

10 Rules for Dynamic Participation

ANNETTE CLANCY

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How can we make meetings, consultation processes and facilitation more participative? What exactly does that mean? and more to the point, what does it look like? Here are the ten principles of Dynamic Participation—a process created by Annette Clancy based on an acute understanding of the psychology of groups. This is a process that's guaranteed to get people talking and acting.

1. HERE AND NOW

Always work in the "here and now". Who said what to whom a week ago; a month ago or a year ago is rarely useful in terms of moving a situation forward. Working with what is going on in the room right now is.

2 ALWAYS WORK ON A LIVE ISSUE

Role plays and case studies can be really interesting ways of getting a group to work on a task, but they rarely result in that group applying the learning in their work environment after the workshop/session has finished. Working on something that is a live issue for everyone in the room is one sure fired way to ensuring that learning s

3. CONTEXT IS AS IMPORTANT AS CONTENT

How someone decides to "put something into the room" is always as important as what they say and is a huge source of information about how this group works together in helpful and unhelpful ways.

4. MAKING A DIFFERENCE STARTS WITH BEING IN THE ROOM

Making a difference starts with being in the room. If people can't understand why you have invited them together then the process is pointless. If however, you can show people by the way in which you interact with them that their presence and view is essential then you create immediate buy in.

5. KEEP THE PROCESS PUBLIC

Have the conversations about why you are there, what is expected and hoped for, boundaries around time etc out loud and with those you invite into your process. Take a risk and produce notes of the meeting that summarise what has been discussed and distribute these openly to all who attend.

6 DIALOGUE NOT MONOLOGUE

Dialogue, not monologue. Are you sure you are consulting/facilitating? And not disseminating? A real dialogue involves myriad views...are you open to changing yours on the basis of what you hear? If so, then a real and genuine dialogue can yield exciting results. If not, then you are engaged in a monologue and people will rarely come back for a second lecture.

7. ROLES COME WITH RESPONSIBILITIES

that goes for everyone in the conversation. Dynamic Participation offers a space to ask each participant – what is my role? And what is my responsibility? Taking the blame culture out of organisational life can only be done if both of these questions are asked and answered by everyone in the room (including the consultant).

8 ATTEND TO BOUNDARIES NOT RULES

By attending to the boundaries of the process you leave room for difference. By attending to rules you impose conformity.

9 FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Ask those who present with negative statements to offer positive alternatives, thereby focussing on what is possible as distinct from what is not.

10 WHAT IS BEING PROTECTED?

Defensive people are usually trying to protect something important. Instead of getting frustrated with the defence try asking "what is so important here that it needs this kind of protection?"

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AUTHOR

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