



# Tips and Tricks for Hosting an ETFO Book Club

ETFO Book Clubs provide an excellent opportunity for members to reflect on their classroom practice, enhance their professional knowledge, and engage in the professional learning that best meets their needs and the needs of their students. These book clubs offer an opportunity for professional networking, sharing and reflections through an in-depth examination of ideas, concepts, research, and strategies presented in a professional resource. The books have been chosen due to their relevance to the real work of teachers and to authentic issues teachers are grappling with in their classrooms, so that teachers have a deeper understanding of their impact on classroom practice and student learning.

## **ETFO Book Clubs, for teachers and by teachers...**

ETFO Book Clubs facilitator guides have been written for teachers, by teachers. These resources engage your members in enhancing their professional knowledge and practice. Participants attend four two-hour sessions that focus on specific chapters of the various resources highlighted, consider strategies they can try in their classroom, and reflect on and share their experiences within a community of learners.

## **ETFO Book Clubs are adapted to the needs of your members...**

The facilitator guides have also been field tested by teachers and revised to reflect this. They have probably not been tested by you in your local. With that in mind, ETFO field testers would like to offer the following suggestions:

## **Respond to your members' needs...**

We all want rich discussions that are meaningful and worthwhile for teachers and worth their investment of time. An ETFO Book Club will vary from site to site depending on the interests and needs of each group.

- While the session order is suggested in the facilitator guide, the facilitator should feel welcome to make changes, as long as there is consistency among the sessions.
- The timelines are approximate, and not all activities must be completed. It is not like covering the curriculum, but rather professional learning, and that can travel in some surprising directions, so let it!

### **Own the scheduling of sessions...**

The guides have been written for four two-hour sessions. Please feel free to modify the number of sessions and duration to meet the needs of your members.

- You'll need time to get teachers registered and also to order the books and get them into the teachers' hands prior to your start date.
- While the sessions were planned for bi-weekly delivery, you might choose to schedule once a week for a month. As long as you allow time for active participation and lively discussions.
- Some field testers found the book to be excellent but the time frame too short. Feel free to make necessary adjustments to the session to make it comfortable for participants. The discussions are the important thing, because the big ideas are addressed in the conversation. Take the time needed to have those conversations, even if it means skipping some of the activities and readings.
- While the sessions are planned as four, two-hour sessions, you may find, as some field testers did, that you want to add more sessions to allow for more discussion and sharing of ideas among participants. Go for it!
- ETFO Book Clubs are a social time among members. Allow time for your members to eat, and network, and decide how to best allocate that time. It is up to the facilitators to own the decisions and meet the needs of each particular group.

### **You are welcome to modify the listed activities...**

- The guides have been developed deliberately to engage your members in thinking and discussing. Whatever activities you decide on as a facilitator, make sure that you involve teachers in sharing opinions with others in the teaching field and brainstorming new ideas to try. The mix of new and experienced teachers combined with a dedicated time to learn together in a comfortable relaxed setting should be rich for all!
- You might choose to have teachers bring in samples of a book or lesson, bags of tricks or even artifacts from school to share with each other and generate new thinking.

### **It's about what is best for teachers...**

- And that will depend on your group. In some cases, a fair amount of effort and time will be needed to keep up with the demands of the course or the book study. Please feel free to rework the plans as needed. ETFO Book Clubs should be supportive.
- If teachers don't have a classroom to try things out in, then be flexible about how you have your participants apply their learning to the classroom.
- If teachers can't find the time to do the reading in preparation for the session, maybe sections of the reading can be completed during the ETFO Book Club session.