

| Conventional Groups | Participatory Groups |
|---|---|
| The fastest thinkers and most articulate speakers get more airtime. | Everyone participates, not just the vocal few. |
| People interrupt each other on a regular basis. | People give each other room to think and get their thoughts all the way out. |
| Differences of opinion are treated as <i>conflict</i> that must be either stifled or “solved.” | Opposing viewpoints are allowed to co-exist in the room. |
| Questions are often perceived as challenges, as if the person being questioned has done something wrong. | People draw each other out with supportive questions. “Is <i>this</i> what you mean?” |
| Unless the speaker <i>captivates</i> their attention, people space out, doodle, or check the clock. | Each member makes the effort to pay attention to the person speaking. |
| People have difficulty listening to each other’s ideas because they’re busy rehearsing what they want to say. | People are able to listen to each other’s ideas because they know <i>their own ideas will also be heard</i> . |
| Some members remain quiet on controversial issues. No one really knows where everyone stands. | Each member speaks up on matters of controversy. Everyone knows where everyone stands. |
| People rarely give accurate representations of the opinions and reasoning of those whose opinions are at odds with their own. | Members can accurately represent each other’s point of view – even when they don’t agree with them. |
| Because they don’t feel permission to be direct <i>during</i> the meeting, people talk behind each other’s backs outside the meeting. | People refrain from talking behind each other’s backs. |
| People with discordant, minority perspectives are commonly discouraged from speaking out. | Even in the face of opposition from the person-in-charge, people are encouraged to stand up for their beliefs. |
| A problem is considered solved as soon as the fastest thinkers have reached an answer. Everyone else is then expected to “get on board” regardless of whether s/he understands the logic of the decision. | A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning. |
| When people make an agreement, it is assumed that they are all thinking the exact same thing. | When people make an agreement, it is assumed that the decision still reflects a wide range of perspectives. |