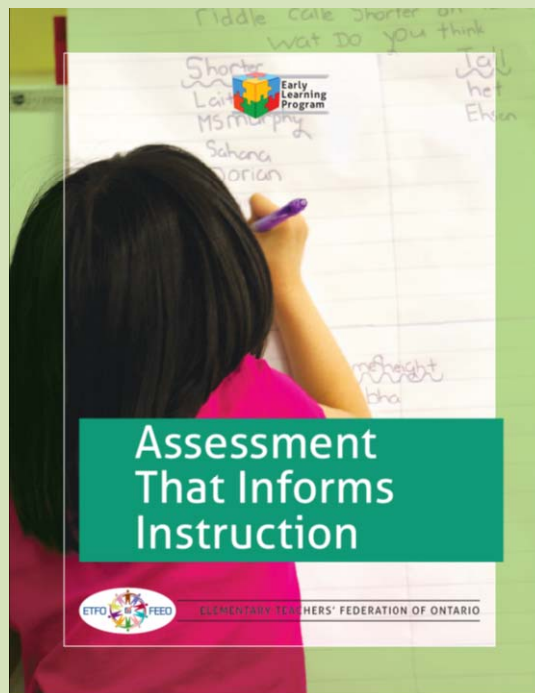


# Facilitator Guide ETFO Book Clubs



# Thinking It Through

## Assessment That Informs Instruction

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## Introduction to ETFO Book Clubs

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario is committed to providing professional development for its members in a variety of forms. Teachers are best able to determine what professional development they need to pursue as life-long learners and ETFO Book Clubs are designed for voluntary participation of interested members. As ETFO professional development programs and services continue to evolve to meet the challenging needs of educators and their students, the new season of offerings has been expanded to include book clubs with a focus on classroom management, differentiated instruction, and Kindergarten.

Professional 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.

A book club is a staff learning experience that gives educators an opportunity for professional networking, sharing, and reflection through an in-depth examination of ideas, concepts, research, and strategies presented in a professional resource.

The main goals of ETFO Book Clubs are:

- To enhance the professional knowledge of our members.
- To enhance the professional practice of our members.
- To foster leadership at the local level.
- To implement high-yield, research-based instructional strategies.
- To monitor the impact or effects of instructional decisions on students.
- To reflect on current teaching practices.

When professional book club experiences are tied to the real work of teachers, and to authentic issues they are grappling with in their classrooms, teachers have a deeper understanding of their impact on classroom practice and student learning.

## Book Club Structure

Professional book clubs provide an excellent opportunity for our members to enhance 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. As a facilitator, you will contribute to building leadership capacity within our locals in the area of professional development.

## Roles and Responsibilities

ETFO Book Clubs are offered in partnership between locals and the provincial office. Facilitator guides, such as this one, have been developed by members to support you as you facilitate this book club.

## The Role of the Facilitator

A book club facilitator guides a group of participants through an interactive discussion of a selected title. The facilitator organizes the session and conducts the meetings. Group members can expect the facilitator to use open-ended questions, wait time, and paraphrasing to encourage participation. The facilitator also emphasizes the importance of keeping the discussion on track, focusing on one topic or task at a time. The person in this role is not an expert and should remain neutral allowing group members to share different perspectives. All group members are valued and encouraged to participate in their own way.

“The most valuable insight a group can have is that the most effective resources for moving ahead are found within their situation and within themselves.”

R. Bruce Williams

## Establishing Group Norms

Any group that meets regularly to work together needs to identify a set of norms or ground rules that will help a group do its work and discourage behaviours that interfere with a group's effectiveness. Norms govern how the group will interact, share, and learn together.



It is ideal to set norms at the beginning of a group's work together inviting group members to suggest ideal behaviours for groups, eventually refining them into an agreed-upon set of norms. Once established and posted, groups need to continually remind themselves about the norms they have created.

Some topics you may want to raise as starting points for discussion with your group are:

Expectations for behaviour – How will your group relate to one another within (and beyond) the group? Considering norms in TRIBES such as right to pass, attentive listening, and taking turns, may be helpful.

Shared leadership – How will members share responsibility for the group? How will decisions be made about what to read, when to meet, and where to meet be made?

Participation and interaction – How will members work together? Considering roles such as recorder, timekeeper, and encourager may ensure that all group members become involved in the discussions.

One strategy that may be helpful when reviewing group norms is 'Round-Robin Reflection'. In this process everyone takes 30 seconds to silently reflect on the extent to which he/she honoured the group's norms and to what extent it enhanced the group's work. The facilitator then chooses someone at random to share their reflections. When this person is finished then another group member paraphrases what they have heard. This process is repeated in round-robin fashion beginning with the person to the right of the first speaker.

## Building Inclusion

Grounding is an excellent inclusion activity for introductory meetings. It serves several purposes including:

- establishing a norm for respectful listening;
- bringing people into the here and now;
- allowing people to connect with one another; and
- allowing for expression of hopes and apprehensions.

Directions - Each person in round-robin fashion, speaks to these points:

- name;
- current role;
- school;
- reasons for joining a professional book study; and
- expectations of the book club experience.

Powerful  
Conversations:

- Focused
- Productive
- Interactive

## Needs of Individuals in Groups

Regardless of the nature of the group and its purpose, some basic needs must be met within the group setting for it to be as focused, productive, and interactive as possible. A good facilitator looks for signs of the characteristics listed below to determine whether it provides the kind of satisfaction group members need. Periodically it may be helpful to give group members time to evaluate the extent to which the group is meeting their individual needs.

The following are important needs group members value. As the group evolves, it is about finding the balance between the needs of the group members and the group work that needs to be accomplished.

Feeling a sense of belonging – Group members need a collaborative environment where they feel safe and supported in their presence and their contribution to the group's work.

