

GUIDE



STRUCTURING AND OPERATING A BOOK STUDY

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EDUCATION

Structuring and Operating a Book Study

Region 5 Comprehensive Center

The Region 5 Comprehensive Center (R5CC) is one of 20 technical assistance centers supported under the U.S. Department of Education’s Comprehensive Centers program from 2019 to 2024. The R5CC serves the needs of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia by building capacity to improve policies and programs to improve student performance.

Prepared by the Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Learning’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Team, with assistance from the Region 5 Comprehensive Center.

May 2022

The contents of this resource were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education by Region 5 Comprehensive Center at Westat under Award #S283B190030. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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Keller, B., Brookes, S.J., and Wills, K. (2022). *Structuring and operating a book study*. Rockville, MD: Region 5 Comprehensive Center at Westat.

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Acknowledgments

We would like to thank multiple reviewers for their time and comments, in particular, Damien Sweeney, Florence Chang, Heather Bushelman, and Nicole Fields at Kentucky Department of Education.



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Much of the information in this document is from: “PLC Book Study Guide,” from the Florida Department of Education (<https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>); “Professional Book Study,” from the UFT Teacher Center (<https://www.uft.org/files/attachments/professional-book-study.pdf>); and “Professional Book Study,” from Duval County (FL) Public Schools (https://dcps.duvalschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=17098&dataid=15227&FileName=professional_book_study.pdf).

Introduction

This document guides you through the process of setting up and running a book study about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belongingness, so we can better create an inclusive and equitable environment where everyone feels they belong. Books on these topics provide tools and context to navigate race, age, physical ability, religion, and sexual orientation. In this context, the topics relate to the workplace and education. The books that you and your colleagues read should teach respect, compassion, and dignity for others.

Many books are available in multiple formats, including traditional hard- or paperback books, e-books (e.g., Kindle), and audiobooks. If you are interested in the audio version of a book, you might check it out from your local library's digital audiobook service, through such services as Hoopla, OverDrive, or Libby. While there are many subscription services for audiobooks, [Chirp](#) sells audiobooks without a subscription.

1. Considerations When Designing a Book Study

These are questions you should consider addressing when designing your book study. Please note that throughout this document, we refer to the resources that groups are using as a “book”; however, your group might, in consultation with the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Team, choose to consume a different type of media. We refer to a “book” in this document for simplicity.

1.1 How big will the group be?

The answer to this question depends on your circumstances, but generally if you have more than 12 people, it might be difficult to include everyone in discussions. Groups of about eight people tend to be the optimal size.

1.2 How will people join?

It's best to have people volunteer to be part of your book study. You will want to advertise the book study to gain interest, and it may be helpful to recruit an influencer who can attract or persuade others to join. In the end, you might have to recruit participants into the study by identifying people, speaking with their supervisors, and approaching them one by one.

1.3 How often will you meet, and for how long?

You can decide this ahead of time or let the group decide. Time commitments may depend on your circumstances, but 1–2 hours is optimal for each meeting. Holding regular meetings is preferred, so people will know the expectations. However, the frequency may depend on how much time people need to read the book and other demands they may have on their time. Some groups find that meeting every other week is a good interval, while others may need more time between sessions.



1.4 Do you want to choose the book for the group or let them choose it?

The preference is that your group will choose a book together. If the leader chooses the book, the book study might be able to move more quickly into the reading/discussion part of the group, but members may get frustrated with a perceived lack of process for choosing the book or if they don't like the book.

By letting the group choose, you're more likely to get buy-in from the group on the entire book study. It will cost you some time, but that may be well worth it in the end. Be careful though, as people whose preferred book was not chosen may feel underappreciated, and if left unchecked, that could develop into a rift between group members.

If you let your group choose a book, we recommend that you first nominate a few options so participants are not overwhelmed. This guide does not provide a list of books to consider, but you can search for recent books on topics like civil rights, disabilities, achievement gaps, American history, criminal justice, LGBTQ+ topics, racial identity, specific racial/ethnic groups, school integration, and memoirs from those involved in civil rights. In addition, there are numerous lists generated by media and academic organizations from which you can draw ideas.

If you let the group choose the book, see Section 2.8 for timing and other details.

