

Big Idea: This facilitator's guide is designed to provide principals, coaches, teacher leaders with processes, strategies, and protocols to effectively facilitate professional conversations around the Foundational Knowledge Conversation Guide Series.



References:

Education Business Plan 2016-2019

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cea65c12-a239-4bd9-8275-3ab54d84f5b3/resource/580cb6dd-1c03-408f-93a2-ed45dca541db/download/education-2016-19.pdf>

FNMI Facilitator Professional Development Resource

http://inclusiveeducationpdresources.com/fnmi/pdf/fnmi_pd_resource_binder.pdf

Essential Terminology

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Terminology%20%20%28PD-WT-16a%29.pdf>

The intent of the **Conversation Guide Series** is to create teachers' and system leaders' awareness of understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit:

- perspectives, experiences and ways of knowing;
- history and legacy of residential schools and treaties, and;
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations for education.

Successful facilitation of meaningful professional conversation is complex work. This facilitator's guide is not intended to provide a specific approach to these professional conversations. Instead, it offers a menu of processes, strategies, and protocols to allow you to make decisions tailored to the content of the work and the unique context of the participant learners. You are encouraged to select from the menu the processes, strategies and protocols that match the intent of the session and the learning needs of the participants.

This facilitator's guide is divided into three sections: Getting Ready for Professional Conversations; Engaging in Professional Conversations; and Reflecting on the Professional Conversations.

Getting Ready for Professional Conversations

As the facilitator, it is critical that you spend time prior to the session and become familiar with the contents of the Conversation Guide to be discussed.

Prior to the session :

- Review and become familiar with all sections of the Conversation Guide: Big Idea, References, Resources, Content in the body of the conversation guide, Questions for Discussion and the For More Information section.
- Reflect on your responses to the questions posed in the Questions for Discussion section. Anticipate participants' responses. The contents of the Conversation Guides can be emotional, controversial and divisive.
- Consider the length and complexity of the content within the Conversation Guide - you may need to break the Conversation Guide into more than one professional conversation. This will depend on time available and the complexity of the topic. The Conversation Guides are intended to create awareness and general understanding. Additional professional learning support will provide support for deeper understanding of the topics covered.

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Creating the Conditions for Learning.

People's lives are busy. They come together with other pieces of their lives still on their minds as they settle into their seats. Before the professional conversation begins, creating a space that is inviting and has a sense of calm energy can go a long way in engaging your participants in deep discussion.

The following ideas also assist in creating a space for learning:

- Create table configurations that hold 3 - 6 people (rather than theater style). Try to ensure there's enough room for people to push their chairs away from the table and get up and move around. You may also consider creating a space for people to form a circle of chairs.
- Ensure equity and ease of access to all reading materials or other resources. Consider whether or not to print materials - many of your participants will prefer "touching" the resources - highlighting, underlining key ideas. Alternatively, ensure all participants can easily access the reading material or other resources online.
- Give participants time to get comfortable. The participants will need some time to "feel" the room. They may also need time to either reconnect or connect for the first time with one another.

Engaging in Professional Conversations

Meaningful professional conversations take place in a social/emotional environment in which inquiry, risk-taking, sharing and collaboration are encouraged in order to optimize student learning. In the event that you are facilitating a newly formed group, it is especially important to consider a manageable group size (up to four people per group). Finally, you are encouraged to review preexisting norms for professional conversation, or create basic norms if none have been created.

Facilitating the "Content" Section of the Conversation Guides

It is important that your participants clearly understand the purpose of the session. The Big Idea section provides a concise summary of the content in the body of the guide. You may wish to have each participant read the Content section on their own. Alternatively, you may wish to engage the participants in protocols. Several Protocols are listed below. Select the protocol that you believe will best fit with the content of the reading. It is important to provide clear and explicit directions related to the protocol.

Save the Last Word For Me

- Form groups of 4. Each person reads the Content section silently and identifies what they consider to be the most significant idea addressed and be able to explain why.
- A volunteer begins the protocol by identifying the point that s/he found to be most significant and reads it out loud and shares why s/he chose that particular point.
- The other 2 participants respond, in turn, to that idea. Try to avoid cross talk.
- The first person responds to the comments - s/he has the *last word*.
- The same pattern is followed until all members of the group have a chance to have "the last word."

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Say Something

- Scan the Content section and decide together how far both of you will both read silently before stopping to say something.
- Begin reading the text.
- Once each partner has reached the chosen stopping point, both partners exchange comments, or say something related to what was read.
- Partners continue the process until the selection is completed.
- After a designated amount of time, engage the whole group in a discussion of the text.

I Summarize, You Summarize

This conversation format may be used when dividing up a text. Use the A/B structure:

- Participants prepare their summaries alone
- Designate who will begin (remind listeners to listen)
- Give a time frame and monitor the time
- When each partner has spoken, give the first person 30 seconds to note a new connection made because of partner's summary and then do the same for the second person.