Commitment to group goals – Group members achieve commitment when they see value in the goals selected, having a part in selecting and refining those goals, and directing the group process.

Sense of progress – It is important to give group members opportunities to reflect on their progress toward goals so that members feel a sense of accomplishment.

Having confidence in the facilitator – A good facilitator establishes a supportive, risk free learning environment emphasizing the importance of professional dialogue. The facilitator organizes the sessions and conducts the meetings. The person in the role of facilitator is not intended to be an expert and should remain neutral, allowing participants to share different perspectives.

## Knowing Your Participants

When developing a group’s capacity for powerful conversations, Robert Garmston suggests that group members set aside unproductive patterns of listening, talking, and participating.

However, from time-to-time, facilitators may need to confront challenging situations. Late arrivals at meetings, overbearing participants, and conflict among group members can negatively impact on a group. Although there is no “right” way to respond to these problems, here are some possible solutions to common problems faced by facilitators.

“We should all try to listen with the same intensity we have when we are talking.”  
Richard Saul Wurman

Non talker – Honour an individual’s right to pass. Each member has the right to choose when and to what extent they will participate in the group discussion; ask open ended questions and learn to be silent.

Underminer – Focus on the agenda and topics agreed upon by the group. Don’t acknowledge or over react; at the end of the session revisit the group norms and their purpose.



Rambler – When the member pauses, refocus attention by restating the relevant points and move on; ask "How does that relate to \_\_\_\_\_?"

Side talker – Re-direct conversation by asking the person an easy question or to paraphrase what has been stated; create a parking lot (flip chart, sticky notes) to post questions or issues that can be discussed in a later session.

Over talkative – State "We only have a limited amount of time today. We want everyone to have a chance."

## Further Reading

Robert Garmston. "Teacher Talk That Makes a Difference". Educational Leadership, ASCD, April 1998.

Garmston, R. & Wellman, B. The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups, Christopher-Gordon Publishers, 1999.

Richardson, J. "Norms Put the 'Golden Rule' into Practice for Groups". Tools for Schools, NSDC, August-September 1999.

Easton, L.B. Powerful Designs for Professional Learning. NSDC, 2004.

Richard G. Weaver & John D. Farrell. Managers as Facilitators: A Practical Guide to Getting Work Done in a Changing Workplace, McGraw Hill, 1999.

Bennett J., Dawson R., & Torney. "Book Study Facilitator's Guide for Teaching Student-Centred Mathematics". Pearson Education, Canada, 2007.

Wisconsin Staff Development Council – [www.wi-sdc.org](http://www.wi-sdc.org).

## Introduction to *Assessment That Informs Instruction*

The title of the resource ***Assessment That Informs Instruction*** was very carefully chosen to reflect the belief that assessment and instruction are connected and that the purpose of assessment is for learning. The assessment information that educators collect forms the basis of planning. In the busy life of the classroom, this may not always happen.

In kindergarten, as children are engaged in play at learning centres, educators have an opportunity to observe children demonstrate their learning in multiple ways. In essence assessment in kindergarten is dependent upon a rich learning environment. The two are inextricably linked. Observation is the key method of assessment in kindergarten and demands a particular skill set for educators to use it successfully. The document refers to watching what children are doing. Educators need to think ahead as to what they might see but also be open enough to watch without preconceived notions at times; listening to children (listening for children's theories, ideas and understandings to better understand their thinking); interacting (educators need to find the balance between interrupting and interacting to understand the child's thinking or to seek clarification). The document outlines key elements for observing. The appendix has a beginning list of questions that might be used for observation. This may be very useful to educators who are new or for those who want affirmation for what they are already doing.

The document presents different tools and strategies that educators might use at various times. Some of these may be very familiar and some may be new. The difference in the outline for each is the addition of categories for why and how they might be used. Educators need a system for collecting information, a system that will work for them and prove useful for planning and communicating information to others. Educators may use the examples as a basis for reflecting on the systems they use and their effectiveness.

In this book club participants will have the opportunity to meet with other kindergarten educators to read, dialogue with and reflect on current practice. The sessions have been organized into four large areas that are important for assessment.

In the first session, educators will engage in the collection of some data about the group as a whole and in so doing get to meet other members. The discussions for the session will engage participants in thinking about why we assess, developmentally appropriate assessment practices and authentic play assessment.

Assessment is not without its challenges and for some educators these challenges come from pressures outside of the classroom. The second session will look at some of these challenges and engage participants in thinking about possible solutions. They will also take an in-depth look at planning for observation: watching, listening, interacting with children, etc.

The third session examines tools and strategies for assessment, helping educators learn about new ones and reflect on their purpose, when and how they might be used.

The fourth session is about communication, how to develop a system for oneself that communicates what is known about the child, how to engage children in self-assessment, communicating to parents and communicating with other staff.

# Session One: Thinking About Assessment

## Readings:

***Assessment That Informs Instruction***, Example, page 8

## General Overview:

In this first session, the introductory activity has been organized to collect some data about the group in various ways. This data will give the facilitator an overview of the group but will also enable participants to connect as they discover the commonalities within the group. This first session also gives participants an opportunity to engage in self-reflection on their beliefs about assessment and also to reflect on the learning in the session. This first session engages the members of the group in thinking about practice in relation to being developmentally appropriate and considering what authentic assessment opportunities are in the classroom. This should create the context or framework for thinking about assessment in the other sessions. As participants enter, have them fill out a name card and choose a place to sit at one of the group tables.