1.5 Who reads which part(s) of the book?

Ideally, everyone would read the entire book. This will lead to fuller discussions and greater shared understandings of the lessons in the book. However, given people's other responsibilities, it's not always possible. If you feel that it would help you successfully complete the book study, you could ask for volunteers to read different sections (or make assignments if you don't have enough volunteers).

There is more discussion about different potential roles for members of the group below, in Section 1.6. In addition, there is discussion about the pace of reading (i.e., how much people need to read and by when) in Section 2.9.

1.6 Who has what roles within the book study?

Book studies conducted in other settings have asked participants to take on different roles. You do not need to use all of these roles, nor do you necessarily need to formally assign roles to all members of the group. Previous experience suggests that ensuring when most, if not all, of these tasks are completed, the greater the likelihood that your book study will be successful.

Read through the following list of roles and determine

- » which roles you want to have in your group;



- » how you will select people for the roles (probably a mix of volunteering and assignments is best—if you can ensure the burdens are shared equally);
- » whether roles rotate through the group during the course of the study (preferred) or if group members will keep the same role for the entire study; and
- » how often you will rotate roles (e.g., every meeting or after several meetings) if you're using this process.

Potential roles and descriptions of their duties are included on the next page in Exhibit 1.

1.7 Is your book study going to be in person, online, or a mix of both?

We can't take anything for granted anymore, including whether your book study will meet in person. If you want or need to hold some or all of your sessions virtually, we recommend that you use Microsoft Teams for meetings, because that is the preferred system for Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), ensuring that participants have it installed and increasing the likelihood that they are familiar with it. However, you may need to spend some time ensuring everyone has a shared understanding of how to use the different tools you may need. Having said that, if the group prefers a different system, use what people want.

This document is written to assume that you will be meeting in person. But most of it will still work if you are virtual. However, in a virtual setting you may need to get creative with some of the facilitation tools. For example, instead of having a physical board to write on, you may need to move to a Jamboard, available at <https://jamboard.google.com/>. For a quick tutorial of Jamboard, you can view this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1nVeBHEAaI>. In addition, you may encourage people to break out into smaller groups, in a “different” meeting, to have smaller group discussions, and then return to the main meeting to report out.

As you likely know, communicating in virtual meetings is different than in-person meetings. So, in a virtual meeting, be prepared for things like long pauses, the appearance that people are not paying attention, and people who may not want to turn their camera on. One way to address each of those challenges is to make it clear to everyone that you may need to call on people, and that they should be willing and able to contribute when called upon. This should help ensure that people are engaged and can help spread the discussions around to all members.



Exhibit 1: Potential Roles and Responsibilities

Facilitator/moderator

- » Will this be you every meeting, the first meeting, or according to some other system?
- » This person shapes/guides the discussion and helps with the discussion's logistics (if necessary).
- » This person also focuses the group on the task at hand.
- » This person often develops the meeting agenda, prepares questions beforehand, and may bring a discussion outline with important facts and insights.
- » This person is generally neutral in the discussion but can share their own thoughts if the discussion lags.
- » This person also keeps an eye on the group's norms and goals and holds people to them.

Recorder/Notetaker

- » This person takes down ideas, discussions, and any assignments.
- » Some resources recommend that a single document (a group journal) contains all the notes for all of the meetings and is available to anyone to review at any time. But that's not necessary if you don't want to do it that way. **In Section 3, we discuss bringing this possibility up with the group in the first meeting.**
- » **A template for note-taking can be found on the next page of this document in Exhibit 2.** Please keep in mind that this is a template and can be modified to meet your needs.

Reflector

- » This person examines the processes the group employs as well as adherence to norms.
- » They can also identify strengths and weaknesses in processes and norms that may need to be revised.
- » They can also communicate at the end how well the agenda was followed.

Timekeeper

- » This person ensures that the meeting starts and ends on time.
- » They ensure that the agenda is followed during the meeting.



Exhibit 2: Note-Taking for Group Discussions

Question or comment posed to the group	Who posted the question or comment?	What section of the text is this comment addressing (i.e., page number)?	Key discussion points and new lessons	Applications for KDE

Source: Page 9 of the document "Professional Book Study" from the UFT Teacher Center, which can be found here: <https://www.uft.org/files/attachments/professional-book-study.pdf>.

