



Say, Say, Do: Leadership Version

This version of Say, Say, Do (School Reform Initiative, n.d.) protocol focuses the debrief around issues of leadership. The Say, Say, Do protocol provides multiple opportunities for educators to consider new leadership behaviors as well as ponder the impact of their current behaviors. The facilitation in this version is very explicit toward the intended learning as participants generally spend most of their cognitive energy on the task and usually aren't focusing on facilitator moves and decisions.

Purpose

Participants aim to reflect on what adult facilitation strategies are helpful or hindering as a task becomes more difficult.

Group Size

Generally, groups of six or more are ideal.

Sequence

1. Ask participants to stand in a circle. Tell participants you will give them one of four directions in this experience, *step in*, *step out*, *step left*, and *step right*.
2. To begin round 1 of Say, Say, Do, ask participants to give themselves just enough elbow room between themselves and the next person; let them know you will be calling this configuration *home base*. When you give a direction, in this round, they should say exactly what you say and do it at the same time. Inform the group of the first direction, saying, “In just a moment I will say step in. Think about what you will do in this round. Say what I say and do it. So, what will that look like? (fifteen to twenty seconds) Here we go—step in.” Use the same direction and its converse to start, saying, “Step in. Step out. Step in. Step out.” Then inform the group as you remove yourself from the circle that you are out there because your job is to help them be successful. Continue giving directions at a lively pace, mixing the four direction options in different patterns. If the group falters, revert to one direction and its converse to build confidence. (Two to three minutes)
3. Ask participants to turn to someone and have a strategy talk, asking one another, “How did that go? Any strategies emerging?” After forty-five to sixty seconds of the strategy talk, ask, “Any strategies so helpful others should hear about them?” (Less than five minutes)

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4. To begin round 2 of Say, Say, Do Opposite, reset the group back to home base with elbow width between participants. Tell the participants the four directions will stay the same, but their action needs to change. Whatever the facilitator says, they should repeat but do the opposite at the same time. Say, “In just a moment, I will say step in. Think about what you will do in this round. Say what I say but do the opposite at the same time. So, what will that look like? (fifteen to twenty seconds) Here we go—step in.” Use the same direction and its converse several times in a row to start, saying, “Step in. Step out. Step in. Step out.” Then remove yourself from the circle as you continue to give directions at a lively pace, mixing the four direction options. Use the same tone of voice throughout the rounds (resist succumbing to laughter and so on). It is important to participants that the facilitator is not mocking their attempts. If the group falters, revert to one direction and its converse to build confidence. (Two to three minutes)
5. Ask participants to turn to someone and have a strategy talk, asking, “How did that go? Are any strategies working or not working this time?” After forty-five to sixty seconds of the strategy talk, ask, “Are any strategies so helpful others should hear about them?” (Less than five minutes)
6. To begin round 3 of Say, Say Opposite, Do, reset the group back to home base with an elbow-width distance between participants. Tell the participants there is one more change. Whatever the facilitator says, they should say the opposite but do the requested action at the same time. Say, “In just a moment, I will say step in. Think about what you will do in this round. Say the opposite of what I say but do what I have said at the same time. What will that look like? (fifteen to twenty seconds) Here we go—step in.” Use the same direction and its converse several times in a row to start, saying, “Step in. Step out. Step in. Step out.” Then remove yourself from the circle as you continue to give directions at a lively pace, mixing the four direction options. If the group falters, revert to one direction and its converse to build confidence. (Two to three minutes)
7. Conduct a whole-group reflection. Ask about the difficulty of rounds. (Three to five minutes)
Language You Can Borrow: *Please show on your hand with the numbers of fingers raised which round was the most difficult. If anyone has four fingers up, that would show how scrambled your brain currently feels! Like us, most groups don't all agree on this. This shows that even with the most careful scaffolding, some will need more support earlier than anticipated. As teachers of children, we often have multiple scaffolds ready to go but that is often not true in working with adults. We expect adults or professionals to just get with the program and make it work.*
8. Conduct a whole-group reflection, asking about mistakes. (Three to five minutes)
Language You Can Borrow: *Everyone made a mistake at some point. Let's say you got to choose what kind of mistake you make, either an in-out mistake (you went in, everybody*

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else went out), or a right-left mistake (everybody went right, you went left). Which kind of mistake would you choose? On the count of three, if you would prefer right-left, step left; if you would prefer in-out, please step in. One, two, three, step. Let's hear from both sides. (Sixty seconds) This might be called our personal risk preference. Some of you may be willing to take a risk and make it known to the group publicly (in-out), as opposed to others who are willing to take a risk, but only want one person to know or experience that risk with you (right-left).