## Key Learning/Objectives:

During this session participants will:

- Begin to collect some data about the group as a whole
- Identify data that might be collected about the group of children
- Engage in self and group reflection
- Reflect on why it is important to assess
- Discuss developmentally appropriate practices in relation to assessment
- Identify authentic opportunities for assessment
- Reflect on the learning in the session



## Materials:

**Assessment That Informs Instruction** resource

LM 1.1 Self-Reflection (one per person)

LM 1.2 Head, Heart and Hands Reflection sheet (one per person)

LM 1.3 Homework Response sheet (one per person)

Name tags for each person

Markers

Chart paper with questions already filled in for Getting To Know Us activity

Blank square post-it notes

Gummed circles or squares

Blank chart paper for two separate activities and enough for each group

## Time: 120 minutes

## Instructional Tasks:

### **Getting to Know Us: 25 minutes**

*Background:* In this activity, participants fill in a number of different graphs that will collect information about the individuals in the group and the group as a whole. The charts will need to be prepared ahead of time so participants can complete them after a few instructions.

*Purpose:* To collect information about the group as a whole and for members to make connections with others.

### Instructions and Task

1. Before participants arrive, prepare the following charts:
  - a. *When is your birthday?* (label chart paper vertically with months on the left hand side leaving enough room for participants to write their name and birthdate on the Post-it notes™).



<b>When is your birthday?</b>	
<b>January</b>	
<b>February</b>	

b. *Is this your first time teaching kindergarten?*

<b>Is this your first time teaching kindergarten?</b>	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1111 (ask participants to use tally marks)	11

c. *How many years have you taught?*

<b>How many years have you taught?</b>				
<b>1-2 years</b>	<b>3-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-20 years</b>	<b>20 +</b>
				Lynn

d. *Do you teach a half-day program or a full day program?*

<b>Do you teach a half-day program or a full day program?</b>	
<b>Half-day</b>	<b>Full Day</b>
√	
√	
√	

e. *Do you teach JK, SK, JK/SK, Other*

<b>Do you teach JK, SK, JK/SK, Other?</b>			
<b>JK</b>	<b>SK</b>	<b>JK/SK</b>	<b>Other</b>

Note: Use gummed circles or squares for participants to indicate response



2. Ask participants to circulate and respond to all the questions.
3. Debrief the activity: Ask:
  - *What did we learn about us as a group?*
  - *If this was the information from a class of children, how would knowing the birthdays of the group be helpful/not helpful?*
  - *What data do you collect about children before they enter school?*

### **Self-Reflection: 10 minutes**

*Background:* Self-reflection is an important component of professional development. Very often educators feel they don't have the time or do not take the time to engage in this practice. The self-reflection sheet, LM 1.1 asks participants to reflect on their practice in relation to some of the statements.

*Purpose:* To reflect on practice in relation to key ideas of assessment.

#### Instruction and Tasks

1. Ask each participant to fill out Self-reflection LM 1.1. Explain that it will not be shared but is for their personal use as they reflect about aspects of assessment. Advise them that they will need to bring it back to the last session.

### **If we didn't assess: 15 minutes**

*Background:* Assessment is part of the educator's role and is something that must be done. In some situations, assessment drives everything in the classroom. It may be viewed as a chore by some educators, a requirement of the job and not a necessity. This short exercise is to begin the thinking about what would happen if we didn't assess-to have participants dialogue and think creatively about the topic.

This is a brainstorming activity and that means all suggestions are accepted and recorded.



*Purpose:* To initiate conversation on the topic of assessment and to look at the topic of assessment from a different perspective.

#### Instructions and Task

1. **Small Group Work:** Give each group a piece of chart paper and a marker. Have groups select one person to be the recorder and one person to be the reporter.
2. Ask the recorder to write the sentence: *If we didn't assess....* at the top of the paper. Instruct the groups to finish the sentence multiple times. Remind them of the rules of brainstorming-all ideas are accepted and recorded. There isn't debate. Tell groups they will have five minutes,
3. **Whole Group Debrief:** After five minutes stop the groups and ask the reporter to read three of the sentences from the group. Continue taking responses until all have been heard. Remind groups to tick off responses that are the same so that they will not be repeated.
4. Ask: *What did you notice about the responses? Were there any that surprised you?*

#### **What are developmentally appropriate assessment practices? 30 minutes**

##### *Background:*

The National Association for the Education of Young Children talks about developmentally appropriate assessment practices. What then does this look like and sound like in a kindergarten classroom? Participants are asked to explore this idea by contrasting the two ideas.

*Purpose:* To identify practices which are developmentally appropriate and inappropriate to set the context for further discussion.

#### Instructions and Task

1. **Small Group Task:** Give each group a blank piece of chart paper and two different coloured markers and create a chart as per example below.



<b><i>Developmentally appropriate assessment practices</i></b>	<b><i>Developmentally inappropriate assessment practices</i></b>

2. Whole Group Debrief: Take one or two examples from each group. Ask: What were your criteria for deciding whether a practice was appropriate or inappropriate? Note: Identifying practices as inappropriate may make some people uncomfortable especially if these are part of their assessment methods. The information from this task may be useful for the facilitator in noting where more discussion might be needed.

### **Authentic play assessment: 25 minutes**

*Background:* Much of the assessment information that can be gathered occurs while children are engaged in play at learning centres and outdoors. This is an ideal opportunity for educators to take the time to observe. The example on page 8 shows how an educator can place children in unauthentic situations because of pressure and lack of understanding.

*Purpose:* To identify authentic play assessment situations and to reflect on what authentic means.

Instructions and Task:

1. Whole Group: Refer participants to the example on page 8 in ***Assessment That Informs Instruction*** and either read it to them or have them skim read.
2. Ask: *Why is this not an authentic assessment task?*
3. Small Group Work: Ask each group to write a 'working' definition for authentic assessment and to provide some examples of what that would look like in a kindergarten classroom.
4. Whole Group Debrief: Ask one person from each group to report on their 'working' definition and two examples.



5. Ask: *Why is it important to engage young children in authentic assessment experiences?*

## Reflection: 10 minutes

### Head, Heart and Hands

*Background:* This is a simple way to have people reflect on the discussions in the session. Head represents what people might be thinking, heart represents something they might be feeling/something they are passionate about, hands represents something they would like to try or do.

