Poetic Motivations

Using poetry to reveal and share deep motivations for change

BEING | Inner Compass

What you will need:

- 10 - 25
- Individual & group workshop
- 15 mins preparation
- 1 - 1.5 hrs execution
- Printed 'I poem' template

Related Tools:

Purposeful Storytelling

Menu:

I. Overview
II. Learning Activity
III. Assessment
IV. Key Advice
V. References



"With this creative activity, students identify and express their intrinsic motivation for change by writing a poem about their identity, values and feelings."

—Debby Gerritsen

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I. Overview

By drafting a poem about their identity and values, students use their creativity and learn to articulate what is close to their hearts. They become aware of their intrinsic motivation for change and share their motivations in a group.

This activity not only facilitates personal reflection but also inspires a collective exploration of how individual values align with and contribute to societal change.

Learning outcome

- The student is able to identify and express their inner values and intrinsic motivation for change

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II. Learning Activity

Through poetry, students express their identities and passions, connecting with themselves and others.

1. Introducing 'I poem' 5 mins

Hand out the 'I Poem' template and explain the goal of the learning activity: compiling a list of sentences that express their identity, values, feelings and motivations for change.

Tip: for this exercise, you can choose a theme relating to change depending on the scope of your course, for example, the future of education, climate change or inequality.



2. Writing the First Draft 20 mins

Encourage students to begin writing a draft in silence, without overthinking, allowing their thoughts and ideas to flow freely. They can skip sentences they find difficult to answer, change the order or add new 'I (verb)' sentences.



3. Refining 10 mins

Students proofread their poems and adjust them where needed to ensure the text flows smoothly. They can erase sentences, change the order of sentences or rewrite them.

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4. Sharing Circle

20 mins

Students share their poems with the group. Invite students to stand up while reading. The group applauds after every poem.

At first, it can be scary for them to share their writings, but after the first two poems, more students will have the courage to share theirs. The time needed for this step depends on how many students you invite or are willing to share their poems.

Tip: see the Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment and consider offering an option for those students who may feel uncomfortable standing or sharing aloud to take part in a way that respects their comfort levels, such as reading from their seat or opting for a peer to read on their behalf.

5. Reflective Echoes

10 - 30 mins

Thank the students for sharing their thoughts and feelings. You can ask the group for plenary reflections first by asking the following questions:

- How was it to write a poem?
- How did you feel about sharing your work?
- What did you think of the work of others?

Then, students reflect on their learning in duos.

Please note, as part of the assessment *as* learning, students reflect using reflective questions.

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III. Assessment

By reflecting on their learning process, students become aware of how this activity contributes to the identification and expression of their intrinsic motivation for change.

You can ask the students for written reflections or oral peer-to-peer reflections using the reflective questions.



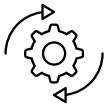
Purpose

Assessment *as* learning aims to strengthen the learning process and the development of metacognitive skills. It empowers students to direct their own learning and to become independent, critical self-assessors.



Roles

Self-assessment, optionally peer assessment as well



Characteristics

Authentic



Materials

Reflective questions

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Assessment

Reflective questions

1. What did you learn about your intrinsic motivation for change in the exercise?

2. What did you learn about your identity and values, and how do they contribute to your intrinsic motivation for change?

3. How did the exercise help to identify your intrinsic motivation for change?

4. How did the exercise help to express your intrinsic motivation for change?

5. What did you learn by listening to other students' intrinsic motivation for change?

6. After doing this exercise, do you feel competent in identifying and expressing your intrinsic motivation for change? How will you continue developing these skills?

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IV. Key Advice

For this exercise, a safe learning environment is crucial. Sharing personal thoughts and feelings can make students feel very vulnerable. You can tell students that it is okay not to share their poems in the group if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

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Key Advice

I Poem Template

I Poem

I am …

I am …

I am …

I wonder…

I hear…

I see…

I want…

I pretend...

I feel...

I touch...

I worry...

I fear...

I understand...

I believe…

I say...

I think…

I dream...

I try...

I envision…

I hope...

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Key Advice

Seven golden guidelines to create a safe learning environment
Creating a safe and inclusive learning environment is an ongoing process. By implementing these guidelines, you can foster open communication, a sense of belonging and collective learning:

1. Set clear expectations
Clearly communicate your expectations and routines from the beginning. Ensure that students understand what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. Encourage them to participate in creating these expectations, promoting a sense of ownership and responsibility.

2. Build trust
Establish a trustworthy and secure environment by emphasising that anything shared within the group should remain confidential. Encourage students to make their own decisions about sharing personal experiences and respect their individual levels of comfort.

3. Foster active listening
Emphasise the importance of truly listening and understanding. Foster an environment where students feel free to express themselves without fear of judgment or criticism and discourage interruptions. Strengthen active listening skills by teaching non-verbal cues and using prompts.

4. Encourage empathy
Encourage students to consider the feelings and experiences of others and to respond with kindness, acceptance and understanding, even when perspectives differ from their own. Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where empathy is valued and embraced as an essential aspect of communication and mutual understanding.

5. Be a role model
Lead by example and embody the behaviour you expect from your students. Treat all students with respect, fairness and kindness, and appreciate their diverse backgrounds, individual strengths and contributions. Ensure the safety and well-being of all students by promptly and decisively addressing any form of harassment or discrimination. Reflect on mistakes and offer apologies when necessary.

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6. Adapt the pace and intensity

Recognise when emotions escalate and become overwhelming, adjusting the pace or intensity of the activity as necessary. For example, implement the "five-minute rule", where each student can express their controversial view in a respectful manner, or offer a short break for students to journal and reflect on their emotions, enabling them to regulate their feelings.

7. Follow up and check-in

Encourage students to reflect on the impact of the experience on themselves as well as the group. Provide individual or group follow-up and inquire about the well-being of students. Offer the opportunity for further discussion or support if needed. If you believe that the emotional intensity or well-being of the students exceeds your expertise, do not hesitate to seek advice from a student advisor, mental health professional or the appropriate support services provided by your institution.

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V. References

This tool was developed with the help of Najiba Abdellaoui from BaaB Publishing.

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