

Introduction

Like any new skill or behavior that has to be learned, these seven norms require practice and conscious attention. Individuals using them for the first time may find the exercise awkward until the seven norms become more automatic behaviors

Source: <https://www.state.gov/m/a/os/43984.htm>

Pausing

Pausing actually slows down the "to and fro" of discussion. There are fewer 'frames per second' to deal with. It provides for the precious "wait time" which has been shown in classrooms to dramatically improve student critical thinking. Pausing and the acceptance of moments of silence creates a relaxed and yet purposeful atmosphere. Silence, however initially uncomfortable, can be an excellent indicator of productive collaboration. Pausing also signals to others that their ideas and comments are worth thinking about. It dignifies their contribution and implicitly encourages future participation. Pausing enhances discussion and greatly increases the quality of decision making..

Paraphrasing

To paraphrase is to re-cast or translate into one's own words, to summarize or to provide an example of what has just been said. The paraphrase maintains the intention and the accurate meaning of what has just been said while using different words and phrases. The paraphrase helps members of a team hear and understand each other as they evaluate data and formulate decisions. Paraphrasing is also extremely effective when reducing group tension and individual anger. "The paraphrase is possibly the most powerful of all non-judgmental verbal responses because it communicates that 'I am attempting to understand you' and that says 'I value you' (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p. 49)..

Probing

Probing seeks to clarify something which is not yet fully understood. More information may be required or a term may need to be more fully defined. Clarifying questions can be either specific or open-ended, depending upon the circumstances. Gentle probes increase the clarity and precision of a group's thinking and contribute to trust building because they communicate to group members that their ideas are worthy of exploration and consideration

Putting forward ideas

It takes a degree of self-confidence and courage to put forward an idea and it is vital that collaborative groups nurture such self-confidence and courage. Ideas are the heart of a meaningful discussion. Groups must be comfortable to process information by analyzing, comparing, predicting, applying or drawing causal relationships

Paying attention to self and others

Collaborative work is facilitated when each team member is explicitly conscious of self and others - not only aware of what he or she is saying, but also how it is said and how others are responding to it. "- Understanding how we create different perceptions allows us to accept others' points of view as simply different, not necessarily wrong. We come to understand that we should be curious about other people's impressions and understandings - not judgmental. The more we understand about how someone else processes information, the better we can communicate with them (Costa & Garmston, 1994, p. 59)."

Presuming positive presuppositions

Of all the seven norms of collaboration, this one may be the most fundamental, for without it, the rest are meaningless. Simply put, this is the assumption that other members of the team are acting from positive and constructive intentions (however much we may disagree with their ideas). Presuming positive presuppositions is not a passive state but needs to become a regular manifestation of one's verbal responses. The assumption of positive intentions permits the creation of such sophisticated concepts as a "loyal opposition" and it allows one member of a group to play "the devil's advocate." It builds trust, promotes healthy cognitive disagreement and reduces the likelihood of misunderstanding and affective/emotional conflict..

Pursuing a balance between advocacy and inquiry

Both inquiry and advocacy are necessary components of collaborative work. Highly effective teams are aware of this and self-consciously attempt to balance them. Inquiry provides for greater understanding. Advocacy leads to decision making. One of the common mistakes that collaborative teams may make is to bring premature closure to problem identification (inquiry for understanding) and rush into problem resolution (advocacy for a specific remedy or solution). Maintaining a balance between advocating for a position and inquiring about the positions held by others further inculcates the ethos of a genuine learning community..

