



TLC STRATEGY

Community building activity: “Three things”

Purpose: A simple, brief activity that fosters building background knowledge about students and models a writing exercise that may be modified for use with students.

Materials: paper and pens/pencils for all students

Steps

1. *Set-up:* students sit at tables.
2. *Time to complete:* 30 minutes
3. Teacher asks each participant to find three things that they have with them that represent something personally meaningful, and to place those things on the table in front of them.

Note: there is no need to ask students to bring anything special for this exercise. Almost always, people will have photographs, jewelry, keys, etc., that symbolize important people or events. Instead of suggesting these things, however, let students decide for themselves what items to use.

4. When students have placed their items in front of them, invite them to write according to the following (suggested) prompts. Younger students should choose just one item.
 - a. *Describe the item(s) in front of you in as many ways that you can. What color, shape, and size are they? What do they look like? Do they have a texture, flavor, or smell? Can they make any sounds? When you carry each object in your hand, is it heavy or light? Warm or cold?*
 - b. *One by one, write about each object: Where and how did this item come into your possession? Did someone give it to you? Did you buy or find it in some special way? How long have you had it?*
 - c. *Describe each object’s importance to you. What does it represent?*
 - d. *Finally, when this object leaves your possession, to where or to whom will it go next? Will it be replaced by something else? Will you be finished with it?*
 5. Ask each person to share their writing with a partner. While not mandatory, encourage them to read what they wrote, rather than merely talk about the objects.
 6. After having students return to the large group, ask volunteers to read. If possible, give everyone a turn.
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