

LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL
PERSONAL NARRATIVE
Endowed Object

Note: All protocols have multiple origins. The strength of a protocol is in the ability of facilitators or planners to adjust/revise for use in your context. <http://www.nsrffharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z> is a good source of multiple protocols for school, district, community and organizational use.

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Choosing an endowed personal object to tell the story is a way to connect the storyteller to something tangible and tell a part of their personal narrative through talking about the object.

An object does not have to be expensive to be of great importance and personal value. Some objects are highly symbolic and function as metaphors for events in our lives or relationships and qualities we value. Some objects may be negative in nature and remind us of painful or difficult issues or times. (a losing lottery ticket to the gambler, the "dear John letter", etc). In the theatre, characters handle "props" that have great meaning to them; the King's crown, the magic sword, the wedding ring, etc. Playwrights use props to help tell the story in a visual, immediate way.

We all have objects in our lives that connect to our own personal stories and narratives. **Pick an object to use in the telling of an important personal story, and make sure it is one that connects and illustrates the story you want to tell.** There are several ways this can happen.

You can ask faculty ahead of time to bring one object of importance, either positive or negative, from home for a faculty meeting. It may be an object that represents a part of history or current event that has significance, or one that represents a powerful relationship or personal turning point. Please tell them not to bring images, articles or photographs, as they are too literal and do not allow for the process of personal, symbolic curation that needs to happen as the participant looks at objects in their home through this new lens of endowment. Inevitably people will make choices that are meaningful to them, and they will endow the objects with emotional meaning as they present to the group.

If you want to do this exercise **on the spot**, ask the participants to go through the things they have carried with them and find one object to use as a personal metaphor....keys, a ring....even a special pen or pencil may be used as a powerful metaphor when scaffolded with emotional endowment. Encourage them to use as many details as possible as they share out. Ask them to imagine that this object they carry with them will be found in a hundred years as part of their personal time capsule; what would this object say about them? How could it connect to their own personal legacy?

One school leader brought a bag with several objects and pulled two out to talk about her life and why these were important. A strong 8th grade teacher had all teachers make bags of objects and the students looked in the bags and tried to match the bags with teachers, based on their knowledge of the teacher and hypothesizing. Then when they went to that teacher's class, he

or she told a story about something in the bag. They repeated by having the students bring objects and tell a story, write a story, and share their personal “artifact”.

If you use this with teachers, brainstorm how this could be used with students.

Norms for Engagement

- Appreciative/constructivist listening could be used to share
 - A facilitator reviews directions and keeps time.
 - Dyads sit knee to knee and eye to eye.
 - These norms are in place:
 - Assume best intentions
 - Maintain double confidentiality. You will share your journey line, but the person(s) you share with will not repeat your story to anyone else and you will not ask the person about it later unless he or she brings it up.
 - The first person shares for 2 minutes without interruption, and the listener may give nonverbal feedback. That might include subvocalization like “ummm...” but does not include verbal feedback, questions, other stories, etc. Then the second person shares for 2 minutes.
 - Debrief in pairs or full group about processes (Note: sometimes the non-response part of the protocol is hard for person)
- Think Pair Share can be used as an alternative but confidentiality norms apply
- Musical sharing – play music and when the music stops, have person share with another; 3-4 sharings.
- Debrief processes.

Extension. It might also be used in talking about building what Valenzuela calls “authentic” not just “aesthetic” relationships in her book *Subtractive Schooling*. You could actually have teachers read this and define the difference. Both are needed in schools, but often the authentic is omitted and therefore the aesthetic caring is not effective with students. Chapter 3, pp. 61-113 if you use the book.

Authentic Caring = personal

- Caring for them as people
- Building relationships of reciprocity with students
- Cultural background is seen as an asset

Aesthetic Caring = abstract

- Caring about school outcomes and forgetting the individual
- Assuming students do not care about school because they do not do the teacher’s “work”.
- Concentrating only on effort optimism in students and forgetting to establish and pay attention to the personal
- Demanding assimilation to schooling norms without paying attention to cultural norms and values of students

You can read the article and practice **Numbered Heads Together** as engagement strategy with these questions:

1. What is assimilation?
2. What is educación?
3. What is authentic caring?
4. What is aesthetic caring?
5. How might Valenzuela define cultural competence in teachers?
6. Make an equation for subtractive schooling.
7. What are some examples of your aesthetic caring?
8. What are some examples of your authentic caring?

Note: When you are using NHT with adults, you ask for multiple responses from the number you called., asking them to build on each other's responses

Journal: How do you think you students would see you on this authentic to aesthetic continuum?

