Making connections through stories
QKLG Train-the-trainer workshop: Session 2, Practice conversation

Purpose
This conversation is designed to help participants to explore characteristics of quality kindergarten experiences. It can be used as an ice-breaker activity and/or completed as a lead-in to intentional conversation 1.

Key messages
• Conversations are a powerful way to help participants to make connections between their experiences and new information or ideas.
• Well-focused conversations support ongoing professional learning.

Resources
For each group of three people you will need:
- a ‘turn-taker’ — an object that identifies the speaker during the conversation process, e.g. a natural object such as a shell or an everyday object such as a pen
- bell, chime or timer
- a felt pen
- six blank cards (large enough for writing that can be read at a distance).

Conversation process
Conversations often rely on stories and examples to be effective. Every centre and educator will have their own stories and experiences, and as a facilitator you also have a wealth of stories to illustrate the information you need to provide. You can ‘break the ice’ with participants by having conversations about what they know and are passionate about, and then lead on to less familiar information.

Introduction
Explain the process to participants. You might say something like this:
Let’s have one of these conversations, employing the strategy of a ‘dialogue circle’. In a dialogue circle, participants use a ‘turn-taker’ that identifies them as the speaker. When the speaker has the turn-taker, no-one is allowed to interrupt them. When the speaker finishes, they pass the turn-taker to the next speaker. This continues until all members of the group have spoken.
The conversation

Ask participants to form groups of three and provide each group with the resources listed above.

Step one

Ask participants to think about what constitutes a quality kindergarten experience for children and their parents, then construct a short story that demonstrates a quality kindergarten experience (e.g. retell an event, a conversation, or something you saw).

Step two

In each group, each person will tell their story. Give the first person the turn-taker, and 3 minutes to tell their story. If the speaker shares their story in less than 3 minutes, other members of the group may make comments or ask questions in the remaining time. At the end of the 3 minutes, the turn-taker is passed to the next speaker.

Step three

After everyone has told their story, invite each group to work together to list their key learnings. For example, they may identify how parts of the stories demonstrate the characteristics of quality kindergarten experiences for children and their parents. Ask participants to write each key learning on one of the cards provided.

Step four

Invite each group to share their learnings with the whole group.

The learnings are likely to be of two types:
- what they learnt about conversations and stories
- what they learnt about characteristics of a quality kindergarten experience.

You could stick the cards on the wall as a reminder of the characteristics of quality kindergarten experiences.

Ask the participants to make a personal record of their learning:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you learn about conversations and sharing stories?</th>
<th>What did you learn about the characteristics of quality kindergarten experiences?</th>
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</thead>
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