2. Structuring the First Meeting of the Book Study

The first meeting of the book study will be unlike the others because there are a number of administrative tasks that need to be undertaken in the first meeting. This meeting will likely not focus on the book very much at all. Instead, you will lead the group in a discussion about the book study.

2.1 Introductions

Do not assume that everyone in the group knows each other. The first meeting should provide time for everyone to go around and introduce themselves. You can start, to set the tone. Try to limit everyone's introduction to 15–20 seconds.

2.2 Goals

You should also lead the group in setting goals for the book study. Potential goals include

- » learning more about the book topic and discussing ways in which its lessons could be applied in your work;
- » everyone will read the entire book (or their portion of the book, if you're splitting it up);
- » discussing if there is some product to emerge from this work (for the KDE Book Study, the goal is to give a 15-minute presentation to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Team at KDE about the book); and
- » determining how you will know if the group was successful (if you want to).

2.3 Timeline

Describe the timeline to the group (or if you wish, allow them to help the group members develop the timeline). The timeline should include

- » how frequently you're going to meet;
- » how long each meeting will last; and
- » when (on the calendar) you want to conclude the book study meetings.

2.4 Norms

This meeting should also collectively set norms for discussion and group activity. Norms can outline how you'll deal with disagreements, direct conversations and behavior, set limits on team members, and provide support to group members. **Exhibit 3 provides one potential way to discuss setting norms.**



Exhibit 3: Tool for Setting Norms

Pass this entire exhibit out to the group. This first page can be completed individually by each member of the book study group. When everyone is finished, you can discuss your answers and use that discussion to set the group norms. The next two pages can be completed by one person in the group as the group makes decisions about norms, and then the group can sign the final page of this exhibit.

Answer the questions below to jump-start your thinking about useful team norms that will strengthen collaboration and productivity.

List five behaviors you value in others during team meetings.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List five behaviors that are counterproductive during team meetings.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Source: Pages 6–7 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.



Exhibit 3: Tool for Setting Norms—continued

These next two pages can be completed by one person as the group discussion unfolds. Then, the group members can all sign their names on the last page of this exhibit.

Now that you've considered the positive and negative behaviors that impact collaboration and productivity, you can begin to create your team norms by working through the categories below. Your group may choose to select some of the norms suggested and/or create their own in the space provided.

What procedures will govern meeting attendance?

- Each team member will commit to participate actively for the entire length of the book study.
- All members will arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting.
- All members will refrain from scheduling other activities during meeting time.
- We will start and end on time.

Others:

What procedures will govern how we talk together?

- All members will join in the team's discussion.
- Each member will listen attentively as others speak.
- Our conversations will reflect our respect for and acceptance of one another.
- We will disagree with ideas, not individuals.
- We will keep our conversations confidential.

Others:

Source: Pages 6–7 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.



Exhibit 3: Tool for Setting Norms—continued

What attitudes and behaviors do you expect from team members?

- All team members will come prepared.
- Team members will be “fully present,” both mentally and physically.
- Members will refrain from working on other things during the meeting.
- Team members will maintain a positive attitude toward the work to be done.

Others:

What rules will govern decisionmaking?

- We will reach decisions by consensus.
- Conflicts and differences of opinion will be handled professionally and respectfully.

Others:

What other expectations do we have for team members?

- We will rotate some/all group roles.
- Meeting time will be phone- and device-free.

Others:

Source: Pages 6–7 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.



Exhibit 3: Tool for Setting Norms—continued

By signing below, we agree to hold each other accountable for adhering to these group norms.

Name

Date

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Source: Pages 6–7 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.

2.5 Special considerations

There may be instances when something has happened, such as a traumatic news event, which may weigh on participants if not addressed. By acknowledging the news, it provides an opportunity for participants to share and feel supported, and offers a cathartic moment. The goal of the facilitator is to show compassion. A beginning prompt may be something like, “Before we begin the book discussion, I want to share I have been processing the event/news that recently has occurred, and it’s been weighing heavily on my mind. I want to offer an opportunity for you to share your thoughts.” Provide a few minutes for participants to share their feelings and provide a reminder it is OK for participants to step away if needed. Another option is to lead the group in a deep breathing exercise or a mindfulness moment. More information about those can be found here (respectively): <https://connect.mayoclinic.org/blog/living-with-mild-cognitive-impairment-mci/newsfeed-post/stress-relief-is-only-a-few-breaths-away/> and <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/health/wellness/g32267191/mindfulness-activities/>.

