Discussion Movers

- o Addressing ALL teams and participants
- o Moving to 'you' language and getting 'I' and 'me' language out of prompts
- o Using open-ended questions which deepen thought and discussion

Stages of Application Facilitation

Opening
- Initial prompt(s)

Deepening/Clarifying
- Sparing use of thought-deepening prompts to help participants discover learning points without giving hints of the preferred or acceptable responses
- Ensures points made are clear, paraphrasing when necessary, to facilitate understanding
- Ensures rationale for the circumstances in which acceptable applies are surfaced

Summary
- Summarizes the arguments made for and against response options to clarifiy learning points

Confirmation
- Instructor confirms the **preferred** response (and **acceptable** where applicable)

Closing
- Bottom line
- Single sentence statements of the learning pont(s)

*Opening Prompts

This training session focusses on opening prompts. Please review the following list of TBL™ prompts for starting application activity discussion, and then compete the following activities:

1. Select 1-3 prompts from the list that will be immediately useful to you without adaptation or that you use now.
2. Select 1-3 questions that you can adapt and note your adapted version

Be prepared to further discuss prompts during the training session.

Diagnostic Prompts—Probe motives or causes

- How did you reach your decision with this question?
- What brings you to say that?
- What led you to that conclusion?
- What other responses did your team seriously consider?

Exploratory Prompts—Eliciting teams' thinking

- Why is this question important?
- What do you think about _____?
- What bothers/concerns/confuses you the most about _____?
- How did you decide _____ was not your preferred answer?
- What are some ways we might respond to _____?

Deepening and Clarifying

Analytical Questions—Seek to apply concepts or principles to new or different situations

- What are the main arguments for (or against) _____?
- What are the assumptions underlying _____?
- What questions arise for you as you think about _____?
- What is a different perspective on this?

- What perspectives are missing from this discussion?

- How would you summarize this dialogue so far?

- What implications does _____ have? (for _____?)

- How does this idea challenge or support what we've been talking about?

- How does this idea/contribution add to what has already been said?

- How is this situation an example of parallel process?

- How will this response _____ work in practice?

Challenge Questions—Examine assumptions, conclusions, and interpretations

- What can we infer/conclude from _____?

- What is your understanding of _____?

- What does _____ remind you of?

- What principle do you see operating here?

- What policy do you see operating here?

- What are the cultural implications of this situation? For the family? For the agency?

- What does this help you explain?

- How does this relate to other experiences or things you already knew?

Relational Questions—Ask for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues

- What patterns do you identify?

- How do you account for _____?

- What was significant about _____?

- What connections do you see?

- What does _____ suggest to you?

- How might_____ affect family engagement?

- What is the first thing you think about in relation to _____?

- What is the connection between what you've just said and what _____ was saying earlier?

- State one example from your practice experience that relates to _____?

Cause and Effect Questions—Ask for causal relationships between ideas, actions, or events

- How do you think _____ relates or causes _____?
- What are some consequences of _____?
- Where does _____ lead?
- What are some pros and cons of _____?
- What is likely to be the effect of _____?

Extension Questions—Expand the discussion

- What do others think?
- How might this situation be emotionally challenging for you/your supervisee/etc.?
- What did you find noteworthy about this comment?
- What additional sources of information do you want and where will you find it?
- What is a specific example of _____?
- How would you put that another way?
- What are some questions you have about _____?

Hypothetical Questions—Pose a change in the facts or issues

- What if _____ were from a different _____, how would that change things?
- Would it make a difference if we were in a _____ society/culture?
- How might this dialogue be different if _____?
- What might happen if we were to _____?
- How might your life be different if _____?

Evaluative Questions

- What have we missed?
- What do you want to know about _____?
- What changes would make this response even better? (Gallery Walk)

Summary:

Process Questions—Elicit satisfaction/buy-in/interest levels

- Let me recap my understanding of what we've talked about so far…(paraphrase). What have I missed?
- Ok, this is what you've discussed so far…(paraphrase). Corrections? Additions?

Priority Questions—Seek to identify the most important issue

- From all that we've talked about, what is the most important...?
- Considering the different ideas in the room, what do you believe is the most critical issue?
- What do you find yourself resonating with the most?
- If you had to pick just one topic to continue exploring, what would it be?

Summary Questions—Elicit syntheses, what themes or lessons have emerged?

- What is the significance of this question for child welfare practice?
- Why are we asking you to consider this question / situation / scenario?
- What remains unresolved for you?

Action Questions—Call for a conclusion or action

- How can we **use** this information?
- What **examples** from your own practice can you **apply** this learning to?
- What is one thing you **plan** to take from this activity and **apply** to your work?
- Based on our discussion, how will you **change** your practice with children and families?

*Adapted from: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/inclusive-classrooms/useful-questions-for-dialogue-facilitation/

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