RESOURCE

PEER LEARNING COMMUNITIES
Icebreakers and Opening Protocols

Below are several examples of icebreakers or opening protocols to use when first forming a peer learning community. These are helpful as educators introduce themselves or at the opening of any subsequent peer learning meeting that needs a warm-up.

1. **Funny Child Quotes**: Ask educators to write down a funny quote from a child in their classroom on a sticky note and post it on a wall for all to see. Ask them to share the quote and what they appreciate about it and/or ask others to try to guess which child said it.
2. **Collaboration Experience:** Ask educators to share a positive past experience they've had in collaborating with others in a team or group. After everyone has shared, discuss what these experiences had in common.
3. **Powerful Learning:** Ask educators to write down a powerful positive learning experience from their own childhood schooling. Ask them to share the experience. After everyone has shared, discuss what these experiences had in common.
4. **Reflection on a Word:** Choose a word that is relevant to the focus or work of the group (e.g., "collaboration," "instruction," "quality"). Ask the educators to introduce themselves and share their take on the word. This highlights and reinforces the value of multiple perspectives. (McDonald, J.P., Mohr, N., Dichter, A., and McDonald, E.C. (2013). *The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice,* 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College Press)
5. **Book or Movie Title:** Ask educators to think of the title of a children's or adult's book or movie that describes or relates to their experience as an educator and then share it.
6. **Picture/Postcard:** Pass out pictures or picture postcards. Ask educators to find something in the picture that relates to their experience as an educator or leader.

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