2.6 Developing norms with larger groups (or groups meeting online)

If the book study group size is large, developing meeting norms may be more challenging. One way to develop meeting norms is through a live voting process. By utilizing a free tool such as Google Forms, participants can review typical meeting norms in group discussions and vote on the norms they prioritize as the most important.

For example, in Exhibit 4 (on the next two pages), a group of 25+ participants voted on their top three meeting norms.

2.7 Dealing with overpowering voices

In some groups, there might be one or more members whose contributions crowd out input from others. This could be because of the frequency or the manner of their input. While you want to ensure that people have the opportunity to contribute, and you don’t want to stifle discussion, you also need to ensure that there is space for all voices to be heard. If one or more members is dominating a session, you could ask them, in front of others, to give others a chance to speak. This could be accomplished by saying something like, “Let’s let others contribute, then I’ll come back to you.” If that is ineffective, you could speak with the group member outside of the regular meeting to determine ways that they can still contribute, but not close off opportunities for others to do so.

If helpful, you can remember the line from Hamilton, “Talk less; smile more.” That could be a guiding principle for some members.

2.8 Group journal

Some book study groups find it helpful to keep a group journal with notes as the book study progresses. You may want to let the group decide if they would like to keep a group journal. If the



group keeps a journal, it should be accessible to everyone throughout the process. This could be a Google Doc that is accessible to all.

2.9 Choosing the book

If you are letting the group choose the book, go over the list of options in the meeting and give group members a few days to vote by email. The top choice would need to be distributed prior to the second meeting, with enough time for them to read the first assigned portion.

Please see Section 1.4 for a discussion about the pros and cons of choosing the book yourself or through the group.

Exhibit 4: Example of Online Norm Setting

The image shows a screenshot of a web-based form titled "Book Study Meeting Norms". At the top left, there is a red eye icon and the text "* Required". At the top right, there is a cloud icon. The main content area is titled "Vote for your Top 3 Meeting Norms *". Below this title is a list of 14 norms, each preceded by an unchecked checkbox. At the bottom left of the form is a purple "Submit" button, and at the bottom right is a purple "Clear form" button.

Book Study Meeting Norms

* Required

Vote for your Top 3 Meeting Norms *

- Each team member will commit to participate actively for the entire length of the book study.
- All members will arrive on time and stay for the entire meeting.
- All members will refrain from scheduling other activities during meeting time.
- We will start and end on time.
- All members will join in the team's discussion.
- Each member will listen attentively as others speak.
- Our conversations will reflect our respect for and acceptance for one another.
- We will disagree with ideas, not individuals.
- All team members will come prepared.
- Team members will be "fully present," both mentally and physically.
- Members will refrain from working on other things during the meeting.
- Team members will maintain a positive attitude.

