Assessment within a quality program
QKLG Train-the-trainer workshop: Session 2, Conversation 3

Purpose
This intentional conversation is designed to support participants to understand how assessment contributes to informed curriculum decision-making.

Key messages
- Assessment is an integral part of the overall process of curriculum decision making.
- The main purpose of assessment is to inform short- and long-term planning to promote children’s learning.
- Assessment to support learning involves interpreting documented evidence and making judgments about a child’s learning.
- The Continua of learning and development: Queensland kindergarten learning guideline companion provides advice to help teachers make consistent judgments about children’s learning progress.

Resources

You will need:
- PowerPoint: Assessment within a quality program
- a copy of the QKLG for reference
- a copy of the following handouts for each group of four participants, or ask participants to bring their copy of the QKLG and the Continua:
  - Assessing children’s learning (QKLG p. 14)
  - Promoting continuity of learning and development … (QKLG pp. 34–35)
  - Diverse learning pathways (QKLG p. 36)
  - Making consistent judgments (Continua p. 5)
- a bell, chime or similar to represent an elevator chime
- a copy of the following for each participant:
  - Observation sample: Maeve’s water play learning journey
- a copy of the following for each participant, or ask participants to bring their copy of the QKLG and the Continua:
  - Figure 2: Informed decision making (QKLG p. 18)
  - Continuum of learning and development: Active learning (Continua pp. 26–27)
  - Active learning key focus … (QKLG p. 54)
Conversation process

Introduction
Use the PowerPoint Assessment within a quality program to guide the conversation process.

- Briefly explain the purpose of the conversation using Slide 2
- Show Slide 3 and read the key messages
- Show Slides 4 and 5 and talk participants through the process they will use for the conversation.

The conversation
Ask participants to form groups of four and engage in the intentional conversation.

Step one
Explain that each person in a group is about to become an ‘expert’ on one aspect of assessing children’s learning.

Invite participants to select one of the four handouts provided to their group, or to turn to the relevant page of their QKLG or the companion document. The handouts are:

- Assessing children’s learning (QKLG p. 14)
- Promoting continuity of learning and development … (QKLG pp. 34–35)
  - Read from the heading: ‘The continua: Phases of learning and development’, below Figure 4
- Diverse learning pathways (QKLG p. 36)
  - Read from the heading: ‘Using the continua’ to the end of the page
- Making consistent judgments (Continua p. 5).

Ask participants to make brief notes as they read. They will use these notes to give an ‘elevator explanation’ of their topic to their group. An ‘elevator explanation’ is one that you can give to other people in the time it takes you to travel with them in an elevator for about 15 floors: 2 minutes maximum.

Step two
Invite participants to take turns to give their elevator explanations to the others in their group, starting with the person who read page 14 of the QKLG. Proceed to the person who read pages 34 and 35, then page 36 and finally page 5 of the Continua. This order will help build logical connections for participants. You will need to indicate the end of each 2-minute explanation period with an instrument such as a bell or chime that mimics arriving at the destination floor.

Step three
Explain to participants that they are now going to apply what they have learnt by analysing and discussing an observation of a child’s learning, using the document Observation sample: Maeve’s water play learning journey.
Ask them to look at Figure 2: Informed decision making and read through the explanation under the heading ‘assessing children’s learning’, subheading ‘interpreting documented evidence of learning’.

Step four
Ask participants to use the questions they have just read under ‘assessing children’s learning: interpreting documented evidence of learning’ as they discuss the context/commentary in Observation sample: Maeve’s water play learning journey.

Step five
Ask participants to turn to the second page of the observation sample to identify and discuss the key focuses in the learning and development areas that are evident in this sample. The following focuses might be identified:

- Identity — Building a confident self-identity
- Connectedness — Building positive relationships with others
- Wellbeing — Exploring ways to show care and concern and interact positively with others
- Active learning — Building positive dispositions and approaches toward learning
- Communicating — Exploring and engaging with numeracy in personally meaningful ways.

At the end of the discussion, point out to participants that this particular observation enables the teacher to focus on significant learning in multiple learning and development areas. For instance, it would be possible to use it in Maeve’s portfolio as evidence of her numeracy learning, of her capacity to build positive relationships with others and of her confidence in herself as a learner. However, observations of significant learning will not always relate to multiple learning and development areas.

Step six
Tell participants that they are now going to focus on the Active learning area. Ask them to analyse the observation sample for evidence of Maeve’s positive dispositions and approaches to learning. What is it that she says and does that provide the evidence?

Ask them to record their notes under the heading ‘analysis’ on the second page of the observation sample, and briefly share their ideas within their group.

Step seven
Ask participants to read the section ‘assessing children’s learning: making judgments’ in Figure 2: Informed decision making.

Tell them that they are now going to use the continuum to help them make judgments about Maeve’s learning in the Active learning area. Remind them that they would normally do this with a collection of evidence in Maeve’s portfolio of learning.

Invite participants to consider the level of support provided to Maeve in terms of her positive dispositions and approaches to learning. Ask them to consider also whether the learning occurred in a familiar or new situation.

Draw participants’ attention to the continuum’s phase descriptions at the start of the Continuum of learning and development: Active learning. Invite them to discuss the phase that best represents Maeve’s learning, noting particularly the type of situation and level of support evident in the sample observation.
Refer participants to the next page of the *Continuum of learning and development: Active learning*. Invite them to read the examples in the phase they think best represents Maeve’s learning. Do these examples confirm their judgment? Is Maeve’s learning more like these examples? If not, ask them to read the adjacent set of examples to see if Maeve’s learning is more like those. Draw attention to the extra dot points at the end of each set of examples and suggest that, as they use the examples for making consistent judgments, they might add their own examples that reflect their particular community context and group of learners.

Ask participants to complete ‘Making judgments’ on the second page of the observation sample, briefly explaining their judgment. For example, they might write, ‘Maeve’s self-initiated suggestion that they count the beads and her confident request for help only when she recognised that she needed it, demonstrates learning more like the learning of a child in the extending phase’.

Invite participants to briefly share their explanations in their group.

**Step eight**

Ask participants to think about some intentional teaching responses that they might use to further promote Maeve’s learning and development in terms of her positive dispositions and approaches to learning, and to write these on the second page of the observation sample.

Invite them to share their ideas with the others in their group.

**Conclusion**

To conclude the conversation:

- Bring the small groups back together for some whole group work.
- Refer participants to *Active learning key focus* … (*QKLG* p. 54). Explain the layout.
  
  - Point out the four key focuses of Active learning on the left. The details on the page relate to the highlighted key focus — ‘is building positive dispositions and approaches toward learning’.
  
  - The three points on the right refer to significant learnings or aspects of building positive dispositions and approaches toward learning
  
  - The box on the left provides an overview of the knowledge, skills and dispositions that teachers promote during the Kindergarten Year
  
  - The box on the right contains a collection of intentional teaching ideas they might use
  
  - Point out the provision for teachers to add their own examples that reflect their context
  
- Invite participants to read through the intentional teaching ideas to identify and share any that they might use to promote Maeve’s learning.

**More information**

If you would like more information, please visit the *QKLG* professional development material on the QCAA website: [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au).