

Participant Formulated Evaluation

Participant Formulated Evaluation (PFE) a method used in the work with study circles to get the participants involved in their own learning process and to take responsibility for their learning.

It is also useful as a regular evaluation throughout the circle and as a final evaluation of the whole process – did we reach our goal?

To make a PFE thoroughly, it is important to give the time necessary. In case there is not enough time to make a complete PFE, one must be aware that some of the understanding, involvement and shared responsibility might get lost.

The longer circle and the time the participants will study together, the more valuable is the times spend on making a PFE.

The eight steps of PFE

(If the group consists of more than 5-7 members, divide into smaller groups of 3 to 5 persons.)

1 Each participant individually thinks of what they want from this circle, their expectations and goals. Individually, each one makes a list of the five most important issues for participating.

2 In each group, the members present their five words to each other. It is essential that each participant gives the time to present their words and explain the meaning of them so that everyone in the group understands the definition of the word.

3 Among all the words, the group chooses five (or more depending on the time you have) that they all can agree on as the most important for this circle.

(If more than one group)

4 Each group present and explain their five words to the whole group (using a whiteboard or wall to stick the notepads on makes it easier). TO make a useful PFE it is important that everyone understands the meaning of each word.

5 With all words from the groups, the leader will help to gather the ones with a similar meaning under one word (sometimes renaming can make it easier). Depending on the duration and subject of the circle the leader can decide on the number of words necessary for the evaluation.

6 The group discuss and decide on which 5 (5-9) goals/expectations they think are the most important for their work.

7 For each chosen goal the group needs to decide on an opposite word.- What is the worst that can happen?

Example goal: "more knowledge" ----- "I learned nothing new"

8 Draw up a scale over the word - pairs with scores above (6-0 or 7-1) where the highest number means full satisfaction and the lowest, disappointment. Make a copy to hand out each session when it is time to evaluate.

When using a PFE collect the answers and show the result to the group for discussion. Emphasize on the highest and lowest marks and talk about what they stand for. What can the group/the participants do to improve a low mark?

Remember

It is important to discuss the meaning of the PFE – It is not an evaluation of the leader's work – but an evaluation of the work the group has accomplished at the time. The learning process goes on and deepens as we carry on the discussion about values and meanings.

When an expectation gets a low mark, it is important to discuss and find out the reason for this. What have the participants done to fulfil their part in reaching the goal? Each participant has a responsibility to make their best to help the group to reach the highest score on each word pair. This way everyone can see how their efforts to take responsibility for their learning process, reflect on the group.

If the group will work together for a long time, one might want to make new, more detailed PFE within a certain word pair.

By using PFE, the participants of the circle get a chance to talk about their expectations and can decide on what they find are the most important for their learning process. And the leader will get some ideas about what the group wants to focus at. The word list is also useful as a reminder when things don't work out as planned.

Common reactions

Why are we doing this? takes too long time

But after one used it one- two times the lights shines and people find it quite useful

Problem in our circles – it takes time and the participants are often too eager to start with the subject itself that it is hard to understand why one should spend time on “words”