9. Conduct a whole-group reflection, asking about facilitation. (Five to seven minutes)

Language You Can Borrow: *My job was to help you be successful. Work with someone near you: What facilitation moves did I make to help us toward that goal? Try to name at least four to five.*

10. Following some time to think and brainstorm with others, either generate a list from participants or offer some of the following items verbally so the small groups can see how many they noticed.

- a. Moves at the beginning of each round:

- i. Start at home base.
- ii. We all did the first few moves.
- iii. First command was always *step in*.
- iv. Use an even voice.

- b. Moves during the stepping:

- i. Alter pace.
- ii. Repeat directions to build confidence.
- iii. Intervene gently (if this occurred).

- c. Moves at the end of each round:

- i. Debrief time takes place without me.
- ii. Adjustment opportunities take place without me.
- iii. Conduct strategy talk.

Language You Can Borrow: *Sometimes our work scaffolding groups is invisible—behind the scenes. Now that you know all that went into this deceptively simple experience, you might trust me more if I ever asked you to do it again.*

11. Conduct a whole-group reflection and ask about competence. (Five to seven minutes)

Display Burch's (Mindtools, n.d.) concept of Conscious Competence (Van Soelen, 2016), found in figure 2.5 (page 56). As a corporate trainer, Burch's goal for newly hired staff was to move them from unconscious incompetence (quadrant 1) to unconscious competence (quadrant 2). (For example, think of the typical response of a Chick-fil-A employee to being thanked. He or she says, "It's my pleasure." This

response shows unconscious competence.). I venture education has a different goal. This is conscious competence (quadrant 4). Ask participants, “In what ways did our experience in Say, Say, Do model a shift toward conscious competence? How will we as leaders help others move toward conscious competence?”

12. Debrief the process. (Five minutes)

Notes

- After each round is a strategy talk. When asking if any strategies are so helpful that they would be beneficial to reference with others, a participant may offer something that is more of an outcome than a strategy. For instance, listening is frequently shared as a strategy. Asking, “What did you do to be a better listener?” can help but can also result in participants saying, “I focused,” or something similar. Increasing focus is also an outcome, not a strategy. Continuing to ask, “What did you do to _____” can eventually conclude with a replicable strategy (for example, “I looked down at a spot on the floor”).
- If you notice extreme worry or a desire to quit from a participant during one of the rounds, consider one of the following options (in order of least to greatest intensity).
 - a. Stand next to a struggling participant and model the behavior with him or her as the group continues to respond to the prompts.
 - b. Gently guide someone with a hand on the back or arm slightly before you give the next direction.
 - c. Linking arms with one person and moving with them can be helpful (omitting the words temporarily).
 - d. If several people are confused, a restart might be appropriate. However, a restart is a nuclear option. It has significant impact on the group. If you decide to do a restart, be sure to debrief that choice and what specific observations led to that decision.
- If you use any of these options, be sure to debrief this with the group immediately following step 9. It can be helpful to make explicit which facilitator moves were apparent and which others were more covert. For instance, this question sequence can be helpful: “What scaffolds did everyone seem to experience?” then following with the converse, “What moves might have been differentiated?” Some participants appreciate my gentle supports; others do not. Having conversations about what evidence the facilitator saw before deciding to intervene can be helpful. I find leaders often do not talk about layers or tiers of support for teachers nearly as much as they talk about tiers of support for students.
- The whole-group reflection about mistakes (step 8) might surface how this learning could be helpful to a facilitator of a group who meets frequently. (For example, perhaps someone who prefers an in-out error might be willing to be observed by her peers early in an implementation cycle.)

- The whole-group reflection about facilitation (step 9) might generate the thought that modeling is a helpful strategy. When I facilitate this protocol, I intentionally try *not* to model. Instead, with careful following of the facilitation notes, participants model for each other. Modeling for adults may have unintended assumptions (for example, that you can't handle it without a model . . .).

Application Examples

- As Greg, an assistant principal, ponders how to help leadership team members see their important roles in the PLC, he decides to use the Say, Say, Do protocol in their next check-in session. During the whole-group reflection, he poses this question. “How do we ensure each teacher is more consciously competent from being in our collaborative meetings?” During the session, one teacher says, “Imagine if our collaborative meetings were so good, we said to the kids when we got back, ‘Watch out, guys. I was in a leadership meeting today!’”
- In a professional development session on how to write observational feedback to teachers, Karla uses Say, Say, Do to build the concept of conscious competence. Throughout the skill-based learning, she continually refers to this concept as participants are challenged to question their current practices. They ask, “How does this practice build conscious competence in our teaching force?”

Reference

School Reform Initiative. (n.d.). *Say, say, do.* Accessed at [www.schoolreforminitiative.org
/download/say-say-do/](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/download/say-say-do/) on February 4, 2021.