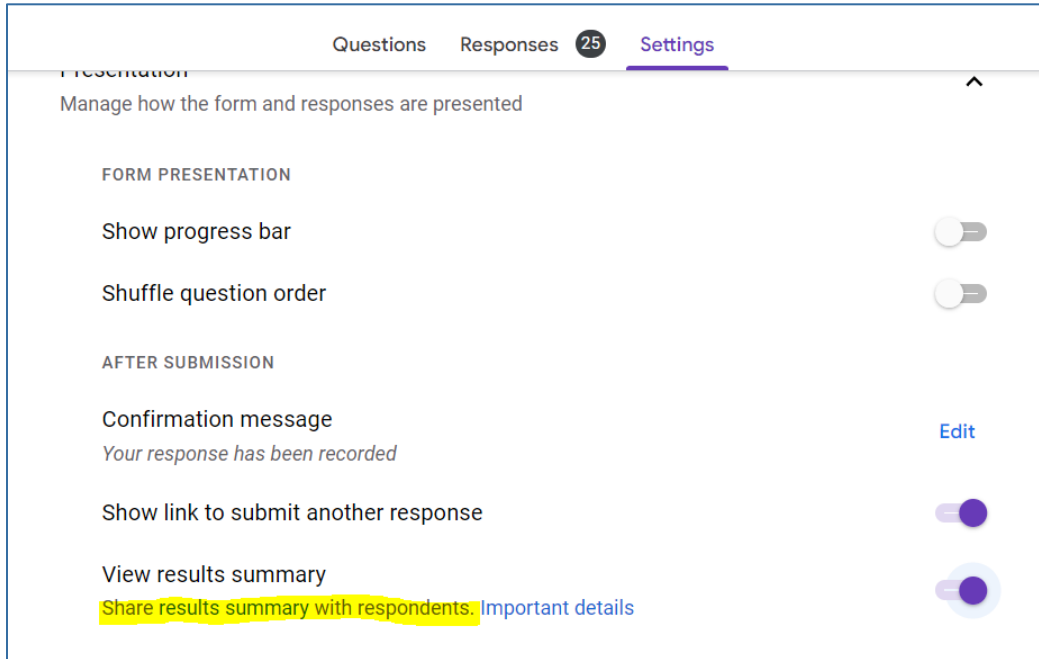
Submit Clear form

Source: Third party application.



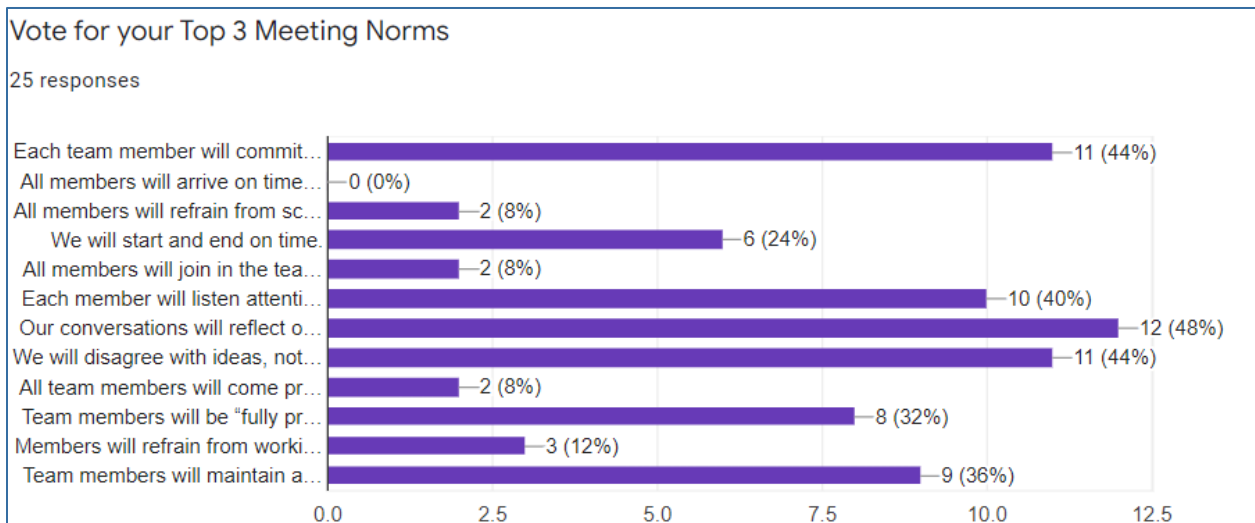
Exhibit 4: Example of Online Norm Setting—continued

For participants to be able to see the results of the poll, simply change the settings to allow for responses to be shown. See the screenshot below.



Source: Third party application.

Then, results can easily be collected, and the facilitator can review the norms with the most number of votes from the participants (sample results below). In the case below, the top meeting norms are: 1) Our conversations will reflect our respect for and acceptance of one another; 2) Each team member will commit to participate actively for the entire length of the book study; 3) We will disagree with ideas, not individuals; 4) Each member will listen attentively as others speak; and 5) Team members will maintain a positive attitude.



Source: Third party application.



