Passion Profiles
A Protocol for Exploring Who We Are As Educators
adapted from Gene Thompson-Groves, “Student Profiles”

PURPOSE

*passion (p²sh”…n)* n. 1. A powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger. 2.a. Ardent love. 3.a. Boundless enthusiasm…

This protocol invites educators to articulate and connect with the passions that not only brought them into the field of education, but sustain them now. In connecting with their passions, educators also connect with one another and with their collective mission.

TIME
Approximately 45 minutes

DIRECTIONS

**STEP 1. (5 minutes)**
Read the passion profiles and identify the passion that most accurately describes who you are as an educator. If more than one fits (this will be true for many of you), choose the one that you most identify with *at this point in your career*.

**STEP 2. (15 minutes)**
As guided by facilitators, participants gather into clusters of 2 or 3 people who share the same passion and who are from different tables or small groups to explore the following prompts:

- Why is our unique profile important to the development of the children in our school communities? What is missing if our profile is not represented?
- What are some of the things people often misunderstand about our profile?
- What are some of the things about the other profiles we find it challenging to understand?
- As I think about my work in my school, is there a particular student who has been especially affected (either positively or negatively) by my particular profile? What have I done that has contributed to (or hindered) the growth of this student? If you’re not in a classroom-based educator, that’s okay – think about the broader scope of your work and share a story from wherever you sit.

*Note to Facilitators:*
If you are working with a large group of participants, this is a good opportunity for participants across different groups to share conversation. Clusters of people should all have the same Passion Profile – but can be from different small groups.
**STEP 3. (15 minutes)**

At the end of the conversations in pairs or triads, participants return to their home tables and give a brief report-out of some of the issues that arose in discussing the above questions. It is important that each participant shares the student he or she identified and particular insights about the impact of the relevant profile on this student.

**REFLECTIONS**

- As we continue to delve into questions of teaching practice and student learning, in what ways is it useful to have a sense of the different passions we bring to teaching and learning?

- As we all continue to grow as educators, what might we take from the passions that we did not select? How might our students’ success in school be impacted if each one of us is able to embrace elements of these other passions?

- What was it like to participate in this *Passion Profiles* process? What worked well about it? What might have made it better?
Four Passion Profiles
adapted from Gene Thompson-Groves’ “Student Profiles”

Passion 1. Educator as Nurturer of Children
You became a teacher primarily because you wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. Perhaps you were one of those kids whose life was changed by a committed, caring teacher and you decided to become a teacher so that you could do that for other children. You are always curious about particular students whose work and/or behavior just doesn’t seem to be in sync with the rest of the students in your class. You often wonder about how peer interactions seem to affect a student’s likelihood to complete assignments, or what enabled one of your ELL students to make such remarkable progress seemingly overnight, or how to motivate a particular student to get into the habit of writing. You believe that understanding the unique qualities that each student brings to your class is the key to unlocking his or her full potential as a learner. You support the idea that activities that support the social and emotional development of students (advisory, peer counseling, extracurricular activities, the arts, and athletics) are just as important as purely academic and cognitive enterprises.

Passion 2. Educator as Master of Subject Matter
You are at your best in the classroom when you have a thorough understanding of the content and/or topic you are teaching. Having to teach something you don’t know much about, makes you uncomfortable and always motivates you to hone this area of your teaching knowledge base. You realize that what you know about what you are teaching reflects upon the integrity of the subject you represent. You spend a considerable amount of your personal time — both during the school year and in the summer — looking for books, material, workshops, or courses you can take that will strengthen your content knowledge. You are one of those teachers who is always tinkering with the curriculum in order to enrich the learning opportunities for your students. You have a thorough understanding of your content area, and you are proud of being known as a teacher of physics, mathematics, or whatever your discipline. You like to attend conferences and subscribe to journals that help you to stay up on current trends affecting the curriculum that you teach. You often offer critiques of the existing curriculum and strive to find ways to make it better reflect what you feel are the important and deep principles of your discipline.

Passion 3. Educator as Crafter of Pedagogy
You are motivated most as a teacher by a desire to improve on and experiment with teaching strategies and techniques. You have experienced and understand the value of particular strategies to engage students in powerful learning and want to get really good at this stuff. Although you have become really comfortable with using collaborative techniques with your students, there are many other strategies and techniques that interest you and that you want to incorporate into your teaching repertoire. You seek high levels of student engagement and value it as much as you value the subject matter you represent.

