

Predictions

Description: Participants predict demographic information or student achievement results and compare predictions against actual results. The alignments and/or gaps help facilitate important discussions.

Benefits: Motivation, new skills

Directions:

1. Remove key data from an existing table or chart to prepare a worksheet. Create a space to write the prediction and the actual answer next to each other.
2. Present basic information about the data to introduce the topic.
3. During the presentation or meeting, invite participants to record a prediction. Then, provide the actual results. After giving the actual rates, ask the participants to circle either their most or least accurate prediction. Then ask them further responded by answering on the sheet: Why do you think this is your most or least accurate? What does this make you wonder about this group's experience?
4. Use a discussion technique like Circle of Voices to share and process their observations.

Uses:

Review of key performance indicators to investigate any inequities in disaggregated data.

Review of student satisfaction surveys to identify topics for focus groups or areas for goal setting.

Practical Steps to Start a Broad-Based Discussion of Opportunity Gaps

AIR Webinar Handout

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Frames

Description: Individuals or teams complete a template of sentence stems that allow them to express ideas in a clear and organized framework.

Benefits: Motivation, new voices and skills, reduces cognitive load for deeper analysis

Directions:

1. Choose an institutional report or topic that you would like a specific group to examine.
2. Write a brief essay that addresses your goal for the group analysis, then copy the essay and delete information from the copy so that you have a skeleton of the essay. The template could be very brief, such as this example:

In the student satisfaction survey results, I observed that _____. I **believe this to be true** because _____ (make an analysis statement from your own knowledge of your institution). This is (choose: similar or different) in part-time students. I wonder if this is because _____ (share a thought from your own experience).

3. Make copies of the frame along with directions to use as a handout for participants, retaining your original.
4. Distribute the “Frames” handout to each participant, explain directions, and answer any process questions.
5. Participants write the essay using the frame as a guide.
6. Participants share out by only reading the completed frame essay. Do not make or allow additional comments at this point. Also, resist the urge as the facilitator to comment after the individual responses.
7. Hold a discussion with the group about observations, connections between ideas, and what other questions the analysis generates.

Uses:

Help new faculty and/or trustees understand the demographics of the student body.

Assist program coordinators with analysis of program review data, such as FTE trends, completions, retention, course success, and demographics.

This is also useful as a follow up activity to the data predictions exercise (reference above).

Source: Barkley, E. F. (2010). Student engagement techniques: a handbook for college faculty. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons. pps. 191-194. (Directions above are a paraphrase and/or direct quote.)

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Circle of Voices

Description: Small group participants hold a structured discussion that ensures that each person participates and minimizes opportunities for one voice to dominate.

Benefits: New voices, democratic process, provides common experience of a constructive public discourse

Directions:

1. Start by posing a question, issue, or conducting a thought-provoking exercise.
2. Give everyone two minutes to think quietly about his or her responses or reactions. Keep this time silent. Allow for jotting down notes.
3. When the two minutes are up, ask people to form groups of five.
4. Each person in the group takes a turn to present his or her initial response. They are asked to keep their response to a minute (or this can take too much time and create a loss of momentum in your session).
5. Once the initial round of individual's response is over, the group moves into the second round of conversation that is open and relatively unstructured. There is no order that needs to be followed. However, in this second round, a ground rule comes into play about the contributions people can make. "People are allowed to talk only about what another person said in the first round. This can include asking questions about someone's initial contribution, commenting on something that resonated, disagreeing with a comment, or indicating how a first-round contribution opened up a new line of thinking" (p. 10). Ten minutes is often sufficient time.
6. The exercise ends with people reporting (1) any new perspectives or resolutions they heard, and (2) any new questions that were raised.

Uses:

This small-group discussion exercise pairs nicely with most any activity to take understanding to the next level. The advantages include the following: (1) Ensures that each person participates; (2) Stops a few participants from domineering; (3) Provides time for a focus to emerge, not be forced.

Source: Brookfield, S., & Preskill, S. (2016). The discussion book: fifty great ways to get people talking. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons. pps. 9-12. (Directions and uses above are a paraphrase and/or direct quote.)

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