2.10 Reading assignments

Determine how much group members should read for the next meeting. You could make this decision, or you could allow the group to provide input to make a group decision on how much to read between group meetings. In addition, work with the group members to map out a rough plan for when you're going to read different sections of the book. Start with your end date and work backward to see how much of the book you need to read by each expected meeting. You don't need to necessarily hold to this schedule (if doing so creates other problems), but it will give you a good idea if you're on schedule to meet your deadline.

2.11 Notes while reading

Determine what, if anything, you want people to record while reading, and use as a guide after they're done reading each section. **Exhibit 5 on the next two pages provides some examples.**



Exhibit 5: Examples of Note-Taking Forms

Reflection Guide

Name: _____

Book title: _____

What I learned	Chapter # (and page, if applicable)	How I can use it	Result of using this lesson	Modification to the lesson after use?

Source: Pages 8-9 of the document "PLC Book Study Guide" from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.

Exhibit 5: Examples of Note-Taking Forms—continued

Book Discussion Guide

Date: _____

Chapter (number and title): _____

Prior to the discussion:

What new idea(s) did you discover in your reading?

What questions would you like to ask the group about the reading?

1. _____

2. _____

During the discussion:

What are the key points being made by group members during the discussion?

What new lessons did you take away from this discussion, which could be applied in your office?

After the discussion:

What new knowledge or skill(s) will you “practice” as a result of the reading/discussion?

Source: Pages 8-9 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which can be found here: <https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.



3. Structuring Subsequent Meetings

The facilitator/moderator should start each meeting by revisiting the norms, goals, and timeline.

Once that is complete, the discussion about the assigned book section can take place.

Exhibit 6, starting on the next page, lists 11 different protocols you could use to guide the book study discussion. You can use them as designed or modify them to suit your needs or style. Ideally, you will use several of these, just to keep the meetings fresh. Remember that the facilitator/moderator will likely need to perform some preparation work prior to the meeting, to ensure that the discussion is not hampered by logistical issues. Please take that into account when deciding who is leading which discussion and what protocol they plan to use.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions

The first six protocols are from pages 4–5 of the document “PLC Book Study Guide” from the Florida Department of Education, which is available here:

<https://fl01803656.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/FL01803656/Centricity/Domain/13712/PLC-Book-Study-Guidelines.pdf>.

Top 10 List

Setup: Appoint one group member to be the *notetaker* at the board (this could be a virtual “board” such as a Google Doc or Padlet if the book study is conducted virtually) and appoint one group member to be the *coordinator* to keep members on track. Other group members are present with their notes.

Procedure:

1. Group members take turns sharing interesting facts, opinions, or points they learned from the assigned reading.
2. The notetaker records as concisely as possible.
3. The coordinator allows discussion to occur and prevents discussion from going too far off topic.
4. When everyone is done sharing, the group evaluates their group’s work and directs the notetaker to consolidate or eliminate notes.
5. Then the list is ranked from the least important concept (10) to the most important concept (1) taken from the chapter.
6. A cleaned-up version of the notes is made available to all group members.

Round Robin

Setup: The entire group sits in a circle, and one person serves as *notetaker* and another as *coordinator* to keep members on track. Other group members are present with their reading notes.

Procedure:

1. One group member begins the discussion with a statement starting with “I learned,” “I realized,” or “I now know” and shares something from the assigned reading that appealed to them. Avoid evaluative statements like “I think,” “I feel,” and “I believe.”
2. When group member 1 is finished, attention turns to their left. This member can either add on to group member 1’s statement or begin a new statement of what they learned/realized/now know.
3. Discussion continues in this fashion until every member has spoken at least twice.
4. Group norms can determine if someone can “pass” their turn until later.
5. When the discussion is concluded, the notetaker records a summary of the meeting.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

Silent Webbing

Setup: Large pieces of chart paper or butcher paper and a variety of colored markers (thin-tipped).

Procedure:

1. The coordinator leads a discussion on what the group perceives as the two or three main ideas from the assigned reading.
2. Those main ideas become the center of each piece of chart paper or are spaced out in the center of the butcher paper.
3. Each group member takes one marker and silently adds thoughts, comments, and reflections on each main idea. Group members can add on to the main idea “web” or add reflections on other members’ ideas. This “silent discussion” continues as long as needed.
4. When the writing stops, the coordinator brings the group together for a discussion on concluding or prevailing thoughts and discoveries.
5. A notetaker records conclusions.

