

# Method: Speaker, Listener, Writer

**Brief summary:** This is a method to use for reflection, evaluation or conclusion of thoughts from a workshop, meeting, or after a certain period of collaboration in a group. It can also be a good tool when participants of a group need to reflect on a certain question, explore their thinking further or look for new perspectives. The aim of the method is not to come to a conclusion or to find an answer, it's rather a chance to start exploring a question, play with thoughts, one's personal values, beliefs and assumptions. By a fixed set of roles and a structured time frame, everyone is provided with the space to participate.

**Time needed:** 20-40-60 minutes

## Material:

- Colored papers A4 or A3, one for each participant
- Colored pencils (+ optionally more material for drawing)
- The reflection-question written on a whiteboard or big paper on the wall

## Preparation checklist:

- As facilitator, reflect on the purpose of doing the exercise, considering the needs of the participants
- Formulate a suitable question(s) for reflection
- Adapt the instructions, time etc to the group of participants

## **Instruction:**

Share the aims of the method with the group.

The participants are going to work in groups of three, where each participant gets to try three certain roles; speaker, listener and writer.

Share the question(s) they are going to reflect upon. Tell them that they have 10 minutes in each role, and that you are going to tell them when half of the time is left, as well as when to switch roles.

Give all instructions before you divide them up into groups of three, (preferably group participants that do not know each other very well) and ask them to decide who is going to start in which role.

Distribute three papers and some pencils to each group and let them spread out and start.

## Roles:

- The speaker: Reflects on the proposed question(s), exploring ideas, one's personal values, beliefs, assumptions and certainties.

- The listener: The listener's role is to listen with attention. The listener can help by asking follow-up questions but only if the speaker gets quiet, seems to be in need of it or asks for, or requests it.
- The writer: Takes notes or writes keywords from what the speaker is saying. It is important that the writer takes down the speaker's words and not their own interpretations. The writer hands the notes to the speaker when it's time to switch roles, so that the speaker can bring it as a memory note.

### **Debrief, reflection on the method**

After the exercise, gather the participants and take a few minutes for self-reflection on the questions:

- *How did you feel taking on the different roles?*
- *Where there any role that you found particularly difficult or easy, awkward or comfortable?*
- *What was new for you in speaking, listening or writing like we did?*

Share in pairs and/or to the whole group something from your reflection. Be clear about that each person make their own decision on what and how much it feels good to share.

### *Comments, thoughts from Watch it!*

We think that this method touches on important qualities/competences when collaborating in a group:

To give time, space and forms for reflection and evaluation.

To dare to share one's own thoughts and be allowed to be creative without any rights or wrongs. That everyone is listened to and is given the same amount of time to share their thoughts. To experience how it feels to speak without being interrupted, impacted or steered by questions from others.

To listen with attention, but without posing any questions. To hold back curiosity and eagerness to talk, and to let the speaker decide where to go with their speaking.

Trying the role as the writer without doing any interpretations, respect and use the actual words of the speaker.

We definitely don't see these roles as the only ones that are important for collaboration. But they are useful as a starting point for reflecting on the roles we have or take on in groups. For example, which roles are easy for me to take on? This could be the beginning of a more in-depth discussion and the method can be further developed and modelled to get a chance to try other roles and characteristics.