

Activity 5. Why We Teach

Shared Responsibility for Successful Students

Activity 5. Why We Teach

a **Time Allotted: 30 Minutes****b** **Materials/Equipment**

- Introduction script and PowerPoint slides
- Discussion guide for each participant (See page 4)
- Optional: Consider providing a small journal for personal reflections, if feasible within budget. Possible sources include dollar stores and discount stores.

c **Description**

This activity is a small group discussion that reconnects the participants to the reasons for teaching and the characteristics of effective teachers. The facilitator concludes by debriefing the last two questions on the participant form for the whole group.

d **Directions**

1. Introduce this activity.
 - In 2005, Sonia Neito, Professor Emerita of Language, Literacy, and Culture, School of Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst authored the text: *Why we Teach*.
 - In this book, 21 teachers share their reasons for teaching.
 - In this activity, we will reconnect to our reasons for teaching and will collaboratively discuss the supports and skills that will continue to nurture our own passion for teaching.
2. First, answer the first four questions on your own. You have your own reasons for becoming and remaining a teacher. You will only share that information that is comfortable to you with your small team.

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3. Second, debrief your responses to these first four questions but share only that information that is comfortable for you. You can say 'pass' if you wish. You are responsible for taking personal notes even if you will not discuss your responses with the team.
4. Assign a scribe and reporter from your group to capture the group discussion of your responses to questions.
5. Option: Conduct this activity within teacher planning periods for grade levels or department teams.

**Participant Questions**

1. Why did you choose to become a teacher?
2. Are those reasons still intact? Have you found new reasons for teaching?
3. How do your reasons for teaching support the changing realities of the schoolhouse, such as changing demographics, higher standards, the goal of closing the achievement gap, more challenging pathways to post-school success for many students, and so on?
4. As schools become more engaged in social justice and equity for all students, how do your personal reasons for teaching support these goals?
5. What support or supports do you need from your campus leadership to meet these challenges for equity for all students?
6. What must teachers commit to personally in order to meet these challenges?

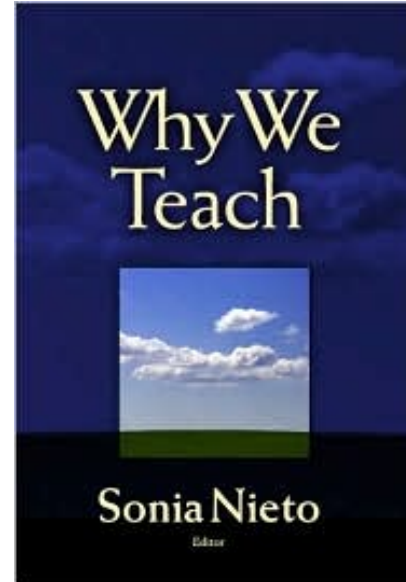
HANDOUT

Why We Teach

Nieto, S. (Ed.), 2005. Why We Teach. New York: Teacher's College Press.

From the Introduction:

When asked, many say they became teachers for reasons that sound old-fashioned and seem at odds with the current national obsession with bureaucracy, accountability and high-stakes testing. In general, they view teaching as a 'calling' and they are driven by a sense of service." (p.3)



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