Q & A

Setup: Index cards and writing utensils.

Procedure:

1. Each group member writes one open-ended question on the front of one index card about the assigned reading. The questions should be higher order questions that are not evaluative.
2. Each group member will talk to every other group member, asking their questions to each other. Group members will reflect on the answers to each question and write interesting and unique responses on the back of the index card.
3. When every question has been asked and answered, the group will come together as a whole. A coordinator will lead a whole-group discussion on concluding or prevailing thoughts.
4. A notetaker records conclusions.

Expense Account

Setup: Each person in the group gets three tokens (pennies are easy to use).

Procedure:

1. The coordinator explains the activity and begins with an open-ended question about the assigned reading.
2. Each time someone speaks, the speaker puts a token in the center of the table.
3. If a group member does not have any tokens left, they cannot speak. When everyone is out of tokens, group members can receive their tokens and start the process over (with the same or new questions).
4. A notetaker records conclusions.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

Affinity Map

Set up: Chart paper, Post-it notes for everyone, and writing instruments.

Procedure:

1. The coordinator begins by asking an open-ended analytic question that asks for defining elements of something, or that has many answers and thereby provides many points of entry for deepening a conversation.
2. Participants write one idea in response per Post-it note. Instruct group members to work silently and on their own.
3. Then, in silence, put all Post-it notes on the chart paper.
4. Organizing: Reminding participants to remain silent, have them organize ideas by “natural” categories. Directions might sound like this: “Which ideas go together? As long as you do not talk, feel free to move any Post-it note to any place. You may move your Post-it notes and those of others. Do not be offended if someone moves your Post-it note to a place you think it does not belong—just move it to where you think it does belong, but do it in silence.”
5. Once groups have settled on an organization method, ask group members to discuss the categories and come up with a name for each one.
6. Debrief and have an open discussion using open-ended questions such as: “What do you notice?” “Were there any surprises?” and “What is missing?”



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

The next four protocols are from pages 10–15 of the document “Professional Book Study” from the UFT Teacher Center, which can be found here: <https://www.uft.org/files/attachments/professional-book-study.pdf>.

Text Rendering Experience

(Developed in the field by educators)

Purpose

To collaboratively construct meaning, clarify, and expand our thinking about a text or document.

Roles

A facilitator to guide the process.

A scribe to track the phrases and words that are shared.

Introduction

Take a few moments to review the document and mark the sentence, the phrase, and the word(s) that you think are particularly important for our work.

Process

1. First Round

Each person shares a *sentence* from the document they think/feel is particularly significant.

2. Second Round

Each person shares a *phrase* that they think is particularly significant. The scribe records each phrase.

3. Third Round

Each person shares the *word* that they think/feel is particularly significant. The scribe records each word.

4. Discuss

The group discusses what they heard and what it says about the document.

- » What new insights have you gained about the text by looking at it in this way?
- » What do you think this text is essentially about?

5. Debrief

The group debriefs the text rendering process.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

The Final Word

(adapted by Jennifer Fischer-Mueller and Gene Thompson-Grove)

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to give each group member an opportunity to have their ideas, understandings, and perspective enhanced by hearing from others. With this protocol, the group can explore an article, clarify their thinking, and have their assumptions and beliefs questioned in order to gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

Time

For each round, allow about 8 minutes (circles of five participants: presenter, 3 minutes; response, 1 minute each for four people; and final word for presenter, 1 minute). Total time is about 40 minutes for a group of five (32 minutes for a group of four; 48 minutes for a group of six).

Roles

Facilitator/timekeeper (who also participates); participants.

Facilitation

- » Have participants identify one most significant idea from the text (noted ahead of time);
- » Stick to the time limits;
- » Avoid dialogue; and
- » Have equal-sized circles so all small groups finish at approximately the same time.

