

Level Five Life

Materials Needed:

Level Five Chart
Pencil Crayons or other colours
Paper/iPad/computer
Writing implement
Five items

Process:

Give the students a 2 to 5 days to collect five things that they believe have had an impact on who they are today. It can be people (pictures of them or simply descriptions of them), places they went to, things they accomplished, things they wish they had done, events, heirlooms (pictures are best for these), or literally anything else they believe has had a major influence on who they are.

Step 1:

Prior to the lesson I do some important preaching to make it a safe and sharing environment. I talk to the students about the concept of “witnessing”. What role it held for the Coast Salish people, and other Nations. I talk to the power of being present and explain why it is important to be there with the person you are working with. I also speak to Sawabona, the act of “seeing each other”, and show a short video that outlines this principles. On the heels of this lesson I then create groups of three that we will use later, reminding the students that we will be witnessing the work of others and therefore it is essential we come with open hearts and minds, and deep respect for the lived experiences of our class. We then move into individual thinking.

Step 2:

They will then fill out the Level Five backline master, giving each item its own section and labeling the circle. After his the student quickly determines how much influence this item has had on who they have become today, and represents that influence by colouring in its area on the pie graph. There are ten circles in this pie graph, explain to your students that they begin at the centre and colour outwards, that they should not think about it too deeply just go with there gut and colour outwards until they feel it represents the item in question. **Collect them all**

Step 2: (make sure each group is well spread out and has it's own space to work uninterrupted)

*Have the students get into their groups of three and bring their items. We do this work with an Indigenous lens. This means that the person shares with one of the three group members, while the third student records the thoughts and ideas of the person speaking. This means that the person witnessing is focussed only on the person speaking. They are not looking around the room, they are not writing, they are witnessing and learning what the person sharing is giving to them. It is important work. This is why there is a third person, it is their job to "collect" the work in a Western way. They can record what the person is sharing, write notes about what they said, and/or write questions that they wonder, (we once had a student draw the experience of the sharer that's wonderful, as long as they are willing to explain their thinking. Note that for our students who have difficulty writing they witness without writing, and can record what the sharer said this creates access for everyone). They will be giving everything that they collect to the person who shared when all the sharing has taken place as a gift.

The student sharing goes through each item, telling why they believe it has helped shape who they are today. They talk through each item sharing it's relevance to their life. This is obviously powerful and deep work which is why we carefully set the work up prior to beginning. It is also why we do not set a time, or determine how long the sharing will take place. You let the groups work together until they have all shared, and given each other the gifts (collected data) of that sharing. It is why you need to be explicit in the instructions.

Part 3:

When the students are finished they go alone to look at what was collected for them and they write about each item. Why they think they chose it, some of what they may have learned about it when sharing they had not thought of before. They deeply reflect about each item in terms of why they choose it, how it influenced them, what it means to them and then make a new Level Five Life without looking at their first. When they are done have them collect their first one and compare they two and have them think about these ideas.

- 1) Did any of your levels change, why or why not?
- 2) Now that you have gone through the process is there something else you wish you had brought, if not something you could add, why?
- 3) What is going on in your life now that you believing is influencing you?
- 4) Do you think the things that happen help make us who we are?
- 5) How much of who we become is because of how we react to what happens, how much is our choice? Explain your thinking

I like this part to student choice on how they express their thinking. They can draw, make poetry, write it out, record themselves thinking about them, have a discussion with a partner and record that. It never needs to be done one way.

Extensions and jump offs:

This can go anywhere. I have used it to open work about Residential school, the Nazi Regime, and other high topics. However, now I use it prior to doing personality tests, and other reflections of self so the students can practice getting to know themselves, and being aware that they are changing everyday. I hope you enjoy it. t