

Research-Based Curriculum

Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts

A Collection Curated by Dr. Sharroky Hollie

Introduction to *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts*

The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection examines the cultural and linguistic authenticity of high-interest, culturally relevant literature and nonfiction texts through the use of culturally and linguistically responsive (CLR) discussion activities that address specific content standards for reading, speaking, and listening. Literacy skills are built through two research-based instructional practices, interactive read-alouds and balanced literacy, providing student-centered discourse and flexibility for partner, small-group, or whole-group class facilitation.

The goal of the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection is to validate and affirm the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all students' home cultures while building skills to provide a bridge to school (mainstream) culture, regardless of ethnicity. At its core, culturally and linguistically responsive teaching pushes teachers to recognize their own cultures and the cultures of their students. Teachers can then use that cultural knowledge to make learning experiences more relevant to and effective for all students (Au 2009; Gay 2010; Hollie 2018).

Whether teaching in a diverse school setting or teaching with a homogeneous student population, CLR is essential for every classroom, especially as it applies to increasing academic literacy for all students (Hollie 2011). In the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection, academic language, academic vocabulary, and academic literacy operate harmoniously. They are scaffolded through the use of vocabulary activities, discussion activities, and graphic organizers. Diversity in teaching methods is essential for increasing the probability of reaching all students, no matter their race, gender, age, economic level, religion, orientation, or ethnic identity (Delpit 1995; Hammond 2015). Students are provided the opportunity to exercise critical thinking by analyzing examples of cultural values, norms, languages, and behaviors within the context of each text and by discussing these elements within their own home cultures. Students are thus encouraged to reflect and build upon their own understanding and appreciation of their own cultures, including gender culture, religious culture, orientation culture, national culture, and ethnic culture. Finally, the content of the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection lends itself to classroom discourse surrounding various CLR themes and historical issues prevalent today, including the global challenges of inequality and stereotypes across cultures.

Rings of Culture

In effect, CLR activities tap into who students are, based on their youth culture (Emdin 2016), gender culture, religious culture, orientation culture, national culture, socioeconomic culture, and ethnic culture. In CLR terminology, these various cultural behaviors are known as the Rings of Culture, representing complex layers that make up who people are culturally. Each layer, or ring, provides an opportunity for validation and affirmation through instruction and selection of authentic texts.

Validate and Affirm (VA)

CLR teaching is the validating and affirming of cultural and linguistic behaviors of all students and the building and bridging of those behaviors to success in academia and mainstream culture (Hollie 2018). To validate and affirm means to make legitimate and positive that which institutional knowledge, historically speaking, and mainstream media have made illegitimate and negative regarding the cultures and languages of certain student populations. Some students have been told their cultural and linguistic behaviors are bad, incorrect, insubordinate, disrespectful, or disruptive. Culturally responsive educators refute that narrative when talking to, relating to, and teaching students. In CLR classrooms, when students demonstrate who they are culturally and linguistically, the teacher does not respond negatively or punitively. Instead, the teacher demonstrates understanding and empathy. Teachers can use these opportunities to build relationships with students. Most significantly, students are taught in a way that responds to their cultural and linguistic behaviors, such as sociocentrism, communalism, and verbal overlapping (Hollie 2015). In this curriculum, the focus of CLR teaching is on how to connect to these cultural and linguistic behaviors.

Build and Bridge (BB)

An equal part of validating and affirming is building and bridging. This is where the focus on school culture or traditional behaviors occurs. These behaviors are reinforced with activities that require expected behaviors for traditional academic settings and mainstream environments, such as taking turns, individualism (independent work), and written (rather than verbal) responses. In CLR classrooms, there should be a balance of validating and affirming activities and building and bridging activities.

Learning Situational Appropriateness through VABB

The validating and affirming and building and bridging rationales in the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection explain how each discussion and response protocol validates and affirms home-culture behaviors while building and bridging skills to school-culture behaviors. The implementation of these strategies allows students several opportunities to determine what the most appropriate cultural and linguistic behavior is for the situation and enables them to do so without losing their own cultural and linguistic selves in the process.