Passion 4. Educator as Activist and Advocate
You became an educator to change the world — to help create a more just, equitable, democratic, and peaceful planet. You are constantly thinking of ways to integrate issues of race, class, disability, power, etc. into your teaching. You know there are developmentally appropriate ways to infuse difficult, complex, and socially relevant issues into your teaching and want to learn more about how to do this with your students. You believe that modeling responsible participation as an informed citizen in society is an important facet of the role of educator. You believe that teaching students to serve the larger community is as important as teaching them specific content in your discipline.
Save the Last Word for Me
Developed by Patricia Averette
www.nsrfharmony.org

Purpose
To clarify and deepen our thinking about articles we read.

Roles
- Timekeeper/facilitator, who both participates and keeps the process moving.
- The process is designed to build on each other’s thinking, and not to enter into a dialogue.
- Participants may decide to have an open dialogue about the text at the end of the 30 minutes.
- Timing is important; each round should last approximately 7 minutes.

Total Time
Approximately 30 minutes.

The Protocol
1. Create a group of 4 participants. Choose a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch.
2. Each participant silently identifies what s/he considers to be (for him or her) the most significant idea addressed in the article, and highlights that passage.
3. When the group is ready, a volunteer member identifies the part of the article that s/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud to the group. This person (the presenter) says nothing about why s/he chose that particular passage.
4. The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
5. The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage — saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
6. The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why s/he chose that part of the article and to respond to — or build on — what s/he heard from his/her colleagues.
7. The same pattern is followed until all four members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have “the last word.”
8. Optional: share open dialogue about the text and the ideas and questions raised during the first part of the protocol.
9. Debrief the experience. How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to explore your own thinking?

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.
The facilitator’s role is to help the group to keep focused on how the success described by the presenter is different from more routine work. The analysis of what made this so successful is the purpose of the protocol. The facilitator is a full participant in this protocol, and each participant takes a turn as the facilitator. Each round (steps 2-6) takes anywhere from 23-28 minutes. Success is defined as something that proved to be highly effective in achieving an outcome important to the presenter.

1. **Identify a success.** *(5 minutes)*
   Write a short description of a success. [NOTE: you may want to specify here the arena of the success — in terms of your work as a teacher, as a PLC facilitator, as an administrator, with a student, using a particular teaching strategy, etc.] Describe the specifics of the success. Be sure to answer the following question:
   - What made this experience valuable, to you? What happened in the group you were working with that makes you deem this experience valuable?

2. **Presenter describes the success.** *(5 minutes)*
   In triads, the first presenter tells the story of his or her “success,” in as much detail as s/he can remember. The group takes notes.

3. **Group asks clarifying questions.** *(3 minutes)*
   The rest of the group asks clarifying questions about the details of the “success” in order to fill in any information the group needs to be helpful to the presenter.

4. **Group asks probing questions that help the presenter reflect upon the success.** *(optional step)*
   The purpose of these questions is to help the presenter uncover why this was so successful—to see more in the success. The presenter answers the questions, but there isn’t any back and forth discussion with the group. Some examples of questions include:
   - Why do you think…?
   - What was different about…?
   - Why did you decide to…? *(5 minutes).*

5. **Group reflects on the success story.** *(10 minutes)*
   Group members discuss what they heard the presenter say, and offer additional insights and analysis of the success. The presenter is silent and takes notes.
6. **Presenter reflects.** *(5 minutes)*
   The presenter reflects on the group’s discussion about what made this so successful. The group then discusses briefly how what they have learned might be applied to all of their work.

7. **Protocol begins again for the next group member.**
   Repeat steps 2 through 6 for each member of the group. Remember to keep the focus on the underlying principles or processes that made for success.

8. **Debrief protocol.**
   What worked well? What misconceptions or confusions emerged? What adaptations to this protocol might improve the process? How might we apply what we learned to other work? How might others (teachers, administrators, students) use this process to reflect on their work?

9. **The triad identifies and lists the factors that contributed to their successes,** … and shares this in the large group. The large group looks for trends across triads, and then discusses what it would mean to consciously create conditions that lead to success *(if there is time).*

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An Overview of the Consultancy Protocol

The following descriptions of the Consultancy, how to frame Consultancy dilemmas and questions, and directions for preparing to present a dilemma are adapted from guidance written by Gene Thompson-Grove, Founding Co-Director of the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF)

A Consultancy is a structured process for helping an individual, or a team, think more expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma. Outside perspective is critical to this protocol working effectively; therefore, some of the participants in the group must be people who do not share the presenter’s specific dilemma at that time. When putting together a Consultancy group, be sure to include people with differing perspectives.

