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# Learning Guide 2.9 Transition- Practice Dilemmas

## **Objectives**

* Learners will be able to identify a practice dilemma related to conducting transitions for families and children with disabilities.
* Learners will be able to provide powerful and open-ended questions and/or solutions to other learners’ practice dilemmas.).

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| **Related Content:** [Module 2: Transition](https://rpm.fpg.unc.edu/module-2-transition)  **Instructional Method:** Problem-solving  **Level:** Expert  **Estimated Time Needed:** 5 min. instructor preparation; 90 min. learner activity |

## **Description**

## This learning guide is intended for practicing teachers and can be used in advanced university courses or professional development. Each learner will come to the class session prepared with a dilemma of practice related to transitions and then in small groups learners will use a consultancy protocol to help solve the problem of practice.

## **Materials/Resources**

* Handout 2.13a Consultancy Protocol
* Handout 2.13b Consultancy Protocol – Note-Taking Tool
* Optional: Handout 2.13c Sample practice dilemmas

## **Facilitator Instructions**

1. NOTE: Instruct learners to think of a practice dilemma for transitions **prior** to the class/session time. Here are sample instructions you might provide:

*February 27 – Come to class with a description of a significant challenge (dilemma) you are currently facing in conducting transitions with families of children with disabilities and making sure that these transitions are effective in maintaining continuity and alignment for the child.*

* *Describe your challenges*
* *Explore the dilemma*
* *Frame a focus question for your classmates/peers*
* *Critique your question*

1. Divide learners into groups of 4. Ask each group to identify a facilitator who will manage the time and ensure that group members are staying on task. (When it is the facilitator’s turn to share his or her dilemma of practice, the facilitator may choose an alternate).
2. Hand each group member a copy of Handout 2.13a Consultancy Protocol and Handout 2.13b Consultancy Protocol – Note-Taking Tool.
3. Instruct groups to follow the consultancy protocol. Provide 20-25 minutes per group member to discuss practice dilemmas following the Consultancy Protocol. Make sure there is sufficient time for each group member to have a chance to share his or her practice dilemma.
4. Debrief with the whole group.

## **Suggested Assessment**

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| **If the learner…** | **Then provide feedback…** |
| Cannot identify a practice dilemma related to the content area – transitions. | Allow the learner to use a sample practice dilemma from Handout 2.13c Sample practice dilemmas. |
| Does not provide powerful and open-ended questions and/or solutions to other learners’ practice dilemmas. | Refer the learner back to Handout 2.13a and review the sample questions. |

## **Distance Learning Tips**

* Synchronous class: If possible, divide learners into groups and put each group in separate chat rooms that you can still monitor. If not, call on small groups of learners to complete the protocol while the rest of the class observes. Note that in this model not all learners will have the opportunity to have their practice dilemma heard unless it is a small class or you reduce the amount of time given to each dilemma.
* Asynchronous class: Have each class member post in a forum their practice dilemma by a certain date. Then, have other learners post clarifying questions, probing questions along with responses to others to simulate a consultancy group discussion by a second date. Lastly, have each class member post a final reflection in his or her original forum post.

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| Example:   * March 12 – Post your practice dilemma in the Forum. * March 15 – Each learner must comment on at least two other practice dilemmas and respond to at least two other comments. String discussion is encouraged! (If a practice dilemma already has 2 comments/responses please try to find a practice dilemma that has not received comments yet). * March 16 – Post your final reflection on your practice dilemma based on the comments of your peers. |

**Handout 2.13a – Consultancy Protocol**

**Directions:** The consultancy protocol is a structured process for solving a problem of practice. In this process, a presenter describes a dilemma and invites a consulting group to explore the problem through structured questions. A facilitator manages the process.

**Step 1: Presenter Overview (3 minutes)**

The presenter gives an overview of the problem of practice along with a focus question.

**Step 2: Clarifying Questions (3 minutes)**

Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter (clarifying questions are questions that can be answered with facts such as who, what, when, where, and how).

**Step 3: Probing Questions (5 minutes)**

The consultancy group asks probing questions that help the presenter think more deeply about the dilemma. They are powerful and open ended. They help the presenter begin to analyze the dilemma. The consultancy group does not give advice. A good probing question avoids yes/no responses, stimulates reflective thinking, and challenges assumptions.

*Examples of probing questions:*

* *What would have to change in order to…?*
* *What was your intention when…?*
* *What is the connection between… and …?*

**Step 4: Consultancy Group Discussion (10 minutes)**

The presenter *withdraws* from the group, taking notes on the discussion (IMPORTANT – the presenter may not make comments or answer questions during this time). The consultancy group might describe possible actions that the presenter might take, but they should not decide on a solution. Their job is simply to refine the issues for the presenter. Suggested questions to get the discussion going:

* What did we hear?
* What didn’t we hear that we think might be relevant?
* What assumptions seem to be operating?
* What questions does the dilemma raise for us?
* What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma?
* What have we done in similar situations?

**Step 5: Presenter Reflection (3 minutes)**

Referring to notes taken during the consultancy group discussion, the presenter reflects on what the participants said and how their comments have affected his or her thinking. It is particularly important for the presenter to share new insights that the discussion has provided.

***Adapted from the National School Reform Faculty***

**Handout 2.13b Consultancy Protocol – Note-Taking Tool**

**Directions:** This tool is to be used by the practice dilemma presenter. During step 4 of the consultancy protocol, the presenter will take notes on the consultancy group’s discussion. The presenter may **NOT** comment or answer questions during this time. The presenter will then use these notes to guide reflection.

NAME:

PROBLEM OF PRACTICE:

MY CLARIFYING QUESTIONS:

MY PROBING QUESTIONS:

OTHER THOUGHTS:

**Handout 2.13c – Sample Practice Dilemmas**

**Directions:** Use these practice dilemmas for any learners who do not have their own dilemma of practice or for a “practice” round prior to completing the consultancy protocol in small groups.

**Transition Dilemma #1**

*I am an early intervention service coordinator. Often when I receive information about a new infant from the hospital with a diagnosed disability there is no other information besides the family’s name and the medical notes. This can make it difficult for me to provide a smooth transition that takes into the child and family’s needs for a successful adjustment and positive outcomes in Part C services.*

FOCUS QUESTION: *How can I communicate to local hospitals the importance of providing more information about families and infants with disabilities and what resources might be helpful in this conversation?*

**Transition Dilemma #2**

*I am a special education preschool teacher in an urban environment and every year I have children coming from a multitude of different care centers across the city. I have a very difficult time maintaining relationships with all of the difference centers so that we can ensure continuity of services and successful adjustment for both the children and the families.*

FOCUS QUESTION: *How can I ensure a better exchange of information between my preschool program and all of the various care centers when there are more than I can maintain meaningful relationships with?*