Using DAT Member Input

Table of Contents

The candid opinions of DAT members can be a very effective resource for fine-tuning facilitation and for making progress around group dynamics issues. Facilitators might gather input anonymously, through an online survey or Google Form that only they can see the responses to. They also may gather input semi-anonymously, by providing prompts and notecards for members to write on during a meeting. Facilitators also frequently conduct exit interviews once a DAT has transitioned out of external facilitation. Regardless of the format for collecting input, it is important to give a lot of thought to the questions asked of DAT members. For interim assessments, facilitators usually focus one or two questions on patterns or tensions in the group that they are wondering about, and one or two questions about how facilitation is going. Exit interviews are more comprehensive.

Below, we provide examples of an exit interview, two slides with questions that DAT members responded to during meetings, and a survey we have administered online and on paper.

Once feedback has been gathered, it is important to summarize the themes of the feedback, reflect them back to the DAT (if it is still meeting), acknowledge any changes in facilitation that the feedback may have prompted, and ask DAT members for their thoughts on the summary. Often, some reflective conversation and problem-solving emerges if one of the themes relates to a problematic group dynamic.

NOTECARD QUESTIONS

The following boxes contain questions that facilitators projected on slides, for different DATs. The first set of questions was used with a DAT where there was an imbalance in the sense of ownership of the project across different members. The second set of questions was used with a DAT where some power dynamics were evident between faculty and students.

Please write individual notecards:

- "I feel motivated to collaborate on a project when…"
- Any comments on how things are going for you

Please write on notecards your thoughts about:

- What aspects of this experience have felt valuable? What has felt not so valuable?
- What has it been like to have faculty and students working together on the DAT?

These will only be read by the facilitators.

END-OF-SEMESTER SURVEY

Please rate your agreement with the following questions on a 1-5 scale
(5=Strongly Agree, 1=Strongly Disagree):

____ My DAT is making progress toward improving my department

____ I am learning how to more effectively make departmental changes

____ I would recommend DATs to my colleagues in other departments

Overall, what is going well in the DAT?

What is not going well?

What ideas do you have for improving the DAT's process or work?

Is there anything else you want us to know?

CONDUCTING EXIT INTERVIEWS

This modular interview protocol is intended for use with DAT members, when members leave a DAT, when DATs are wrapping up, or when external facilitators are transitioning out. Ideally, a facilitator, manager or researcher that was not involved in the DAT would interview its members. Ideally, interviews would take place within 2 months of the DAT's change in facilitation. If the DAT Model Core Principles section is used, the interviewer will need to print the text of the principles on index cards.

EXIT INTERVIEW PURPOSE

For all DATs
- Learn about perceived role and influence of facilitation
- Solicit feedback on facilitation and DAT model

For some DATs
- Elicit perspectives about and possibly track shifts regarding:
  - Core principles
  - How change happens
  - Identity as change agents
  - Notions of success
- Learn about their notions of sustainability
- Predictions or observations about how the DAT work has impacted the department

QUESTIONS FOR ALL DAT MEMBERS

Introductory Statement

We see DAT members as partners, not just participants. We want to share with others what works and what doesn't in the DAT model, and want to hear from you about your experience. What is important for us to do to facilitate DATs for other people? ***Please provide examples whenever possible.***

Introduction / General Information

1. What was the most memorable or impactful aspect of your experience on the DAT?

Group Process / Facilitation

2. Facilitators contribute to the DAT in one or more of the following ways (have these printed on cards or a piece of paper so participants can look at them):

- Helping manage DAT logistics
- Supporting the development of a high functioning working team
- Providing support that is customized to the DAT's goals and needs
- Cultivating an external environment that is conducive to the DAT's success

2a. In what ways did the facilitators in your DAT enact these roles? Please provide an example of each, if possible. Can you describe impacts these roles had on your DAT?

2b. Is there anything that the facilitators did that you don't think fell into any of these four roles? Can you provide an example? What would you call that role?

3. In what ways was facilitation not productive for your DAT? Can you provide an example of this? How did this influence your DAT? What could the facilitators have done differently?

4. After your experience in the DAT, do you feel better prepared to facilitate groups in the future? Please explain.

5. Is there anything else that you would like to share to help us better facilitate DATs in the future and to help others to facilitate DATs?

DAT MODEL

6. What is your understanding of the DAT model?

7. What aspects of the DAT model (e.g., talking about norms of collaboration, models of change, developing a shared vision, external facilitation) did you find valuable? (ask this question ONLY if participants do not bring this up in relation to facilitation)

8. What aspects of the DAT model did not contribute productively to your experience in the DAT? Please explain.

9. If we were to share the DAT model with another institution that wanted to know how to support a successful DAT, what should we be sure to articulate?

OPTIONAL QUESTION MODULES

DAT Model Core Principles

The goal of this section is to capture DAT members' understanding of the principles and their perception of how the principles were embodied by their DAT. The six principles should be printed on index cards.

1. Here are six principles that have guided the DAT project members in their development of DATs:

    1. Students are partners in the educational process.
    2. Work focuses on achieving collective positive outcomes.
    3. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation inform decision-making.
    4. Collaboration between group members is enjoyable, productive, and rewarding.
    5. Continuous improvement is an upheld practice.
    6. Work is grounded in a commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice.

2. In what ways do you think these principles influenced your experience on the DAT and the DAT's work? (as participants reference each principle, ask them for their interpretation of the principle)

    a. In what ways did you see the facilitators use these principles?
    b. In what way did you as DAT participants use these principles?
    c. In what ways have you (or do you anticipate you will) use these principles in your department outside of the DAT?
    d. Were there times when these principles were not used in your DAT? What do you think led to that?

Experience on the DAT

1. Describe the DAT's goals. How did the DAT decide on those goals? How did the DAT work towards those goals?
2. Did your experiences in the DAT match your expectations, or are they different from your expectations? In what ways?
3. Describe your interactions with other DAT members during DAT meetings. What is the "feel" of the group?
   a. What aspects of working together worked well and not so well?
   b. Did people's participation seem equitable, or are there power imbalances?
   c. Do you think that differences in participants' roles and responsibilities within the department impacted the DAT? If so, how?
   d. Describe your interactions with other DAT members outside of DAT meetings. Has this changed since your experience on the DAT?
4. In what ways was the DAT similar or different to other committees you've been on?

Departmental Change

1. What is your understanding of how departments change?
2. Have there been any recent initiatives to change or improve aspects of the department?
   a. What was successful/unsuccessful about them?
   b. What do you think contributed to their success/lack of success?
   c. (If participant has a difficult time answering 2b, can ask the following questions) In what ways did the department support change or inhibit change? Were there particular people in the department who were necessary for change to happen, or who inhibited change? In what ways was change sustained?
3. What leads to changes being sustained in your department?

Change Agents

1. What characteristics or skills do you think someone needs to make changes in your department?
2. In what ways could DAT members be more effective in generating change?
3. In what ways do you feel like participating in the DAT impacted your ability or skills to affect change?
4. To what extent would you say you feel "empowered" to enact change?
5. What could the DAT model and/or facilitators do to better help DAT members become effective change agents?