*Purpose:* To formalize the reflection process for sharing

1. Give each person LM 1.2 and explain the meaning of the symbols (head, heart, hand). Ask them to complete the page. Explain that first thoughts are important.
2. Once complete, have participants share their sheet with an elbow partner.

## Homework/Follow-up Task: 5 minutes

Have participants read *Effective Observation*, pages 18-30 filling in LM 1.3 as they read. Bring an example of an observation note, and an organizational strategy for keeping anecdotal notes. Advise participants that they will have time to share why they chose the particular example and how this is useful to them.



## Session Two: Considerations for Assessment

### Readings:

***Assessment That Informs Instruction, Effective Observation***, pages 18-30

### General Overview:

Through a review of the readings about observation, participants will share the key ideas and strategies they use. The session encompasses some of the considerations in planning-thinking about the challenges and possible solutions, how assessment is linked to planning-you can't have one without the other if educators subscribe to the notion of assessment for learning. Planning for assessment begins before school starts. Each educator prepares in a different way but the important message is that a plan is in place. Educators will be asked to share their plans.

### Key Learnings/Objectives:

- Reflect on readings about observation
- Share practical examples
- Reflect on the rationale for having a system that works for assessment
- Read practical examples and what these educators have in place for assessment
- Consider the challenges/issues for assessment and possible solutions
- Consider the connection between planning and assessment
- Think about what needs to be in place before school starts and share practices
- Reflect on learnings for the day

### Materials:

***Assessment That Informs Instruction*** resource

LM 1.3 Homework Response sheet (one per person)

*LM 2.1 Assessment Challenges (one per person)*

*LM 2.2 Group Planning (one per person for Homework)*



*Chart paper and markers*

*Name tags*

*Playing cards or other method for forming groups of four*

**Time: 120 minutes**

**Homework Review: 45 minutes**

**Readings-Observation: 20 minutes**

*Purpose:* To review and synthesize the information from readings and share ideas.

Instructions and Task: 20 minutes

1. Partner Work: Have participants find a partner at another table. Ask them to share their responses to the Line Master 1.1.
2. Whole Group Debrief: *What was a connection that you made in the readings? What was a new learning?*

**Sharing Samples: 15 minutes**

1. Partner Work: Ask participants to, for example, find a partner who is similar in one way (long hair, wears glasses, wearing jeans, same height.....)
2. Ask them to share their observation notes/strategy for notes and talk about why they chose it and why/how it is useful.
3. Whole Group Debrief: Ask: *What is the one important thing you do when taking observation notes? Why is it important to have a system and especially works for you? (i.e., provides consistency, easier to decipher, requires less time and effort, similarities in information enable patterns to be seen more easily, you will miss information if you don't have a way to record it....)*

**Instructional Tasks:**

**Assessment Challenges: 20 minutes**

*Background:* Assessment in kindergarten is not without its challenges. There are



demands from many sources e.g., administrators, the board, parents, other educators including the educator's demands on self. Sometimes the challenges are personal, not having enough time, a system, lack of opportunity because of routines not being in place, a challenging group, and not knowing what to look for.

*Description of Activity:* Participants will use a graphic organizer to identify three challenges and then two possible strategies per challenge/issue. Although the issues may not be entirely personal for each participant, many will be aware of these through readings and from stories of others.

*Purpose:* To have participants identify some of the challenges they face with assessment and to identify possible solutions.

#### Instructions and Task

Model the use of the graphic organizer by filling in the first section as provided in LM 2.1. For example, a challenge might be not having time to assess and strategies might be to not plan anything with a small group until you have collected some assessment information; taking five minutes once children are settled to sit in a place in the room where you can observe what is happening. Ask participants for input for specific strategies. These may be strategies that they have tried or they might be something new that they would like to try. There are no right or wrong answers. It is important to be specific with a strategy not to be general.

#### Partner Work:

1. Ask participants to find a new partner-someone they have not worked with before.
2. Explain that they will work with their partner to complete the graphic organizer LM 2.1. Suggest that working together they can each fill in their own sheet sharing suggestions for strategies. The challenges might be different for each though.

#### Sharing with another pair:

1. Ask participants to stand and meet with another pair.



2. Inform them that they will have five minutes to share one of their issues and challenges. If time permits they may wish to share more but in order to give each person an opportunity start with one. Remind them to share the time equally. It may be helpful to appoint one person as the timekeeper to ensure that each person receives an equal amount of time.

### **The Connection between Planning and Assessment: 20 minutes**

*Background:* The purpose of assessment is to promote learning therefore it must be connected to planning. Both are processes that, for example, are deliberate, are planned, take time, are useful, encompass expectations, and are based on the children.

*Description of Activity:* Participants will use a Venn diagram and where the circles overlap with identify the connections/similarities.

*Purpose:* To explore the connections between the two and be able to articulate the links.

Instructions and Task:

1. Small Group Work: Hand each group a blank sheet of chart paper and some markers and have them draw a Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. Ask them to think of what is involved in the planning process and in assessment and place their ideas in the appropriate circle. Where the two overlap, participants should write the commonalities.
2. Whole Group Debrief: Ask: *What did you notice or learn? If you were asked to synthesize the info or put it in a 'nutshell', what would you say?*

### **Considerations for assessment planning: 20 minutes**

*Background:* Before school starts, plans for assessment should already be in place. Educators will create different systems and organizations and be ready to collect various forms of information.



*Purpose:* To share planning for assessment before school starts.

