



Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Coffee Talk (Equity Focus) Protocol

Initially developed by Frances Hensley, 2009; refined by Susan Taylor and Connie Parrish, 2013.

The purpose of Coffee Talk is to provide a lightly facilitated way for participants to enlarge their thinking by: **reading** several related articles; **writing** reflectively about their responses; and **talking** with others. It works well with large groups and is particularly well suited for use with readings that come out of an equity or social justice perspective.

Time: Approximately 50-75 minutes

Materials: 5-6 short readings (1-5 pages), organized loosely around a topic or theme that is thought-provoking and current. Like Block Party, this protocol can be used with a variety of texts, poems, articles or whole books.

Steps

1. **Facilitators present brief text introductions** of 5-6 short readings. (5-7 minutes)
2. **Participants read and make notes** about the selected texts – facilitators provide 25-40 minutes of reading time, even though there is more reading than can be done in the time allotted. Participants must choose among texts (reading one or two deeply; reading “in”/skimming all 5-6; etc. The goal here is about enlarging perspectives through reading and conversation and not about covering material). (25-40 minutes)
3. **Participants gather back together as a whole group for individual written reflection** participants write about their reading & thinking, responding to any or all of the prompts below or simply free-writing about the readings and their responses to them: (5-10 minutes)
 - a. What was **comforting/comfortable**?
 - b. What did you find **challenging or confusing**?
 - c. What are you **wondering** about/what **questions** do you have?
 - d. What to you most want to **remember**?
4. **Participants share their thinking/have some talk** in groups of 3-4. Participants leave their seats with readings and written reflections in hand. They gather/stand together as they mingle and make sense of the readings. After 5-7 minutes, participants might be invited to change groups, or change topics, or change speakers, and then continue for another 5-7 mins. There might be a third round of changing partners, etc. before debriefing as time/interest allow. (15-25 mins)
5. **Debrief protocol in whole group.** What worked well? What challenged us? What might we do differently next time? How might we apply this to our own work? (3-5 minutes)