

Summary of Six Voices¹

Reflective guide:

- Restates elements of a message with slightly different emphasis
- Rogerian type of statement but still goal directed toward learning objectives
- Contains direct quotes from participants which builds ownership for participants
- Carries a sense of non-directive interaction
- Seeks more precise meanings, clarifying or extending key points

Objective:

- Help group comprehension and give direction
- Similarities or tensions in meaning can be indirectly suggested
- Role of a counselor or highlighter
- Provide more precise meaning or clarification or insights
- Reiterate questions both at a personal and more general level of a claim

Strategies:

For focusing

- Select identifying direction strategy to sharpen dialogue by refocusing, direct discussion to certain points or issues by selectively highlighting or paraphrasing pertinent lines of discourse

Possible to refocus or clarify discussion to certain points or issues by selectively highlighting or paraphrasing participants messages.

- Highlight similar lines of thought in individual contributions, paraphrase or juxtapose comments or insights to clarify or extend interaction, explore belief and motivation behind comments

For deepening

- If a dialogue needs deepening, rather than clarifying, a reflective guide may employ a critical thinking strategy like exploration of multiple viewpoints based on participants' responses to model deeper layers of introspection.

Sample statements and questions you might try:

Do others feel the same tensions and pressures as {name of person} ?
We are all grappling with the issue of....
If I understand her properly, ...
[Person] has opened some new ground
How do you come to terms with your understanding which is perhaps contradictory to others?

Personal Muse:

- You describe your own personal internal dialogue about central issues and hold up your own beliefs to question.
- Process of wrestling with unresolved definitions, issues or tensions using questions to push ideas deeper.
- Use when dialogues show evidence of slowing down or getting muddled.

¹ Collison, G, Elbaum, B, Haavind, S. , Tinker, R
Facilitating Online Learning, Atwood, Wisconsin 2000
These notes are taken from the book and also a chart created by a fellow student Jean Kirchner in the MOOM course April 2000.
In addition, some of the sample questions have come from Mathematica Moderators

The personal muse can attempt to renew discussions or redirect energy without engaging or confronting individuals.

- Craft it carefully to exhibit tensions or dilemmas
- Citations from participants should be the starting point

Strategies:

For deepening

- To explore questions, to grapple with direction, ambiguity or assumptions
- Hold up assumptions and examine possible reasons for either holding or discarding them.
- Model in public the internal dialogue in which anyone would do if carrying on an internal dialogue about the issues.
- Seek to use a comic tale or anecdote to model suspension of judgment, belief or disbelief as potential blocks to seeing a bigger picture.

For focusing

- List as part of a personal narrative key issues or tensions
- No personal stand is taken or value attached to entries
- Use when dialogues need sharpening

Objective:

- Use to explore questions, to grapple with direction, ambiguity or assumptions
- Model process of suspending judgement in the spirit of inquiry and to break through barriers to new ways of thinking.
- list key issues or tensions as part of a personal narrative

- No personal stand is taken or value attached to entries
- Use when dialogues need sharpening

Sample statements and questions you might try:

Something is a pain...but I am going to do X....

I often wonder why I choose to do the projects or other things I do...

I am still struggling to make connections explicit...

• **Mediator**

Polarization can be for reasons external to the content or external to group process which causes taking an adversarial stance or advocacy Use personal communication, insight from experience to assess unstated reasons for reactions. Instead of talking about the positions or advocating, discuss reasons for holding them. Tension is good but needs redirection. Highlight similar lines of thought as well as key points echoed in the dialogue. Can point out advocacy as a potential barrier to inquiry and solutions. Encourage deeper discussion - use questions to clarify meaning and assumptions and explore resolutions where dialogue seems to have stalled. Model suspension of judgement in service of clarifying issues and goals. By making connection across different levels of interpretation, a moderator can explore suspension of belief.

Objective

Mediator redirects discussion away from defense of hardened positions to talk about central goals.

Strategies

For deepening

- Honor multiple perspectives while highlighting common goals
- Paraphrase to see commonality at higher level by resolving ambiguities or mis-assumptions
- List and compare, with eye to recognizing common features and reasons for holding assumptions or believing assertions
- Extend thinking with analogies to help refocus

For Focusing

- Indicate current progress in dialogue by highlighting tensions or unbalanced exposition

Sample statements and questions you might try:

- Controversy is a good place to start ! We don't have to come to a consensus, thank heavens. We only need to understand and appreciate each others' viewpoints.
- Where have been the most constructive changes and insights regarding [topic] and approaches you've come across?

Generative Guide

You may wish to list and perhaps contrast options from existing entries and indicate, based on key concept notes, potential areas of dialogue or concepts that might have been overlooked.

Objective

When dialogues stagnate for lack of fresh approaches to recurring issues or positions

Also brainstorming function

For deepening

- Offer new interpretations or options seeking to expose barriers to inquiry that lie in beliefs or assumptions.
- Attempt to lever participants to view issue through different eyes.
- Seek to model alternatives to confined thinking by incorporating multiple perspectives as springboards to alternative interpretations
- Suggest consideration of evidence for claims and reasons for belief

For focusing

- Lay out existing contributions
- Reference goals or specific assignments or conceptual blocks
- Seek to model alternatives to confined thinking by incorporating multiple perspectives as springboards to alternative interpretations
- mull over potential meanings of phrases or topics and possible directions and alternatives

Sample statements and questions you might try:

- What is gained by doing X?
- I wonder if you do X whether it will make a difference
- Some roadblocks are appearing in our journey....It might be useful to articulate some of them and see how formidable they are or how to plan around them.
- Let's build on the work that has begun...

- **Role Play**

Validate multiple perspectives on key issues, or weave and integrate into main discussion ideas that may seem irrelevant but, when observed through another perspective, indicate valid and focused lines of thought.

Objectives

Step outside of dialogue and present fresh perspective. Use symbolic functions of character or role to express redirection

Strategies

For deepening

- If direction is commonly assumed as productive or healthy, wonder about monitoring, re-evaluation, or existence of usefulness of a backup strategy.

For Focusing

- Enumerate contributions, sharpen perspectives on weakly articulated ideas or ideas that are missing.

Sample statements and questions you might try:

Are there assumptions about X that we should be examining?
Aren't there some new ways of looking at these old concepts?

- **Conceptual facilitator**

Look for content elements or key concepts in activities or readings that have been omitted, misconstrued, or over-emphasized.
Resembles a tutor
Identifies conceptual areas in need of attention and attempts to point out pieces of the conceptual landscape.

Objectives

- Address omissions, confusions or imbalances of thought

Strategies

For deepening

- Challenges standard definitions and assumptions based on common language usages that limit progression to new ideas
- Introduce or validate multiple perspectives on key issues - not to summarize but to lay out a landscape of views.

For focusing

- Weave and integrate ideas that may seem irrelevant on first reading, indicate valid and focused lines of thought; review wording of assignments or key concepts for threads
- Bring to light gems or special insights that might seem lost in murky or very diffuse prose
- Indicate levels of importance of lines of thought or concepts
- Distinguish relevant and irrelevant issues by articulating in crisp tales or metaphors directions taken to date.

Sample statements and questions you might try:

- What changes in learning and experience might you have after trying X?
- How does X contribute to learning?