Culturally Authenticity and Responsiveness

Three Levels of Responsive Texts

Each culturally responsive text can be sorted into one of three levels: culturally authentic (CA), culturally generic (CG), or culturally neutral (CN). The categorization of these texts into the following three levels is meant to determine the extent to which a text authentically represents the cultures and languages of its characters or subjects.

- *Culturally authentic texts* illuminate the authentic, nuanced, and accurate cultural and linguistic experiences of a particular cultural group or Ring of Culture (religion, socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, nationality, orientation, or age), using language, situations, and images that depict culture and language in a genuine, native manner.
- *Culturally generic texts* feature characters of various racial identities, but unlike culturally authentic texts, they contain only superficial cultural and linguistic details to define the characters or story lines in an authentic manner.
- *Culturally neutral literature* features characters and topics of “diversity” but includes content that is drenched with traditional or mainstream themes, plots, characterizations, and/or generalizations. *Culturally neutral informational texts* are devoid of culture or may include tokenistic portrayals of race or culture and avoid addressing authentic issues.

A Variety of Responsive Texts

This collection intentionally includes texts at a variety of levels, strategically selected to demonstrate how CLR strategies can be implemented with any type of text.

Culturally Authentic Texts

For decades, there has been almost no argument against providing diverse texts to support the increasingly diverse demographics of students. Publishers, authors, educators, and consumers have understood the need for texts that represent students of color. As Ron Charles, editor of *Book World* at the *Washington Post*, points out, we “have seen many sincere efforts to provide children and young readers with more books that reflect the rich diversity of the United States, but by and large, the shelves have remained as white as freshly fallen snow” (2017). The challenge of having more texts for all students remains an uphill battle, but the fight for culturally authentic texts just begins there.

The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection informs educators when the text is authentic and when it is not. The difference is often cultural and linguistic validation and affirmation. The authentic, nuanced, and accurate portrayals of cultural and linguistic behaviors are what separate the common from the unique when it comes to culturally responsive texts. Understanding when

texts are not culturally authentic becomes relevant because the goal of validation and affirmation is rooted in the celebration of genuine cultural and linguistic behaviors. Presenting students with texts that move beyond representations of surface culture to explore the deeper, more complex elements of culture ensures students will be validated and affirmed for who they are authentically.

Analysis of Culturally Authentic and Culturally Generic Texts

The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection features shared reading lessons, which include an “Is it Authentic?” section that offers prompts to closely analyze the authenticity of culturally generic texts. For each interactive read-aloud lesson, there are several “Identifying Authentic Texts” sections that zoom in on specific examples of the shallow and deep-level perspectives of culture. This validates and affirms students’ cultural and linguistic behaviors.

Cultural and Linguistic Authenticity

Boykin (1983) identified some of the most common cultural and linguistic behaviors as communalism; eye contact; frankness; orality and verbal expressiveness; proximity; concept of time; and conversational patterns. These behaviors are frequently used to determine cultural and linguistic authenticity in texts. Pulling from anthropological research, the following cultural and linguistic behaviors have been selected for validation and affirmation throughout the lessons in this collection: spontaneity (improvising); sociocentrism (social interaction); kinesthetic (high movement); cooperative (shared responsibility); contextual conversation pattern (verbal overlap); pragmatic language use (nonverbal expression); relational (multiple ways of doing something); concept of time (relativity with time); communalism (collective success); proximity (physical closeness); and sense of immediacy (connectedness). These cultural behaviors are universal, but for marginalized cultures, their norms for engaging in these behaviors in the context of school are often misunderstood and misinterpreted as wrong, bad, or negative. Validation and affirmation of these behaviors will better engage students, and if they are more fully engaged, they will achieve greater academic success. The VABB construct allows for opportunities to demonstrate understanding, acceptance, and legitimization of these behaviors through the use of specific protocols. The instructional juxtaposition of protocols that build and bridge to school-culture behaviors (e.g., traditional classroom practices such as calling on individual students with raised hands or having students work quietly on an independent written response) helps students achieve the goal of understanding situational appropriateness.

