



A Thought-Provoking Warm Up Activity for Teacher Training

by Annie Polatsek

The following activity can be an engaging way to begin a training workshop. Every time I have used it, no matter who the participants are: pre-service or in-service teachers, nonnative or native speakers, we usually run out of time before we run out of things to say!

THE PROCEDURE IS SIMPLE:

1. The list below contains a variety of statements about teaching and learning. Select some of them and prepare small posters, laminated cards, an overhead transparency, or another other way of displaying them for all participants to see.
2. Ask participants to choose, or stand next to, the statement they feel most strongly about (often it is difficult to decide). Then ask them to work with someone else who chose the same statement, and spend a few minutes discussing why they chose that one. If time permits, in pairs they can describe any personal experiences that illustrate the statement and/or write their reactions to the statement.
3. Conclude with a discussion of all the displayed statements. Ask participants to share their opinions, focusing on the principles of teaching and learning exemplified by each one.
4. For an alternative or extension of the activity, first prepare envelopes that contain each of the statements on a separate strip of paper. Then divide participants into small groups, giving one envelope to each group. Ask groups to categorize the statements and create titles for each category. Again, ask participants to share their opinions, this time focusing on the principles of teaching and learning exemplified by the categories.

