

Framing Equity-based Consultancy Dilemmas and Questions

In order to prepare for your home group experience, please think about a dilemma you are facing related to your practice. We define a dilemma as a problem that keeps you up at night, one which troubles your thinking on a regular basis. We are assuming that all reflective educators have a store of dilemmas that would benefit from the collaborative focus of a diverse group of colleagues. As participants committed to equitable outcomes for each student, we're assuming that you are willing to reach into your store of dilemmas to peel back the layers of a dilemma that deals with equity concerns in your practice.

To select an equity-based dilemma, we urge you to consider the conversations you need to have but find yourself avoiding...the sensitive conversations about students and families who you haven't been able to reach, the voices who are not being heard etc.

Once you've selected a dilemma that you know makes your palms sweat, write no more than a one-page description of it, ending with a specific question that will help your Consultancy group focus its feedback. (You will present your dilemma based on your writing.) Consultancies give presenters an opportunity to think differently in a group while receiving respectful, thoughtful, experience-based feedback about their question. All Consultancy dilemmas and conversations will be kept in strict confidence.

Some prompts to help you think about your dilemma:

1. In thinking about your equity related dilemma...

- How is it an equity-based issue?
- Is it an issue or problem that is not already on its way to being resolved?
- Is it an issue or problem that does not depend on getting other people to change (in other words, you can affect the problem by changing your practice)?
- Is it something that is important to you, something that your thoughts return to regularly and is it something you are actually willing to work on?

2. Do some reflective writing about your dilemma. Some questions that might help are:

- Why is this dilemma important for you?
- What do you assume to be true about this dilemma, and how have these assumptions influenced your thinking about the dilemma?
- If you could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would you/we see?
- What have you done already to try and remedy, manage or avoid this dilemma?
- What have been the results of those attempts?
- Who do you hope changes? Who do you hope will take action to resolve this dilemma? If your answer is not you, you need to change your focus. You need to present a dilemma that is about your practice, actions, beliefs and assumptions and not someone else's.

- What's risky about this dilemma for you and what supports do you need to tackle it?
- What is your focus question? A focus question summarizes your dilemma and helps focus the feedback (see the next step).

3. Frame a focus question: Put your dilemma into question format.

- Try to pose a question around the dilemma that seems to you to get to the heart of its connection to equitable outcomes for each student.
- Remember that the question you pose will guide the Consultancy group in their discussion of the dilemma.

4. Critique your focus question.

- Is this question important to my practice as an educator committed to equitable outcomes for each student?
- Is this question important to equitable student/adult learning outcomes?
- Am I willing to take action based on the feedback I get?

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