### Instructions and Task

1. Individual Task: Have participants skim read the examples on pages 4 and 5. Explain that they are only examples of what two teachers do. Everyone will have their own way of doing things.
2. Whole Group Debrief: Ask: *What stood out for you as you read the plans?*
3. Small Group work: Explain that before school starts, educators usually have plans and systems in place for gathering assessment information. This may include what they are looking for when children enter the kindergarten in those first few days. Ask members of the group to share their before school preparations-what they have thought about or organized. It may also include what happens during that first week e.g. as they collect samples of each child writing his/her name.

## Reflection: 10 minutes

### Say Something

*Background:* This strategy is a way for participants to synthesize the information they have heard, or read, and to have others respond. Participants write one or two sentences about assessment in kindergarten-whatever they would like to say. As each person reads their statement the other members in the group respond to the statement e.g. *I agree. I was thinking the same thing. I think that is a priority. Another way to think about it would be....* Each person gets a turn to respond without interruption or debate from others. Invite participants to write one or two sentences that reflect their thinking about assessment in the kindergarten classroom. When everyone in the group is ready, have groups choose one person to begin by reading their statement. Moving either clockwise or counter-clockwise, members of the group respond briefly to the statement. Then the next person reads their statement and the group members respond until everyone has had a turn. Note: You may have to remind people that this is not time for a debate.



## Homework/Follow-up Task: 5 minutes

1. Read *Assessment Tools and Strategies*, pages 37-55. Ask participants to try something new or to bring a sample of something mentioned in this section for sharing at the next session. Advise them that participants will be asked to share reasons for their choice and the effectiveness of the tool or strategy.
2. Instruct participants to use the grid LM 2.2 to sort the children in their class based on their oral language skills and bring to the next session. Tell participants that they must decide based on the current level of understanding about the child.



## Session Three: Tools and Strategies for Assessment

### Readings:

**Assessment That Informs Instruction**, *Assessment Tools and Strategies*, pages 37-55

### General Overview:

The main tool for assessment in kindergarten is observation. Observation includes watching what children are doing, listening to what they are saying and interacting to clarify and extend the learning. Children demonstrate what they know and can do as they engage in play within the classroom. In this session, participants will experience one way to organize the information based on the domains from the first session. There may be some differences in tools and strategies depending on learning areas but for the most part they are the same. One of the activities will ask participants to examine the similarities and differences. It is not enough just to gather the information. The information needs to guide planning in some way and support children's learning.

### Key Learning/Objectives:

- Review readings and reflect on implications for practice
- Share tools and strategies
- Try a strategy for organizing group information and how that might assist in planning for small groups of children
- Explore ideas related to assessment
- Connect observations to an experience by thinking ahead
- Reflect on the learnings of the session



## Materials:

**Assessment That Informs Instruction** resource

Name tags

Playing cards

Chart paper labeled with scenarios

Markers

Time: 120 minutes

## Homework Review: 40 minutes

### Sharing sample tools and strategies

*Background:* There are a number of ways to have participants form groups of four for sharing (matching playing cards, counting off, a puzzle with four pieces, colour coding name tags....). Sometimes participants seek out the comfort of the same group. Changing the groups changes the dynamics and is a way for participants to hear a range of views and to meet new people.

*Purpose:* To share ideas with others and to reflect on the effectiveness of the tool or strategy.

### Instructions and Tasks

1. To form groups of four, use, for example, playing cards that have been chosen and handed out (four sevens, four Kings....). Have participants find their group by matching four cards.
2. Ask participants to share the sample of the tool that they brought and have tried, talking about why they chose the one they did and the effectiveness of it.
3. Remind participants that the time needs to be shared equally in the group.

Whole Group Debrief: Ask: *Was there one that was totally new for anyone? Was there one that someone tried that they really liked? Why do you think the authors of this document chose the format they did for outlining the tools and strategies?*



## **Class Sample for Group Planning: 20 minutes**

*Background:* This is a simple visual strategy to help educators planning for a group of children. In kindergarten, we don't place children in specific groups but educators need to identify children's needs as a group and plan for small group instruction when needed. As in other grades, groupings are fluid but based on needs. The intent is not to overuse the strategy but to familiarize educators with how it could assist in planning and reflecting on the group of children as a whole.

*Purpose:* To use an assessment tool/strategy for group planning.

*Small Group Work:* Have groups share what they discovered about their class from using this visual strategy. Ask them to discuss the following questions in their group: *How will knowing this information assist you in planning for the group as a whole? (For example, if the majority of the children are just beginning to develop oral language skills then there must be more time in small groups with an adult, more modeling of language, more time to talk with others particularly in familiar dramatic play situations. Conversely if children's oral language skills are very well developed, then ensuring that they have a range of opportunities for using language, small group discussions with an adult about a book expressing opinions and possibilities are appropriate. What are some strategies that you will use for groups of children?*

*Whole Group Debrief:* Ask: *What did you learn from doing this exercise? What other tools/strategies are helpful for looking at the group as a whole? (continua, class profiles....).*

## **Instructional Tasks: 50 minutes**

*Background:* Groups will be given different topics for discussion, related to assessment. This is an open-ended discussion that needs not be monitored. The only requirement is that groups share the range of their discussion. They do not need to come to consensus or make a decision.



*Purpose:* To explore ideas in collaboration with others.

### Instructions and Task

1. **Small Group Work:** In groups of no more than four, provide each group with a discussion topic. This may be done in a variety of ways (randomly, they choose one of interest, you give them the topic). The instructions to the group are that they will have time to explore the topic in a free flowing discussion. The only requirement is that at the end someone in the group briefly gives a synopsis of some of the thinking.