Balanced Literacy

Reutzel and Cooter (2000) state that balanced literacy programs teach students skills in reading and writing based on their individual needs and within the context of appropriately leveled reading materials that are of interest to the learner. Allington and Walmsley (1995) point out that there is “no quick fix” and no one program to meet the needs of all children. Instead, teachers must be able to recognize different learning styles, select appropriate strategies to meet the individual needs of the child, and strive to find a balance for every child (Speigel 1994).

Flexible Balanced Literacy Model for Every Child

The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection is designed to flexibly support a balanced literacy model of instruction. Five culturally authentic literature titles include lessons designed to support interactive read-alouds. Five nonfiction titles include lessons that support the shared reading context of balanced literacy. All titles are appropriately leveled based on the F&P Text Level Gradient™ and the Lexile® Framework for Reading published by MetaMetrics®.

Interactive Read-Aloud

Reading aloud is the single most important activity for reading success (Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp 2000). Reading aloud to students yields many benefits, including motivation to read, deeper comprehension, and a model for fluency. Though modeled reading or teacher read-alouds are often associated with young children, their value in the primary, intermediate, and even high school grades is well documented (Barrentine 1996; Beck and McKeown 2001; Fisher et al. 2004; Ivey 2003). In addition to the benefits of enjoying hearing stories read aloud, interactive read-alouds create opportunities to discuss the process of comprehending text while sharing aesthetic and personal reactions with the group (Ivey 2003; Wiseman 2011). Each of the interactive read-aloud lessons in this collection is paired with high-interest, culturally authentic literature. Students are able to discuss the values and behaviors of the characters’ home culture and relate it to their own through a variety of partner and small-group CLR activities.

Shared Reading

Shared reading actively engages students as they read the text with the teacher. The teacher models fluency, expression, and comprehension. Students join in the reading, mimicking the teacher’s model. Shared reading is an effective method to help students access and successfully participate in reading challenging texts (Holdaway 1972). There are several configurations that can be used when implementing shared reading in the classroom. Students may read in unison with the teacher or each other, or they may take turns. Shared reading may also include reading with partners. See the list on page 7 for shared reading options in the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection.

Shared Reading Options:

- **Buddy Reading**—Proficient readers read to less proficient readers. This can be done with peers or by pairing upper-grade students with lower-grade students. Students keep the same buddies for the entire grading period.
- **Choral Reading**—Students read the text aloud in unison with the teacher.
- **Fade In/Fade Out**—The teacher uses nonverbal cues to choose students to read. Students must be able to read and listen for another reader’s cues.
- **Fill in the Blank Reading**—The teacher reads aloud and students follow along. The teacher leaves out key words, and students supply the missing words.
- **Jump-In Reading**—Students have the autonomy to choose when they would like to “jump in” and take turns reading aloud.
- **Tag Reading**—A student reads while walking around the classroom. At some point, after reading at least three sentences, the student tags another student to read. The student then stands, reads, and walks. They then tags another student and so on.
- **Train Reading**—Just as a train has an engine, a car, and a caboose, the teacher is the engine as the first reader who then selects the proficient readers to be the cars and caboose.

Guided Reading

Another mode of reading that teachers may opt to use with complex text is guided reading. During guided reading, teachers “interact with children briefly as appropriate while reading, guide the discussion, make teaching points after reading, and engage children in targeted word work” (Fountas and Pinnell 2012, 389). The experience is carefully set with a text introduction, meaningful discussions, and extension activities related to the text. The main objective for guided reading is to support students with strategies to ultimately be able to access the text (or similar texts) independently. Teachers use each guided reading session as an informal assessment to pinpoint new reading focuses for future lessons.