The Consultancy Protocol was developed by Gene Thompson-Grove as part of the Coalition of Essential Schools’ National Re: Learning Faculty Program, and further adapted and revised as part of work of the National School Reform Faculty Project (NSRF).

Framing Consultancy Dilemmas and Consultancy Questions

A dilemma is a puzzle, an issue that raises questions, an idea that seems to have conceptual gaps, something about process or product that you just can’t figure out. Sometimes it will include samples of student or adult work that illustrate the dilemma, but often it is a dilemma that crosses over many parts of the educational process.

1. Think about your dilemma.

Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling or that you are unsure about. Some criteria for a dilemma might include:

- Is it something that is bothering you enough that your thoughts regularly return to the dilemma?
- Is it an issue/dilemma that is not already on its way to being resolved?
- Is it an issue/dilemma that does not depend on getting other people to change (in other words, can you affect the dilemma by changing your practice)?
- Is it something that is important to you, and is it something you are actually willing to work on?
2. Do some reflective writing about your dilemma.

Some questions that might help are:

- Why is this a dilemma for you? Why is this dilemma important to you?
- If you could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would you/we see?
- What have you done already to try to remedy or manage the dilemma?
- What have been the results of those attempts?
- Who do you hope changes? Who do you hope will take action to resolve this dilemma? If your answer is not you, you need to change your focus. You will want to present a dilemma that is about your practice, actions, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions, and not someone else’s.
- What do you assume to be true about this dilemma, and how have these assumptions influenced your thinking about the dilemma?
- What is your focus question? A focus question summarizes your dilemma and helps focus the feedback (see the next step).

3. Frame a focus question for your Consultancy group:

Put your dilemma into question format.

- Try to pose a question around the dilemma that seems to you to get to the heart of the matter.
- Remember that the question you pose will guide the Consultancy group in their discussion of the dilemma.

4. Critique your focus question.

- Is this question important to my practice?
- Is this question important to student learning?
- Is this question important to others in my profession?

Some Generic Examples of Dilemmas

- The teaching staff seems to love the idea of involving the students in meaningful learning that connects the students to real issues and an audience beyond school, but nothing seems to be happening in reality.

  **Question:** What can I do to capitalize on teachers’ interest and to help them translate theory into practice?

- The community is participating in visioning work, but the work doesn’t seem to relate to the actual life of the school—it is just too utopian.

  **Question:** How do I mesh dreams and reality?
• Teachers love doing projects with the students, but the projects never seem to connect to one another or have very coherent educational goals or focus; they are just fun.

**Question:** How do I work with teachers so they move to deep learning about important concepts while still staying connected to hands-on learning?

• We keep getting grants to do specific projects with students and the community, but when the money is gone, the work doesn’t continue.

**Question:** How does sustainability actually work? What needs to change for it to work?

• No matter how hard I try to be inclusive and ask for everyone’s ideas, about half of the people don’t want to do anything new—they think things were just fine before.

**Question:** How do I work with the people who don’t want to change without alienating them?

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### Preparing to Present a Dilemma in a Consultancy Protocol

Come to the session with a description of a dilemma related to your practice. Write your dilemma with as much contextual description as you feel you need for understanding. One page is generally sufficient; even a half page is often enough. If you prefer not to write it out, you can make notes for yourself and do an oral presentation, but please do some preparation ahead of time.

End your description with a specific question. Frame your question thoughtfully. What do you REALLY want to know? What is your real dilemma? This question will help your Consultancy group focus its feedback. Questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” generally provide less feedback for the person with the dilemma, so avoid those kinds of questions. (See the previous pages for a process for framing Consultancy dilemmas and questions.)

Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling—something that is problematic or has not been as effective as you would like it to be—anything related to your work. Consultancies give presenters an opportunity to tap the expertise in a group, and if past experiences offer any indication, you will be able to rely on the people in your Consultancy group to provide respectful, thoughtful, experienced-based responses to your dilemma.

A couple of caveats—we have found that Consultancies don’t go well when people bring dilemmas that they are well on the way to figuring out themselves, or when they bring a dilemma that involves only getting other people to change. To get the most out of this experience, bring something that is still puzzling you about your practice. It is riskier to do, but we guarantee that you will learn more.
Consultancy Protocol

Developed by Gene Thompson-Grove, Founding Co-Director of the National School Reform Faculty Project (NSRF)

PURPOSE

A Consultancy is a structured process for helping an individual, or a team, think more expansively about a particular, concrete dilemma.

