

LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL
PERSONAL NARRATIVE
I am from Emulation Poem

Note: All protocols have multiple origins. The strength of a protocol is in the ability of facilitators or planners to adjust/revise for use in your context. <http://www.nsrffharmony.org/free-resources/protocols/a-z> is a good source of multiple protocols for school, district, community and organizational use. Thank you to contributors for their poems.

I AM FROM

The I Am From poem is a form of emulation writing developed by Linda Christensen.

The purpose of writing the **emulation poem** is to have participants gain some greater knowledge of their colleagues' or students' backgrounds. While we often know people from years of working with them, we occasionally have surprises.

Initially it opens up dialogue in a way that frees the writer to say precisely what elements of his/her upbringing, history, or current life are particularly important at this time of life.

Write an I AM FROM POEM yourself in 10 minutes or less. Type and add to the examples, substituting any here for yours. Tell participants you did this in 10 minutes and they can too. There is a look of disbelief, but once people start writing, they seem to be fine. Say: "The length is not important. Write for 10 minutes and you will read your emulation poem to at least two other persons, reading, but not explaining."

Read your examples and two or more examples aloud. Either the facilitator or participants can do the reading. Then participants use the lines on the blank page to write an I Am From poem. If persons have laptops, of course, they may use these.

(Note: Collecting and publishing these poems if persons want to revise and submit, using writing process is a terrific way to share your stories.) If you wish to use basic writing process of reading drafts, getting feedback and then revising and publishing in some format or having a reading, that would be the next steps.

Rules of Engagements

- This is a draft poem that emulates the examples, but is your own story.
- Stay engaged.
- Assume best intentions.
- Listen to other's poems and offer only warm feedback about a certain part of the poem that touched you. However, do not tell your own story in response.
- After completing all reading, discuss in trios or quartets the experience of doing this.

Optional

- Ask if someone wants to recommend someone's poem for reading to full group.
- Ask for volunteers.
- Publish poems after writing process and submission
- Discuss how to use with students.

I Am From Examples

You should add your own as facilitator

I am from Carolina, where Turkeys are born and raised.
I am from a place where buck pride is a must.
Born number one of 8, I am from a divided house where my parents allowed their hearts to be broken and never mended, but yet I am an only child.

I am from a place where family is important,
I was raised by a beautiful woman who has a green thumb who is very social able.
Molded by the hands of a strong grandfather.
I am from a place where celebrating and coming together is a must.

Being the trailblazer for my siblings
A Trendsetter for my nieces and nephews
Life has made this a wonderful journey

Having music that is both my profession and my hobby
I am from a place where music is important
Whether ceremonial, religious, program or incidental
The stage is where I am from
Surrounded by instruments is where I am comfortable
However, green fields, marked and with lines and hashes have made me popular
Providing opportunities from town to town, city to city, state to state and up and down the east coast to make my mark in life.

I am from humble beginnings that have given me strength to preserver.
I am from humble beginnings that have given me strength to overcome.
I am from a place where I know that I have to return to pull others out.
I am from a place where I have to return to show others there is hope.
I am from a place where I can break cycles
A place where I am the now the leader
A place where I am a role model
A place where I can make a difference
I am now back home

Teicher Patterson
NELA II 2013

Karyn Pleasant
NELA, Cohort III

I AM FROM

I am from five girls tight like knots
Dad worked hard to pick up the slack
Knew he had to be there 'cause our mother would not.
I am from broken hearts and re-written dreams
From, "I won't give up" and silent screams

I am from the north and the south and somewhere in between
I am from everywhere and nowhere, home seems like a far off dream
I'm from moving for a better life to moving for a better chance
From making sure my kids have the best opportunity
Making sure they get to live and get to dance

I am from "say it's well til you see it's well"
From suffering doesn't exist if no one else can tell
I am from walking by faith and not by sight
From keeping my eyes wide open so I can see through the night
Gotta play my hand close til I can see who's wrong and who's right



Example 2 Lynda Tredway I AM FROM

I am from grasshopper days and humming irrigation wells at night in a prairie town where everyone looked alike.

I am from Christianity and democracy and believing that they meant what they said about loving your neighbor and equality.

I am from migrant workers down the road who we picked up to take to church and from writing high school speeches that said we shouldn't need the voting rights act if we just paid attention to the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments.

I am from years of teaching in schools where kids came everyday thinking that they should be able to believe in their dreams and 30 years of helping my daughter try to realize hers.

For 47 years I was from Washington DC and now for 8 of those I was from California, too, but no matter where I have been I keep trying to figure out how we can possibly live and work together to make schools for all children the places we would want for our own children.

That's always where I am from – and I start each school year with the hope we are going somewhere deeper and different.

Larry Hodgkins

I am from where hard work and relationships with all kinds of people are valued

I am from the stereotypical American Dream, my dad from a small town in Maine who left to find his fortune, but he always brought me back, I know my rural roots – thanks dad

I am from a place where I wanted for nothing and was encouraged to learn, material possessions were never important to me

I am from teaching in a school where I found my calling

I am from a community that looks different from me but took me in

I am a part of something meaningful

I do not teach THEM, I work for US