Independent Reading

Best practices for independent reading require the teacher to be present to scaffold learning while reading. Teachers guide students in selecting appropriate books and understanding what they have read. Emerging readers will need the teacher’s guidance even more as they seek out books that interest them. Emerging readers are encouraged to determine meaning from the context of the illustrations while approximating reading, depending on their level of reading development. Allowing time for discussions about the text is an important part of independent reading. According to Barbara Moss (2016), “Conversations can contribute to critical thinking, metacognition, and argument construction,” all of which promote deeper understanding of meaningful text.

Critical Thinking through Discussion

In *Illuminating Texts: How to Teach Students to Read the World* (2001), Jim Burke discusses the confusion students experience as they encounter texts in society today. They must navigate biased news sources and unfiltered social media reports. Students in an ever-changing global society must be taught to read and think critically and evaluate the evidence provided in the text by the author. This can happen as students simultaneously learn to read. Teachers can help students use higher-order skills and critical thinking from an early age by engaging students in asking questions and having collaborative discussions. According to Harvey and Daniels (2009), “Few kids can actually demonstrate their understanding of a concept if they have not been taught to think about the information” (28). They go on to write, “Finding information means little if students cannot evaluate the usefulness of the information” (102). Teachers must have students talk about what they are reading and work with others to develop the skills necessary to understand the complex texts they will encounter as they become more thoughtful readers. If teachers start discussing texts with students at a young age when reading aloud in whole-group contexts, students will begin to use these strategies at a higher level when they begin to read independently.

CLR Discussion and Response Protocols

The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection includes a variety of engaging partner, small-group, and whole-group CLR discussion activities and response protocols. This provides opportunities for students to actively practice listening and speaking skills and to increase their understanding of diverse perspectives as examples of authentic cultural behaviors. As students are asked to analyze and evaluate the text using a variety of open-ended questions in the Culminating Discussion section, students develop higher-level thinking, oral communication, and leadership skills.

Building Comprehension Skills through Discussion

According to Freahat and Smadi (2014), “One should consider the nature of relationship between lower- and higher-cognitive questions. This relationship can be described as integrative. Lower-level questions can enhance the acquisition of factual knowledge and the foundations for attaining high-cognitive skills. On the other hand, higher-level questions are effective tools for stimulating thinking and developing other cognitive skills such as problem solving and decision making” (9). The *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection incorporates nine key reading strategies that fit within four levels of cognitive learning in increasing complexity: remembering, understanding, analyzing, and evaluating. The key reading strategies are described on the following page.

Reading Strategies

Monitor Comprehension: Good readers monitor their progress to keep track of meaning while reading. They employ a variety of effective comprehension monitoring strategies to know when they need to pause and clarify what they are reading. When readers discuss strategies for monitoring comprehension, their reading improves (Allington 1995).

Personal Connection: Good readers make meaningful connections to the text by referring to their personal experiences and background knowledge. In the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection, students with diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to share their unique home connections.

Determine Meaning: Students constantly need to decode language as they read. As they journey through complex texts, students need to employ skills to determine meaning for vocabulary and figurative language. To navigate complex language, students must use context clues and understand shades of meaning, figurative language, and multiple-meaning words.

Create Images: Creating mental images, or “mind movies,” during reading enhances the reading experience. Mental “images” include visuals as well as sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings. Students should be encouraged to make reading a complete sensory experience through discussing sensory clues provided explicitly in a text as well as in details that can be inferred based on setting, characters, and context clues.

Infer: Good readers combine prior knowledge with clues from the text to infer deeper meanings as they read. Inferring involves visualizing and thinking about the characters’ motives and feelings, the themes, and the author’s purpose. Students ask questions as they read, and the answers to their questions are often found not directly in the text but are inferred when students tie details together.

Predict: Good readers make informed, logical predictions on what is going to happen next in the text by evaluating the evidence given by the author.

