

Learning

Meetings to plan, organize or inform are important times for colleagues in schools, Chapters, and districts. We all know that no matter the topic, it is important to equitably engage the participants in the process of a meeting, and that finding the right activities is essential to successful facilitation.

Over the last year, as face-to-face gatherings have been restricted, there have been many innovative companies that have created online activities to help engage participants as we all grow weary from the increased screen time. Some of these activities require registration and or payment, while some are at no cost. Some of the online activities require specific technological specifications or platforms, and finding the one that fits your context can be time consuming. Other activities can be readily accessible and fun to use.

No matter the activity you choose, it is important to remember that effective meetings require building trust and collaboration, as well as being focused and productive. In thinking about a meeting, here are five things to remember:

- Have a clear and transparent purpose for meeting, with shared goals
- Establish a culture of trust through protocols, physical features, or online connections
- Support equitable conversation providing opportunity for all to be heard, and to listen to others
- Create comfortable accountability to participation both at the meeting and after the meeting
- Be open to both provide and receive feedback

Creating opportunities for conversation in meetings is a tried-and-true method of engaging purposeful participation. It is often those small group or breakout conversations that are most valuable, memorable, and enjoyable within busy agendas. Many strategies that have been used in face-to-face meetings over the years are simple to convert for online usage should that continue to be necessary in the year ahead.

On the following pages, you will find two strategies from the Professional Learning and Development team that you could use in various settings:

Four Corner Cards

First Word Last Word



Stay tuned for more Tips & Tools strategies in future issues of Princip(ed).

Tips

AND

Tools



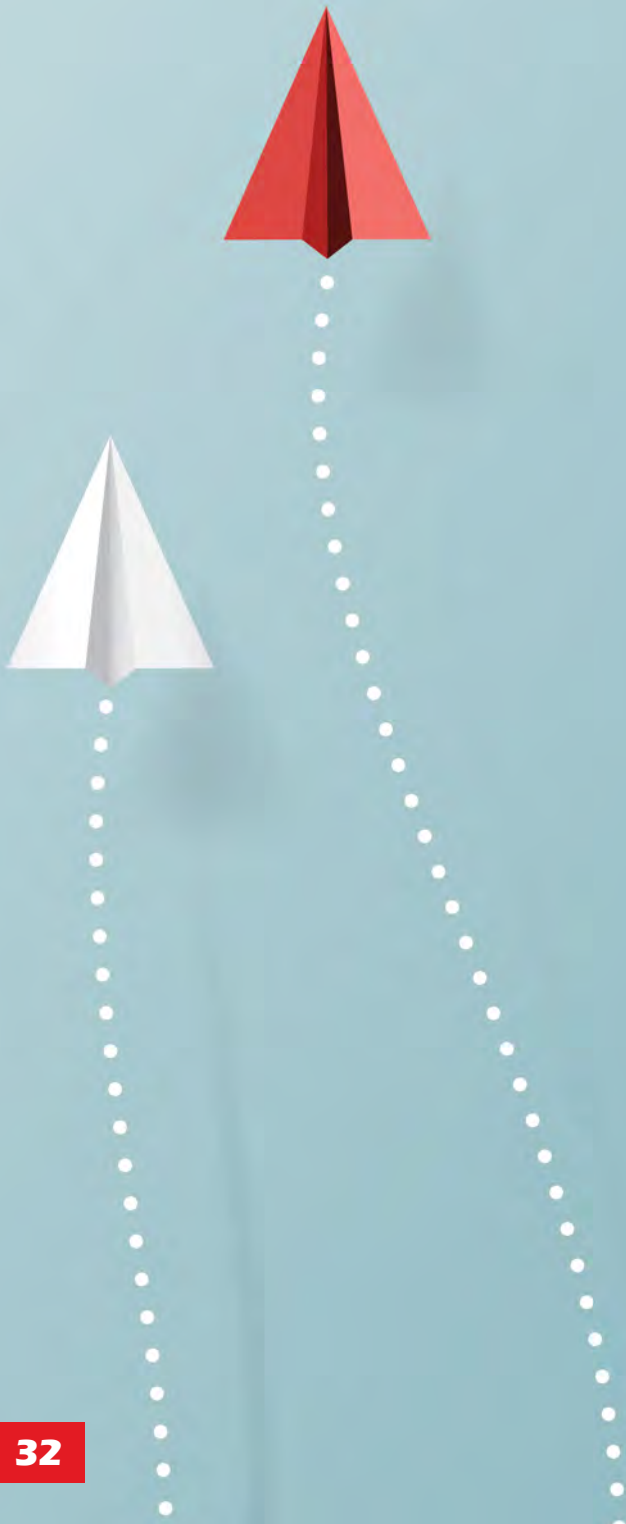
Facilitation Activities for Effective Gatherings of Educators



by
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Four Corner Cards

Source: Gayle Gregory and Lin Kuzmich
Teacher Teams That Get Results



Four Corner Cards could be used as a conversation starter for staff or Chapter meetings to discuss an idea or issue. It allows people to begin with their knowledge and questions, and allows them to share these in an environment that moves from one-on-one, to small group, to large group.

Audience: Staff Meeting, Chapter Meeting, Workshop

Time Needed: 10 to 20 minutes

Materials:

- index cards (one per person)
- felt pens
- chart paper
- masking tape
- pens

Activity Directions:

1. Decide on a topic and create four discussion questions on the topic.
2. Give participants a card with four sections and four prompts.
3. Each person responds to the prompts in each corner of the card.
4. When all are finished, each participant can find one or two other participants and discuss their responses to the questions.
5. Bring the group back as a whole to the larger group and debrief each of the questions from the smaller groups and record on chart paper.

Example: Related to assessment practices, the card may look like this:

What assessment strategies have you used this week?	Why are assessments important to you for your planning?
How would you explain authentic assessment?	What more would you like to know about assessment?

First Word/Last Word is an adaptation of a traditional acrostic. The strategy surfaces and/or organizes important concepts, principles and understanding about a topic area (e.g. servant leadership, feedback, collaboration, culture, change).

Audience: Staff Meeting, Chapter Meeting, Workshop

Time Needed: 20 to 25 minutes

Materials:

- an article for each participant
- chart paper
- chart stand
- felt pens
- highlighters

Activity Directions:

1. Each participant will be given a short article to read individually on a topic (e.g. feedback, collaboration). Participants will mark up either key words, phrases, or sentences in the article.
2. After reading the article, participants will be placed in groups of two or three.
3. The group will generate full thoughts (phrases or sentences) that begin with each letter in the designated word. The word focuses on the exploration of the topic under consideration.
4. After 8 -12 minutes, each group reports on their ideas, or you may go around the room and create one Topic Sample for the whole group.

Example:

- D** Doesn't require agreement
- I** Inquiry sparks sharing
- A** Attending to the spoken word is key
- L** Listening to others' ideas is important
- O** Openness to alternative perspectives is encouraged
- G** Goes to unexpected places
- U** Understanding emerges through the process
- E** Engages intellect and emotions

First Word Last Word

Source: Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman
Groups at Work

