



Creating an Operational Definition

For terms which need to be measured easily and consistently

Purpose: To consider implications for district planning.

Materials: List of terms to be clarified (examples: most, always, significant, some, high-quality)
One notecard per person per term

Protocol

(works best in groups of no more than 8)

1. Identify the words that need commonly-shared definitions within a given context.
2. Each individual in a group writes his/her definition of that term, keeping the context in mind.
3. Once done, he/she passes the notecard to the right (or left).
4. The definition is read; the reader underlines the parts of the definition with which he or she agrees.
5. This continues until all group members have read and underlined. **At this point some parts of the definition may have been underlined 8 times (for a group of 8).**
6. One group member then uses a poster/white board/ etc., to list the parts of the definition underlined the most, the second most, etc. This reveals the most common definition of the term under consideration.
7. The group then discusses the definitions and comes to consensus on the common definition; someone in the group volunteers to record this new definition making the word consistently measurable and observable.

It's wise to post these definitions and refine them over time.