POPS

A Framework for Facilitating Conversations Oriented Towards Change

Procure Information

The goal is *understanding and validation:* get people talking about the topic at hand in order to better understand what they know about it, how they feel about it, and what questions might be coming up. No one is working to convince anyone of anything right now; all thoughts and feelings are welcomed.

Offer Ideas

The goal is *recommending and brainstorming:* with a deeper understanding of what people know, now is the time to offer ideas on the topic, including why it might sound exciting, why some people might have an aversion to it, and how the topic can fit into the life of the program. The tension is valuable: it's where learning happens.

Plan Next Steps

The goal is *engagement and designing:* ideas are forming, and should be cared for gently but with conviction. Teams and individuals should begin planning how they'll implement the topic in thoughtful stages, deciding how accountability will be structured.

Stay Reflective and Realistic

The goal is *continued reflection and action*: now that the topic is finding its way into the classroom on a more consistent basis, the program should make regular efforts to talk about what's working, what's not working, and what can be re-done. Goals from the previous step can be reworked due to external factors.

Procure Information

- What do *you* know about the topic at hand? What do others know about the topic?
    - Where did that information come from? What biases might it hold?
    - How is this topic founded in theories of early childhood?
- How do our backgrounds inform our reactions to the topic?
    - Cultural backgrounds, educational backgrounds, spiritual backgrounds…
- How has this topic been approached in the past? Why?
- What program traditions, standards, or norms might uphold or go against the topic?

Offer Ideas

- What are people drawn to about the topic?
    - What excites them? What challenges them?
- What causes feelings of disagreement or hesitation about the topic?
    - What sources can be provided to add clarity to the situation? Who has a trusted voice within the community?
- What training or reading can answer lingering questions?

Plan Next Steps

- How can the topic fit in with work that is *already being done* in the classroom?
    - What could be done in one hour? One week? One year?
- What new ideas have sprung up after thinking on this topic?
    - When can these new ideas be discussed in depth? When can they be implemented?
- Who will function as the point person throughout these changes?
    - How often will they check in with the classrooms? How often will the classroom check in with them? In what format?

Stay Reflective and Realistic

- In what ways have the changes benefited the program? In what ways have they been challenging?
    - Are there any problems with the topic in general, with implementation, or with individual beliefs?
        - Can restarting the POPS cycle help move things forward, or should it be tabled?