

Using a Book Study at your Centre

Reading, reflecting and discussing an article or book as a staff team can be a powerful learning activity that strengthens both your team and your professional practice. Book studies offer a low cost and adaptable program that facilitates engagement and professional learning community, which contribute to decent work.

In order for book studies to be meaningful and engaging for staff, they need to be planned and intentionally and organized for success. For example, requiring employees to purchase several expensive books, and take time out of their breaks to attend book study sessions does not create a positive learning environment or decent work conditions. Consider the following when designing your book study group:

- Is participation mandatory or self-selected?
- Is there a specific theme to the book study? This could be a theme selected by the group. For example leadership, pedagogical practice, coaching and interpersonal skills
- Who selects what is read? Is it selected centrally, through a voting process, or does every member have a turn selecting the resource?
- How is the book club facilitated? Is there one facilitator or a protocol that is collectively followed? Or, is the opportunity to lead the facilitation rotated to provide participants an opportunity to take on a leadership role?
- How often do you meet? How will centre scheduling need to adapt to enable educators to participate?

[Suggested Books](#)

Protocols & Facilitation

Although protocols may seem too structured and limiting, they are a powerful tool that ensures everyone is heard and respected. A protocol is a set of step-by-step guidelines—usually in the form of a simple one or two-page document—that is used by educators to structure professional conversations or learning experiences to ensure that meeting, planning, or group-collaboration time is used efficiently, purposefully, and productively. Benefits include:

- Helps educators to remain focused.
- Builds foundational communication and facilitation skills essential to effective professional collaboration.
- Helps to nurture a culture of reflection.
- Builds trust and appreciation for mutual perspectives.

National Network on ELCC Human Resources Innovation and Decent Work

Resources are provided for reference only. Always consult current legislation in your jurisdiction to create policies and procedures that meet the needs of your organization.

- Ensures everyone in the group has an opportunity to contribute and be heard during a discussion.
- Reduces the tendency toward subjective, digressive, or one-sided conversations.
- Promotes focused, substantive, in-depth conversations in shorter amounts of time.
- Encourages active, respectful listening among all participants.
- Keeps conversations focused on goals, solutions, and results.

Case Study:

Compass Early Learning uses the “Last Word Protocol” to facilitate their book studies. Book studies are organized at the centre-level, and facilitated by the HR Link, or supervisor, who works at the central administrative office. Priority is given to books with a workbook component to work through together, and selected books often focus on leadership and interpersonal communication.

Protocol Used: https://www.nsrfharmony.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/final_word_0.pdf

Resource of other protocols: <https://nsrfharmony.org/protocols/>