TIME

Approximately 50 minutes

ROLES

- Presenter (whose work is being discussed by the group)
- Facilitator (who sometimes participates, depending on the size of the group)

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1. (5-10 minutes)

The presenter gives an overview of the dilemma with which s/he is struggling, and frames a question for the Consultancy group to consider. The framing of this question, as well as the quality of the presenter’s reflection on the dilemma being discussed, are key features of this protocol. If the presenter has brought student work, educator work, or other “artifacts,” there is a pause here to silently examine the work/documents. The focus of the group’s conversation is on the dilemma.

STEP 2. (5 minutes)

The Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter—that is, questions that have brief, factual answers.

STEP 3. (10 minutes)

The group asks probing questions of the presenter. These questions should be worded so that they help the presenter clarify and expand his/her thinking about the dilemma presented to the Consultancy group. The goal here is for the presenter to learn more about the question s/he framed or to do some analysis of the dilemma presented. The presenter may respond to the group’s questions, but there is no discussion by the Consultancy group of the presenter’s responses. At the end of the ten minutes, the facilitator asks the presenter to re-state his/her question for the group.
**STEP 4. (15 minutes)**
The group talks with each other about the dilemma presented. Possible questions to frame the discussion:

- What did we hear?
- What didn’t we hear that they think might be relevant?
- What assumptions seem to be operating?
- What questions does the dilemma raise for us?
- What do we think about the dilemma?
- What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma? What have we done in similar situations?

Members of the group sometimes suggest solutions to the dilemma. Most often, however, they work to define the issues more thoroughly and objectively. The presenter doesn’t speak during this discussion, but instead listens and takes notes.

**STEP 5. (5 minutes)**
The presenter reflects on what s/he heard and on what s/he is now thinking, sharing with the group anything that particularly resonated for him or her during any part of the Consultancy.

**STEP 6. (5 minutes)**
The facilitator leads a brief conversation about the group’s observation of the Consultancy process.

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**FACILITATION TIPS FOR MAKING THIS PROTOCOL SUCCESSFUL**

**Tip for Step 1.**
The success of the Consultancy often depends on the quality of the presenter’s reflection in Step 1 as well as on the quality and authenticity of the question framed for the Consultancy group. However, it is not uncommon for the presenter, at the end of a Consultancy, to say, “Now I know what my real question is.” That is fine, too. It is sometimes helpful for the presenter to prepare ahead of time a brief (one-two page) written description of the dilemma and the issues related to it for the Consultancy group to read as part of Step 1.

**Tip for Step 2.**
Clarifying questions are for the person asking them. They ask the presenter “who, what, where, when, and how.” These are not “why” questions. They can be answered quickly and succinctly, often with a phrase or two.
**Tip for Step 3.**
Probing questions are for the person answering them. They ask the presenter “why” (among other things), and are open-ended. They take longer to answer, and often require deep thought on the part of the presenter before s/he speaks.

**Tip for Step 4.**
When the group talks while the presenter listens, it is helpful for the presenter to pull his/her chair back slightly away from the group. This protocol asks the Consultancy group to talk about the presenter in the third person, almost as if s/he is not there. As awkward as this may feel at first, it often opens up a rich conversation, and it gives the presenter an opportunity to listen and take notes, without having to respond to the group in any way. Remember that it is the group’s job to offer an analysis of the dilemma or question presented. It is not necessary to solve the dilemma or to offer a definitive answer.

It is important for the presenter to listen in a non-defensive manner. Listen for new ideas, perspectives, and approaches. Listen to the group’s analysis of your question/issues. Listen for assumptions—both your own and the group’s—implicit in the conversation. Don’t listen for judgment of you by the group. This is not supposed to be about you, but about a question you have raised. Remember that you asked the group to help you with this dilemma.

**Tip for Step 5.**
The point of this time period is not for the presenter to give a “blow by blow” response to the group’s conversation, nor is it to defend or further explain. Rather, this is a time for the presenter to talk about what were, for him/her, the most significant comments, ideas and questions s/he heard. The presenter can also share any new thoughts or questions s/he had while listening to the Consultancy group.

**Tip for Step 6.**
Debriefing the process is key. Don’t short change this step.