Possible topics for discussion:

- *What role can technology play in documentation?*
- *How can documentation panels support the learning process of educators and children?*
- *What assessment information is critical for supporting children as learners?*
- *How does teacher bias affect assessment information?*
- *When does assessment not inform instruction?*
- *Why is the title of this document **Assessment That Informs Instruction**?*
- *What type of work samples are most informative?*

### **Watching, Listening and Interacting: 25 minutes**

*Background:* Although, educators should be open to what they are observing, it is also helpful to think ahead as to what they might be watching for, what they might listen to that would indicate children's knowledge and learning and what the possible interactions might be. Watching children is especially important for children who do not speak English or have limited facility with language. Quite often it is useful for educators to ask of themselves: *What might I see children doing or saying that would indicate their knowledge, skills and attitudes?* This 'thinking ahead' is a strategy that is very useful especially if educators are new to the profession. Scenarios have been chosen that would typically be found in a kindergarten program.



Overview of Strategy “Pass the Paper”: Each group responds to the scenario on the chart. The information is then cumulative as participants respond and read what others have written. Note: Charts will need to be made ahead of time.

*Purpose:* To experience thinking ahead about gathering assessment information.

### Instructions and Task

1. Prepare scenarios on chart paper ahead of time as follows:

<b><i>The educator has taken outside various sizes of balls, cones that have been set up in a pathway for children to kick the ball through and targets have been placed on the wall</i></b>		
What might you be watching for....?	What might you be listening for.....?	What might be some possible interactions for further information?

- The educator has added different sizes of empty sugar and flour bags to the sand for filling.
  - The children are following the pictures for planting their own seed.
  - At the water table, there are scoops of different sizes, different sizes of containers, clear plastic containers all of the same size, pouring containers with handles.
  - Children are working with the coloured hardware blocks that have different sizes and shapes.
  - Blocks of tempera paint and different sizes of paper have been added to the painting centre.
  - A box of keys have been added to the math centre. Note: Educators may choose the ones that are most appropriate for their group and the number that they need.
2. Explain to the groups that they will get a chance to record information for each scenario. One person can record for the group or they can take turns as each new



paper arrives. As they receive each paper, they should read the scenario and the previous responses, adding ideas of their own. The activity is over once they receive their own paper back. Note: Facilitators will need to time the activity in order to instruct the group on when to “Pass the Paper”. At the beginning the time may be a little longer to get them started. Facilitators can judge but three to four minutes should be more than ample time for groups to respond.

3. Whole Group Debrief: Once participants have the paper back that they started with, ask them to review the comments. Ask: *What are the benefits of thinking ahead as to what you might watch or listen for? What are the disadvantages?*

## Reflection: 20 minutes

### Partner A/Partner B

**Background:** In this strategy, partners each take time to talk. The facilitator designates who will begin and when the time is up (thirty seconds). The partner then will have the opportunity to continue for thirty seconds. With partners there is the opportunity to support each other in remembering.

**Purpose:** To remember as a way of reviewing the day, listen as the partner contributes ideas and reflect on key points.

### Instructions and Task

1. Have participants find a partner and designate who will be A and who will be B. Explain that each will have thirty seconds to talk and you will indicate when it is time to stop.
2. Ask A to begin talking about: *What we did today...* Say stop or use a predetermined signal and ask B to continue.
3. Ask B to begin talking about: *The main points of discussions today...* Stop B after 30 seconds and have A continue.
4. Ask A to begin talking about: *The most important ideas for me....* Stop A and have B continue.



## Homework/Follow up Task: 10 minutes

1. Read *Communicating with Parents*, pages 35-36.
2. Bring back self-reflection sheet from Session One.
3. Bring ***Planning for Learning*** resource



## Session Four: Communicating Assessment Information

### Readings:

**Assessment That Informs Instruction**, *Communicating with Parents*, pages 35-36 and **Planning for Learning**, page 9

### General Overview:

In this last session, communication is the focus-communication with parents in informal ways, communicating with children thinking about what we say and do that indicates to them they are making progress, engaging children in self-assessment so they can begin to reflect and communicate their learning, and opportunities for communicating with other staff. In some schools there is huge disparity between assessment practices that inevitably cause confusion and mixed messages to parents. Therefore it is important for staff to meet on these key issues to share ideas and develop consensus and understanding.

### Key Learnings/Objectives:

- Reflect on readings
- Share practices related to communication with parents
- Identify positive strategies for communicating progress to children
- Explore ways for engaging children in self-reflection
- Share practices for assessment discussions with other kindergarten staff
- Develop a personal plan of action in relation to assessment
- Reflect on the topic of assessment

### Materials:

**Assessment That Informs Instruction** resource

**Planning for Learning** resource

Line Master 4.1, Communicating with Parents (one per group)



Line Master 4.2, Personal Plan (one copy per person)  
ETFO Book Club Evaluation Form

Time: 120 minutes

### Homework Review: 30 minutes

*Background:* This strategy gives participants the opportunity to hear a range of ideas in a fairly short time frame. Ideally, there should be four in a group and the group formation should allow two to sit on one side of the table and two to sit on the other side. Tables may be organized in a line or a circle. Each group will discuss each question. After a specified amount of time has elapsed for the discussion of question #1, the facilitator will ask e.g., the inside two people or the two on the right side of the table in each group to move to the next table in the sequence. In other words, two people will always move and two will always stay put to meet the two new people at their table. Groups will then discuss question #2 and after the specified time has elapsed (approximately 10 minutes), the two people at each table designated to be the movers move to the next group. This continues until all questions have been discussed. Note: If the group is small, consider one moving and one staying and choosing the questions that might fit.

#### Instructions and Task

1. *How do you communicate with parents before school starts?*
2. *What developmental information does your school collect before school starts?  
How do they do it?*
3. *How do you communicate to parents and others about what children are learning at school throughout the year?*
4. *What strategies do you use for organizing a parent-teacher conference?*
5. *What documentation do you use at a conference, recognizing that it might be different for each child?*
6. *How are children involved or might be involved in the conference?*



Whole Group Debrief: *What is one piece of advice that all educators need to consider when communicating with parents?*

## Instructional Tasks: 60 minutes

### Communicating Progress to Children: 20 Minutes

*Background:* Educators give overt and subtle messages to children about how well they are doing. In kindergarten, this communication is not through number or letter grades but through what is said (e.g., I noticed that you can write your name all by yourself now. You don't even need your name card). This affirms for the child that they have learned something in a very specific way. Sometimes educators share progress through work samples (e.g., each month the children write their name in the name book to show progress over time). The challenge is to do this in developmentally appropriate ways and not stickers, or red check marks.

