

Equity Labs

Problems of Practice – Consultancy Activity

Facilitator (ODE Staff) – The following is intended to guide you through the *Problems of Practice – Consultancy Activity* of the Equity Labs. It was introduced to the Office of Career-Technical Education through the A.I.R. professional development workshop. A.I.R. noted the activity was an adaptation from School Reform Initiative.

This *Problems of Practice – Consultancy Activity* shares similarities with teaching strategies such as [Fishbowl](#) and [Socratic Seminar](#), which may be more familiar to audience members.

ROLES:

- Presenter (District Team Member): Presents a dilemma to the group
- Facilitator (ODE Staff): Keeps time and keeps the process on track
- Consultants (District Team Members): Ask questions; Suggest solutions/answers
- Observers: Watch how the process is implemented and note key moments

PROCEDURE:

1. Select a dilemma and framing question (Presenter | 4:00 minutes)

Presenter: Think about a dilemma and framing question to ask the district team. For this activity, focus the dilemma on a specific challenge regarding equity, equitable access, and within the team's scope of influence to change. It is possible the dilemma has been identified as part of the work completed today.

ODE Staff: If the “presenter” is struggling to identify a dilemma or framing question, the following examples can be used by districts to experience the problem-solving strategy.

Example One	
Dilemma	The district made the decision to remove non-essential admissions requirements – interviews, teacher recommendations, grade point averages, and pre-requisite courses. An instructor is adamant preexisting knowledge of chemistry is essential to student success in the cosmetology pathway.
Question	What can we do to ensure equitable access while addressing the programmatic concerns of the educator?
Clarifying Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently, less than 30% of the students in the pathway successfully pass the State Boards• The cosmetology pathway is not at instructional capacity, meaning there are more seats than students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosmetology is the only pathway requiring the pre-requisite of chemistry.
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Example Two	
Dilemma	The district acknowledges its responsibility to provide a safe environment for learning. However, the district is uncertain of how to best support the growing number of students that express and/or identify with a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or are non-gender conforming.
Question	What does the district need to do to provide a safe learning environment for all students, including those who are transgender?
Clarifying Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 protects people from discrimination based on sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity, in education programs and activities. • Federal recipients must designate at least one employee to serve as a Title IX coordinator. <p>Transgender students have the rights to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal educational opportunities; • Use locker rooms and restroom facilities consistent with the student's gender identity; • Be called by their preferred names and pronouns; • Dress according to their gender identity, as long as it follows the dress code applied to all students

Example Three	
Dilemma	Career-technical education and specifically career centers still have the reputation for being where schools send struggling students, who are not college bound, to learn a trade or skill. Delta Career Center is launching a marketing and communications campaign realign the perception with evidence-based reality – <i>student success post high school, college credit in school, in-demand and high wage jobs</i> - for potential students, parents and the community.
Question	What does Delta Career Center need to consider and do to effectively change the perception of career-technical education in its community to increase the enrollment of students in its pathways?
Clarifying Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delta Career Center's graduation rate is 95% • 25% of Delta Career Center students earned three or more college credits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29% of Delta Career Center students earned one or more of Ohio's in-demand industry recognized credentials • Delta Career Center's special populations and subgroups are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 70% White, Non-Hispanic ○ 16% Black, Non-Hispanic ○ 14% Multiracial ○ 50% Economically Disadvantaged ○ 15% Students with Disabilities ○ 5% Homeless ○ 15% Active Military Families
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2. Describe a dilemma and framing question (Presenter | 4:00 minutes)

Facilitator (ODE Staff): The dilemma and framing question needs to be specific to equity, something system focused not person focused and within the team's sphere of influence (ability and authority to affect change).

3. Clarify the facts with questions (Consultants | 3:00 minutes)

Facilitator (ODE Staff): The consultancy group (team) can ask the presenter questions specific to the dilemma and framing question. Examples might be:

- When did the district become aware of this dilemma?
- Can you restate the statistics and special populations impacted?

4. Ask additional questions for deeper thinking (Consultants | 8:00 minutes)

Facilitator (ODE Staff): The consultancy group (team) can ask the presenter questions specific to the dilemma and framing question. Examples might be:

- What are the current district policies that might help address this dilemma?
- What are the current district policies that might create this dilemma (e.g., zero-tolerance, application requirements, dress code)?
- What are the applicable laws we need to be aware of to make an informed suggestion (e.g., Civil Rights, ADA-AA, Title IX)?
- Who (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents, community members, employers) on this matter thus far?

5. Group Discussion, analysis and suggestions (Consultants | 8:00 minutes)

Facilitator (ODE Staff): The consultancy group (team) discusses and brainstorms potential solutions to the dilemma, while the presenter listens. Keep the group on task and, if needed, guide the team in respectful conversations (e.g., actively listen, avoid interruptions, everyone engages, speaking times).

- What are the current district policies that might help address this dilemma?

- What are the current district policies that might create this dilemma (e.g., zero-tolerance, application requirements, dress code)?
- What are the applicable laws we need to be aware of to make an informed suggestion (e.g., Civil Rights, ADA-AA, Title IX)?
- Who (e.g., students, teachers, administrators, parents, community members, employers) on this matter thus far?

6. Summarize, synthesize and share out (Presenter | 3:00 minutes)

Presenter: After hearing the discussion and suggestions, reflect on how it went and what was learned and what might be used to resolve the dilemma. Share with the group.