Process

1. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper.
2. Each person needs to have one most significant idea from the text underlined or highlighted. It is often helpful to identify a backup as well.
3. The first person begins by reading what struck them most from the reading. Have this person refer to where the quote is in the text—one thought or quote only. Then, in less than 3 minutes, this person describes why that quote struck them. For example, why do they agree/disagree with the quote? What questions do they have about that quote? What issues does it raise for them? What do they now wonder about in relation to that quote?
4. Continuing around the circle, each person briefly responds to that quote and what the presenter said, in less than a minute. The purpose of the response is:
 - › To expand on the presenter’s thinking about the quote and the issues raised for them by the quote;
 - › To provide a different look at the quote;
 - › To clarify the presenter’s thinking about the quote; and



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

- › To question the presenter’s assumptions about the quote and the issues raised (although at this time, there is no response from the presenter).
- 5. After going around the circle with each person having responded for less than 1 minute, the person that began has the “final word.” In no more than 1 minute, the presenter responds to what has been said. Now what are they thinking? What is their reaction to what they have heard?
- 6. The next person in the circle then begins by sharing what struck them most from the text. Proceed around the circle, responding to this next presenter’s quote in the same way as the first presenter’s quote. This process continues until each person has had a round with their quote.
- 7. End by debriefing the process in your small group.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

Wagon Wheels

(developed by educators in the field and revised by Connie Parrish and Susan Taylor, 2012)

Purpose

To deepen understanding of a text and to explore implications for participants' work.

Setup

- » Four chairs back-to-back at the hub of the wheel and four chairs on the outer circle facing the chairs at the hub.
- » Since this process is done knee-to-knee format without tables, it's helpful for participants to bring reflection journals to lean against. They also bring their texts, something to write with, and perhaps some sticky notes for jotting down ideas.
- » Each Wagon Wheel should include six or eight people, ideally. If you have an uneven number, you can hook together two participants on the wheel hub, which then becomes a discussion triad, rather than a pair. See examples below.



Procedural Notes

- » The people on the outside of the wheel will be moving one seat to the left (or right) at each rotation; the people seated at the hub remain in their seats.
- » Explain that group members will be working on one guiding question or piece of text with each partner for 5 minutes (i.e., they will work with four different partners during the activity) trying to amplify their understanding of the text and any implications from the text for their work.
- » At the end of each rotation, each participant sitting on the outside of the wheel will rotate one seat to the left. After they settle down, give them the next question/quotation/topic and ask them to once again amplify their understanding.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

Debrief

Some ideas for structuring discussions

- » You might offer guiding questions for rounds (e.g., what was confirmed or confusing about the text? What might you consider using from the text?).
- » You might identify salient quotations or direct participants to particular places in the text (one quote or location per round). At the beginning of a round, you would direct participants to a page number and quote, read it aloud, and then post it as a reminder. Participants turn to that place in the text, read the quote, think about it, and then discuss it.
- » It's important to provide a moment or two at the beginning of each round during which participants can go back into the text. This deepens the talk.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

Three Levels of Text Protocol

(adapted by the Southern Maine Partnership from Camilla Greene’s Rule of 3 Protocol, November 2003)

Purpose

This protocol is designed to deepen the understanding of a text and explore implications for participants’ work. It asks participants to respond to three levels of the text: literal (level 1), interpretation (level 2), and implications (level 3).

Facilitation

Stick to the time limits. Each round takes up to 5 minutes per person in a group. Emphasize the need to watch airtime during the brief group response segment. Do one to three rounds. This can be used as a prelude to a text-based discussion or by itself.

Roles

Facilitator/timekeeper (who also participates) and participants.

Process

1. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper.
2. If participants have not done so ahead of time, have them read the text and identify passages that they feel may have important implications for their work.
3. Do one to three rounds. A round consists of:
 - › One person, using up to 3 minutes to:
 - Level 1: Read aloud the passage they have selected;
 - Level 2: Say what they think about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.); and
 - Level 3: Say what they see as the implications for their work.
 - › The group responding (for a **total** of up to 2 minutes) to what has been said.
4. After all rounds have been completed, debrief the process.



Exhibit 6: Protocols for Leading Book Study Discussions—continued

This last example is from page 4 of the document “Professional Book Study” by Duval County (FL) Public Schools, which can be found here:

https://dcps.duvalschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=17098&dataid=15227&FileName=professional_book_study.pdf

This example is specifically about a book on poverty but could be adapted for any book on any topic.

