

Talking Circles:

Helping to build Community in the Classroom and Improve Oral Language Skills



Learning Intention:

I can be a good listener and help to create positive community in my classroom.
I understand how talking circles and a talking stick can be helpful.

Learning Outcomes:

- use speaking and listening to interact with others for the purposes of
 - contributing to a class goal, sharing ideas and opinions, solving problems
 - listen purposefully to understand ideas and information, by
 - generating questions, visualizing and sharing, identifying opinions or viewpoints, ignoring distractions
 - use speaking and listening to improve and extend thinking, by
 - acquiring new ideas, making connections and asking questions, comparing and analyzing ideas, developing explanations, considering alternative viewpoints, investigating problems and creating solutions.
- (Note that talking circles can be used for discussions in any subject area, or for working on connections, questions, inference, etc).

Materials:

Talking stick, Materials you have chosen to build your talking stick (fur, feather, leather, stick, glue, beads)

Space to gather in a circle

Power Point Presentation : Talking Stick and Talking Circles

Transforming your thinking sheet

Lesson:

1. Introduce the learning intention.
2. Present power point (Talking Sticks and talking circles) first several slides that explain the significance and purpose of the talking stick.
3. Fill in Transforming your thinking– first thoughts.
4. Optional– nature walk to find a stick, objects to be part of the stick
5. Selection of materials by democratic process to make up the stick.
6. Build the stick as a class/ have someone put it together.
7. Reveal the symbolism chosen by the students
8. First talking circle. Review Protocol– acknowledge territory, direction of circle, no talking unless it's your turn, may disagree but in a respectful and kind way. Keep it simple and safe: an introduction of who they are and where they are from. Remember to include a greeting from any aboriginal people in the group in their own language.
9. Follow up with on second thought.
10. Continue with talking circles, building content and criteria as you go. Reminders of respect in the circle and valuing everyone's opinion.
11. Use it as a consistent problem solving/communication tool in the classroom to ensure that everyone has a voice.
12. Continue to fill in the Transforming your Thinking sheet.
13. Please note that in the first few talking circles it may be necessary to interrupt. One way of explaining this is that we are still “practicing” and normally the teacher's voice is to be heard no more than the students' voices.

Talking Circles: Lesson 2

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- (Note that talking circles can be used for discussions in any subject area, or for working on connections, questions, inference, etc).

Materials:

Talking stick
Space to gather in a circle
Transforming your thinking sheet
Text: Little Bear's Vision Quest, Trudy Ludwig series.

Lesson:

1. Introduce the learning intention: What makes someone a good friend?
2. Fill in Transforming your thinking– second thoughts.
3. Use stories to inspire talking circles before students feel safe enough to discuss their own needs: Trudy Ludwig stories provide excellent content. There are also a list of books related to the six pillars which fit nicely: <http://web.sd71.bc.ca/literacy/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/SixPillars3.pdf> Little Bear's Vision Quest is another example.
4. Review Protocol from the Power Point– acknowledge territory, direction of circle, no talking unless it's your turn, may disagree but only when it's your turn and in a polite way.
5. Continue to fill in the Transforming your Thinking sheet.
6. For each talking circle, give a question to be answered or a subject to be discussed. One strategy to get children to feel safe and valued in the circle is to get them to write down their idea on a sticky note so that when it gets to them they don't have to worry about what to say. As trust increases in the group, this may not be necessary.
7. Ideas to give students if they are feeling as though their idea has already been shared (it doesn't matter, you could say it in different words, give an example, or come up with a new idea.
8. Please note that in the first few talking circles it may be necessary to interrupt. One way of explaining this is that we are still "practicing" and normally the teacher's voice is to be heard no more than the students' voices.
9. After the talking circle, list the criteria for a good friend that has been created as a class. Leave space to add to it as more ideas are brought forward. This criteria can also act as a "code" for how students in the room are to be treated.



Our Learning Intention:

Transforming your Thinking



Name: _____

My first thoughts....

Some questions that I have...

On third thought...

My transformed thinking....