*Purpose:* Reflect on and share practices related to letting children know how they are doing.

#### Instructions and Task

1. Small Group Work: Propose the following question for discussion:
  - a. *What do you do or say that indicates to children that they are making progress or learning? Be specific. Note: You may want to use the example in the background section at the beginning of this session.*
  - b. *Consider the examples in light of what we know about developmentally appropriate practice.*
2. Whole Group Debrief: Ask:
  - a. *What would you consider to be some guidelines for the language we use with children*
  - b. *What we do?*



## **How do we engage children in self-assessment in kindergarten? 20 minutes**

*Background:* Beginning in kindergarten, we hope that children will be able to identify what they are good at doing and start thinking about what they need to learn how to do. For example, some educators engage children in discussions about what they have learned while going through their portfolio, during a writing conference educators ask children to think about what they have learned to do, classrooms with “what to do as a speaker” list have children to reflect on what they remembered to do.... This process supports children’s developing confidence and identify as a learner.

*Purpose:* To identify situations that might engage children in self-reflection

### Instructions and Task

1. **Small Group Work:** In small groups, ask participants to discuss the following question: *How do you engage children in self-assessment in kindergarten?* It might be in relation to learning to write, to oral language, to problem solving skills, to identify their strengths and progress over time.
2. **Whole Group Debrief:** Ask: *What should we consider about young children as we engage them in self-assessment?* I.e. their interest, their language skills, the purpose of why we are doing this, how this meshes with learning goals for children.

## **Communicating with other Staff: 20 minutes**

*Background:* It is important for educators to meet with other members of staff to discuss issues and collaboratively make decisions. The example provided in *Planning for Learning* is an example of a kindergarten educator group meeting to discuss issues.

*Purpose:* To read the example and reflect on how this might impact practice.

### Instructions and Task

1. **Partner Work:** Have participants read the example on page 9 of *Planning for Learning* and discuss:



- *What are the benefits of this type of plan for educators?*
  - *What are the benefits for children?*
2. Whole Group: Ask: *What other developmentally appropriate examples have you experienced or heard about that engage the kindergarten staff in assessment information discussions? (class profiles where the whole staff meets to discuss classes as a group and then make plans as to who might need more resources or support as a class group, how to use EDI information to plan for groups of children in the school, etc.*

## Reflection and Making a Plan: 25 minutes

*Background:* This is a follow-up from session one and will allow participants to review how they rated themselves in session one. After reviewing what they have written, participants will make a plan for what they will do after the book club. Writing the plan is a way of formalizing the intent to continue.

*Purpose:* To reflect on needs and make a plan for continuing after the book club.

1. Ask participants to review their self-reflection sheet from session one to see if they would change any of the ratings.
2. Explain that part of the purpose of coming to a book club such as this is to not only learn new ideas, reflect on current practice but to take that knowledge to implement a personal plan.
3. Hand out LM 4.2 to each participant. They can use this as a guide to develop their plan in relation to assessment.
4. Partner Work: Have participants share their plans with their elbow partner. Invite partners to make suggestions.

## Final Reflection Circle: 15 minutes

*Background:* This closing circle is a way of ‘summing up’ the learning and for all involved including the facilitator. The power of the circle is in the formation of the circle itself as well as the quiet listening to others as they speak. In circle, everyone



has an equal position and voice, if they wish. It allows people the space 'have a say' without interruptions from others.

Have participants form a circle with you. Tell them that you are going to ask them to think about: *We've been together for four sessions talking about assessment. You have been involved in reading excerpts from the resource, sharing your thoughts, feelings and strategies, exploring issues. As we reflect on our time together in this book club, what thoughts or plans about assessment will you be taking away with you? Or as an alternative question - What has been the biggest learning for you throughout these sessions?* Remind participants that everyone will get a turn to speak but they may pass if they wish. Choose someone to begin that you know will wish to speak. Once they have finished, ask them which way they would like the circle turns to go. The circle then systematically follows the direction indicated with each person speaking in turn. Participants may skip a turn if they wish. When finished, close the circle by thanking participants for being part of the circle today.

Distribute the ETFO Book Club Evaluation Form.



# Support Material Section



## Session One: Thinking About Assessment

Line Master 1.1

### Self-Reflection




**1-Strongly disagree 2. Disagree somewhat 3. I'm in the middle 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree**

Having to assess causes me some level of stress.	1	2	3	4	5
My assessment practices are developmentally appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5
I gather my assessment information in authentic ways.	1	2	3	4	5
My system for keeping assessment information is working for me.	1	2	3	4	5
I regularly communicate assessment information to parents.	1	2	3	4	5
I use a range of assessment tools and strategies to show growth over time.	1	2	3	4	5
I gather assessment information from all areas of the program and all the learning centres in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
I ensure that I have information that reflects all areas of development.	1	2	3	4	5
I use my assessment information to inform my planning for the large group and for individual children.	1	2	3	4	5
I am comfortable with the process of observation as the main assessment strategy in kindergarten.	1	2	3	4	5
My assessment practices benefit children and support their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
I use what is known about child development in analyzing my information and planning.	1	2	3	4	5

