




The water pitcher and water glasses game

Length		10 minutes
Difficulty		Beginner
Group size		Small to medium
Aim	To introduce interactive learning methods and help participants understand that they all have an important contribution to make to the quality of the training, by sharing their experiences and knowledge.	
Description	A good ice breaker to introduce people to interactive learning methods.	
Materials	A jug of water and a water glass for each participant, water A room big enough and furnished in a way that allows the group to move about.	
Source	Adapted from George Lakey, Facilitating Group Learning p. 109	

Tips for facilitators

In some contexts target groups have strong internal hierarchies. In others, educational culture and previous experiences of training, make participants reluctant to engage in interactive experience based, workshop style learning as opposed to lectures. This ice-breaker is a good way to introduce workshops with such target groups.

Outline and instructions

Make sure all participants have drinking glasses and that you as a facilitator have a pitcher filled with water. Start filling the participants' glasses with water as you make friendly chatter with all of them. Instruct them to not drink all of the water in their glasses. When the final glass of water is filled ask the participants to silently reflect about how it felt to get their glass filled with water from the pitcher held by you as a facilitator. Then explain that there is another part to the exercise. In this second part of the exercise it is up to the participants to share the water

that they have received with each other. They are free to move around in the room while doing so.

After a little while of doing this, interrupt the participants again and ask them to stop where they are and silently reflect upon how this second part of the exercise felt. After a short time, ask them to silently compare how they felt during the first and the second part of the exercise. After allowing participants to reflect on this for a while, ask them to be seated.

Ask the participants whether they want to share any of their thoughts. Allow for a few comments before asking the group what they think this exercise might have to do with education? Depending on how participants reply, wrap the exercise up by summarizing something along the following lines:

“Often we are trained by school and society to see quality education as being equal to a teacher lecturing us on a specific topic, pouring his or her knowledge into our more or less empty containers. During our time together we are also going to allow space for what happened in the second part of this exercise. We are to use a training methodology that builds on your knowledge and experiences - the water that each of you already have in your glasses. This exercise is our way of inviting you all to share your water, your knowledge with us all.”