Reciprocal Teach

This strategy may be used to process sections of text. It is important to tell the participants upfront what they will be doing between the sections – this will focus their reading. Once the chunk is delivered, provide time for participants to organize their notes for teaching their partner. Then designate who begins – A or B – and allow 2-3 minutes for each to teach.

Alone/Together

Use after covering a section of information.

- Participants organize their thinking alone
- Participants share their thinking together
- Listen for new connections and insights
- Participants consider the question following alone: "How did my partner's thinking impact my thinking?"
- Participants share their thinking together
- Facilitator records the thinking (report out)
- Facilitator networks the thinking to show connections

Walk to Talk

This strategy serves several purposes: to shift the energy in the room, to allow movement, to mix people up and to provide the opportunity to hear new ideas.

- Participants organize their thinking **alone**. Participants may keep notes.
- Participants move away from the tables and find someone across the room. Once they have found a partner, decide who speaks first – or the facilitator may predetermine who speaks first.
- Participants report back to table about the thinking 'out there'.
- Facilitator records the thinking at each table shares some of the ideas collected orally (report out).
- Facilitators invite participants to examine the report out and make generalizations regarding the thinking in the room.

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Paired Verbal Fluency

This is a fast-paced strategy. It can be stressful for some participants, so make sure you frame it in fun. This strategy gets people verbally active prior to discussing a new topic. The act of constructing language and listening to the ideas of others stimulates thinking and helps people to surface knowledge about the topic at hand.

- Participants organize into A/B partner groups and are not allowed to use their notes (ask them to turn them over, put pens down).
- Participants are not allowed to repeat what his or her partner says.
- Facilitator starts the activity on 'go', asking them to share their thoughts on a topic.
 - Round 1: 45 seconds for each person
 - Round 2: 30 seconds for each person
 - Round 3: 15 seconds for each person

Facilitating “Questions for Discussion” Section of the Conversation Guides

Throughout this portion of the session, your role as facilitator is critical. Your task is to engage your participants in meaningful and targeted professional conversation. As facilitator, it is important to try to:

- Remain neutral
- Surface assumptions, illuminate possibilities, and develop shared understandings
- Ensure equal time and voice of all participants
- Listen actively
- Create a safe space for discussion
- Ask probing questions
- Paraphrase for clarity
- Check for common understanding
- Synthesize ideas

Plan to give your participants enough time to fully explore ideas without being told they are right or wrong, telling someone they are right or wrong will stop their thinking very quickly. More often than not, the decisions related to what is right and wrong will emerge during the group's professional conversation. Allow validation for the responses to the questions to come from the participants in the group as much as possible.

C. Reflecting on the Professional Conversations

Awareness and understanding of the content related to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit Conversation Guides is consolidated through personal and/or group reflection. Thinking about one's learning and thinking about one's thought process are keys to deeper learning. Select from the ideas below to engage your participants in reflecting on the professional conversations held throughout the session.

5-minute Reflection Poem

- Write one thing you LEARNED today
- Write one thing that HELPED you learn today
- Write one thing the you CONTRIBUTED to the learning today
- Write one thing you feel you can TRY
- Write how you FEEL

What were ...

- My thoughts, feelings
- My awareness, judgments
- My insights, questions

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5-3-1

This activity provides small groups the opportunity to compare, sort, and synthesize key learning and experiences.

- Participants work alone and jot down 5 words (about content and/or feelings) that come to mind when thinking about the topic.
- Participants share their items with their table.
- As a table, choose 3 words
- As a table, choose 1 word
- Table groups shares the word with the other groups and explains why they chose the word.

3-2-1

This activity summarizes the learning and leads into an action plan.

Variation 1:

- 3 things or important ideas that you want to remember
- 2 things you would like to know more about
- 1 idea that you will write about tonight

Variation 2:

- 3 interesting facts I learned
- 2 big ideas I will think about
- 1 question I need to think about

Here's What, So What, Now What?

This activity allows participants to begin to plan how they will use their learning in their classrooms, schools, or community.

- Participants are encouraged to work in pairs, but do not force this.
- Model the activity first on the overhead, using an example based on the workshop topic. Prepare the example ahead of time.

Here's What	So What	Now What?
for recording learning during the workshop – new ideas, specific insights	for recording the participant's interpretation of their learning	for developing an action plan based on the two previous columns
"The need to belong is clearly linked to successful learning."	"Belonging is not about intimate relationships rather, it is about being respected and accepted for who the person is."	"One thing I am going to do in my classroom is greet each student each day as they come into my classroom and then say goodbye to them at the end of the day/period".

D. "For More Information" Section of the Conversation Guide

Finally, for those who wish to learn more about the topic of the Conversation Guide, the "For More Information" section provides additional resources. Take a little time at the end of the session to highlight these resources for those who wish to deepen their understanding or locate extension materials of the topic discussed.

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