# Session One: Thinking About Assessment

Line Master 1.2

## Head, Heart and Hands Reflection

 <b>Head</b>	
 <b>Heart</b>	
 <b>Hand</b>	

## Session One: Thinking About Assessment

Line Master 1.3

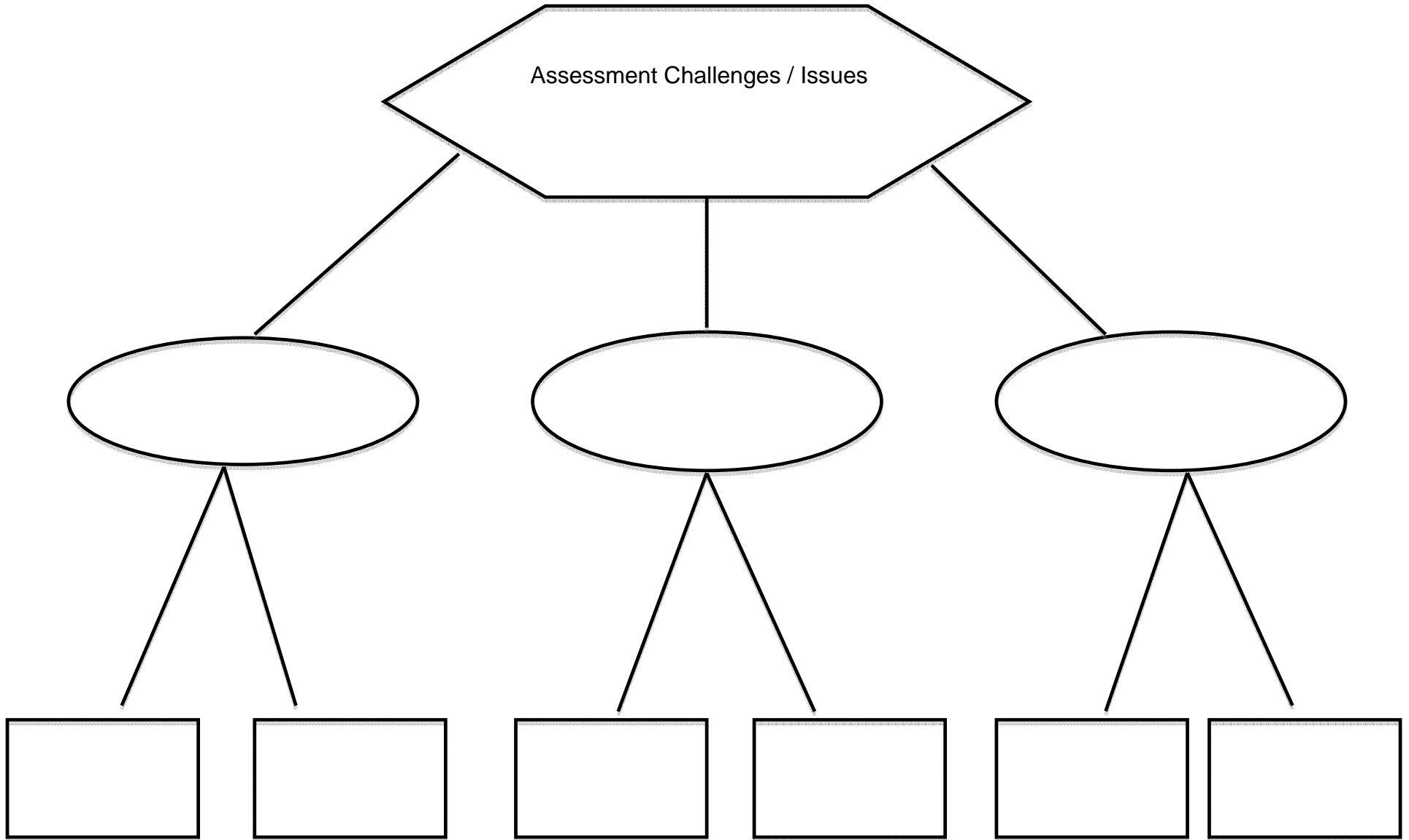
### Homework Response

<b>Three key messages for me...</b>	<b>Something I was happy to read...</b>	<b>Something I hadn't thought of before...</b>
<b>Something that was confirmed for me...</b>	<b>Something I would like to try/change...</b>	<b>Something I wasn't sure about or found unsettling...</b>



# Session Two: Considerations For Assessment

Line Master 2.1



# Session Two: Considerations For Assessment

Line Master 2.2

## Oral Language Skills

<b>Well Developed</b>	<b>Developed</b>
<b>Developing</b>	<b>Just Beginning</b>



## Session Four: Assessment and Information

Line Master 4.1

- A. *How do communicate with parents before school starts?*
- B. *What developmental information does your school collect before school starts? How do they do it?*
- C. *How do you communicate to parents and others about what children are learning at school throughout the year?*
- D. *What strategies do you use for organizing a conference?*
- E. *What documentation do you use at a conference, recognizing that it might be different for each child?*
- F. *How are children involved or might be involved in the conference?*



## Session Four: Assessment and Information

Line Master 4.2

<b><i>My Goal(s)</i></b>	<b><i>What I will Need</i></b>	<b><i>My Timeline</i></b>	<b><i>How I will Know I Have Achieved My Goal</i></b>



# ETFO Book Club Evaluation Form

## Thinking It Through – Assessment That Informs Instruction

1. My overall impression of the ETFO Book Club is:	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer:

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2. Outline the most useful feature(s) of the program and why?

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3. What three things from the ETFO Book Club had the most impact on you?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you think your learning from the ETFO Book Club will impact your work?	To a Great Extent <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Little <input type="checkbox"/>	Not All <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer:

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5. What one thing would you change or add to the program to enhance its effectiveness and applicability in your work?

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6. The ETFO Book Club model was appropriate for the type of learning I expected:	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer:

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7. Attending the ETFO Book Club changed my understanding of ETFO as a professional organization:	Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please explain your answer:

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8. Can you suggest ways this ETFO Book Club could be more environmentally friendly?

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Overall comments:

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