



The 5 Whys for Inquiry

Developed in the field by educators affiliated with NSRF.

Purpose

To help the presenter get at the foundational root of his/her question and to uncover multiple perspectives on the question.

Presentation (3 minutes)

The presenter describes the context of his or her inquiry question

One might include...

- Why you chose this question
- Why it is so important to you
- How it relates to your work back home

Clarifying Questions (3 minutes)

The group asks clarifying questions. These are questions, which clarify the context of the presenter's remarks. They should be specific questions, which can be answered with brief statements. For example, "How long has your school been involved in place based learning?" Or, "How many community members are involved with planning this project?"

Decision (3 minutes)

The group discusses the best line of inquiry to get at the heart of the question and decides upon the initial "why question". The presenter is silent.

The "Why Questioning": (10 minutes)

The "why question" decided upon is asked and the presenter responds. Another "why question" is asked in response to the presenter's answer. This continues with a maximum of five "why questions" being asked.

Discussion (5 minutes)

The group then discusses what they have heard the presenter say. Their discussion is not a solving of a problem but an attempt to help the presenter understand the underlying causes for the issue he or she described. The presenter is silent.

Response (3 minutes)

The presenter responds to what has been said. The group is silent.

Debrief (3 minutes)

The group and the presenter debrief the experience.