



Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

The Inspired Image Protocol

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It is usually not the lovely, most beautiful pieces of artwork that cause us to question, pause, or think. It's the piece that for whatever reason strikes us, make us furrow our brow, pushes our buttons, and causes us to turn our head to the side in wonder. It is not the student who cooperates all the time and gives us exactly what we ask for that challenges us — it is the student who questions us, makes us clarify what we want from them, and forces us out of our comfort zones that inspires us to become better educators.

Purpose

To begin the process of connecting with peers in a new group while creating an individual work of art or a cover for a learning journal. The journals may subsequently be used during learning community sessions and in your classroom practice. A journal is a particularly useful tool during connections to assist members as they transition from other activities and become focused on the work of their learning community. Outside of learning community, journals maybe used to record and reflect upon observations and questions about our daily practice.

Materials

Card stock or heavy weight paper, various art materials (pencil, colored pencil, crayon, water color, collage papers), chart paper, markers.

Process

1. In rounds, answer the following questions with a word. Choose someone to record responses on easel paper for each question. Another option would be to chalk talk the questions, meaning for participants to write responses silently on chart paper to each question. (7-10 minutes):
 - When you are having your best moments as an educator, what words would you use to describe your practice?
 - What do you want to focus on this year in your practice? What are your hopes, dreams, and/or goals for your practice?
 - What sustains you during the school year? What keeps you coming back each year?
 - How would you describe the adults who played a positive and significant role in your life when you were a student? How has this impacted you as an educator?
2. Participants sit in groups of 3-6 and are encouraged to experiment with the art materials (5 minutes).

3. Participants begin the process of creating their covers using the template below (20-25 minutes):
 - Take a minute and pause to think about the word(s) that particularly resonate with you.
 - With these descriptive words as a springboard to get started, use any media provided to create a visual representation of your responses to the above questions for your journal cover. You may choose to include words or create images that represent your responses in your cover.

Some visual questions to help you with this process:

What colors represent these resonating words to you?

What kinds of lines, shapes, or textures describe you at your best?

What kind of media are you drawn to?

Is there an image that comes to mind as a symbol of your responses?

4. Bring group back to larger circle. Share pictures and briefly describe what inspired your creation. (10 minutes)
5. Debrief process. (10 minutes)

Some questions to help frame the debrief:

Did the protocol work for you?

What questions or issues did the process bring up for you?

What assumptions did the process uncover for you?

What does this mean for what you give and take from a group and how you work with a new group?

What challenged you about this protocol and why?

What media were you drawn to and what media did you avoid during this process?

What do you think this means for students when they are given choices and are drawn to some and avoid others?