

LEVELS OF YES AND NO: Just exactly how much do we love or hate that option?

PURPOSE: Provides a visual display of the positions held by team members, identifies concerns, and determines how to address those concerns.

TIME: 70 to 90 minutes.

MATERIALS: Flip chart, felt-tip markers, 3-inch sticky notes (two per team member).

1. Clarify the option the team is considering. Write the option on the top of a flip chart page. Ask team members to pair up and share their understanding of the option, checking to see if all team members can paraphrase the option being considered. **Time: 5 minutes.**
2. Facilitate a dialogue and discussion about the option. **Time: 20 minutes.**
3. Re-clarify the option. Read the statement from Step 1 and ask if everyone still agrees that this really is the option being considered. If the answer is yes, the group proceeds. If the answer is no, repeat the process again, beginning with Step 1. **Time: 5 minutes.**
4. When the group agrees that the option statement is accurate, replicate the chart on p. 9 on the flip chart underneath the option statement. Walk the group through the Levels of Yes and No.
5. Ask team members to think about the situation and choose the number that best represents their current opinions about the option. Ask each participant to record his or her number on one of the sticky notes and to write a brief rationale for his or her rating. (Signing notes is helpful but should not be required.) **Time: 5 minutes.**
6. Have participants place the sticky notes on the flip chart in a column next to the number that matches their rating. The resulting bar graph will provide a visual display of the team's opinions. **Time: 2 minutes.**
7. Read the statements of rationale from all of the sticky notes. Ask participants to listen analytically, looking for categories of rationale as well as similarities and differences among the categories. **Time: 5-10 minutes.**
8. Focus the team on the rationale statements that express a concern, beginning with those mentioned most frequently. Examine concerns from both the Yes and the No sides. **Time: 5 minutes.**
9. Invite participants to speak for each side of the option, beginning with the No side. Invite questions from the participants. Remind all participants to stay open to the influence of others. **Time: 15-30 minutes.**
10. When everyone has been heard, repeat Steps 5 and 6. Ask the team to evaluate the Levels of Yes and No chart to determine if "most" has been reached by either side. If "most" has been reached by the No side, then the option is rejected. If "most" has been reached by the Yes side, then the team moves to the declaring phase. Regardless of the results, label the chart page with the date and retain as part of the group memory. **Time: 10 minutes.**

School-based staff developers are often required to run meetings within their school and often districtwide meetings as well.

Some of these are learning meetings but many are meetings in which participants will be expected to reach some agreement on one or more agenda items.

This tool will introduce you to a method for identifying the Levels of Yes and No within a group.

If everybody is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking.

— Gen. George S. Patton

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of a two-page tool**

10 =	Absolutely yes	
9 =	Strongly yes	
8 =	Strongly yes	
7 =	Somewhat in favor	
6 =	Mildly in favor	
5 =	Mildly opposed	
4 =	Somewhat opposed	
3 =	No	
2 =	Strongly no	
1 =	Absolutely no	

Have participants place the sticky notes in a column next to the number that matches their rating. The resulting bar graph will provide a visual display of the team's opinions.

Let go of your attachment to being right, and suddenly your mind is more open. You're able to benefit from the unique viewpoints of others, without being crippled by your own judgment.

— Ralph Marston

SOURCE: Levels of Yes and No, reprinted with permission from *Putting Sense Into Consensus*, by Connie Hoffman and Judy Ness (VISTA Associates, 1998).