Use Evidence: Students study evidence presented in a text to decide whether they agree with the author’s stance and the ideas presented. They learn to distinguish fact from opinion and to identify and evaluate text evidence. Good readers evaluate ideas in the text, the author’s craft, and characters’ actions and motives as their own understanding of the text progresses (Oczkus 2004).

Synthesize: The ability to compare, or to synthesize, the information gained from reading one text with multiple components is a powerhouse skill. Students need to learn to answer questions, compare information, and resolve conflicting details in multiple texts.

Evaluate Details: By evaluating a specific detail in the text, including author’s purpose, overall theme, or a character’s choice, students are able to demonstrate comprehension on a deeper level by sharing or defending opinions supported by multiple pieces of evidence in the text.

Comprehension Skills

The nine comprehension strategies in the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection enable teachers to differentiate instruction among reading groups and provide appropriate scaffolding to diverse learners. These strategies also offer support for students to develop lifelong comprehension skills through the facilitation of discussion activities.

Differentiated Instruction

To differentiate instruction is to acknowledge various student backgrounds, readiness levels, languages, interests, and learning profiles (Hall 2002). Differentiating can be performed in a variety of ways, and if teachers are willing to use this philosophy in their classrooms, they opt for a more effective practice that responds to the needs of diverse learners (Tomlinson 2000; 2005). *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* addresses the needs of all learners:

- **Below-Grade-Level Students:** Comprehension problems may stem from difficulty decoding and a lack of automaticity when reading (often found with poor sight-word-recognition skills). Many nonfluent readers work so hard at reading that they are unable to allocate cognitive resources to comprehension (Williams and Pao 2011). Other learners may read fluently but still struggle with comprehension (Jitendra and Gajria 2011). “For students with [learning disabilities], it is crucial to teach directly how to construct the main idea, and to emphasize metacognitive and strategic approaches to learning” (Jitendra and Gajria 2011, 200).
- **English Language Learners:** Research shows that instruction for English language learners should be clear, focused, and systematic for best results (Goldenberg 2010). In classrooms where only English is spoken, Goldenberg suggests posting lists and schedules for reference, using graphic organizers, providing additional practice opportunities, using redundant information (words and pictures), and having other English language learners summarize or clarify information. Providing ample opportunities for thoughtful dialogue and discussions with peers is a critical part of English language development (Mora-Flores 2011). Partners or groups may ask for clarification or offer comprehensible language input to support new attempts at output. The feedback process powerfully demonstrates the real purpose of language—communication. Students must communicate their learning across the curriculum orally and in writing, and they need explicit instruction on how to do so fluently and successfully.

Language Support Sentence Frames

The Language Support Sentence Frames in each lesson provide English language learners with structures that encourage increased participation during discussion.

- **Above-Grade-Level Students:** Most students performing above grade level have the metacognitive ability to apply new concepts and vocabulary during independent work quickly and effectively. However, they sometimes face the risk of boredom in the classroom if they are not challenged. Providing rich resources for reading inspires students to utilize and stretch their cognitive skills. Further, above-grade-level readers can use this foundation for reading increasingly complex narratives and informational texts to continue developing their reading and comprehension skills.

Adapting to the Needs of Diverse Learners

The flexible design of the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection allows for use with ability, mixed-ability, and skill-specific groups so that differentiation addresses the individual needs of students during each intervention session. Furthermore, the Respond to the Text sections offer activity options such as writing prompts, culture connection, and literacy activities, which provide teachers the opportunity to differentiate the ways students can demonstrate learning.

Building Academic Language

Academic language affects student achievement across the curriculum (Olsen 2010). Students need to understand the language of the discipline to access information and, in turn, share their learning in oral and written forms.

General Academic Vocabulary (Tier II) vs. Specialized Content Vocabulary (Tier III)

Baumann and Graves (2010) explain the need for students to become familiar with both general academic vocabulary and specialized content vocabulary. General academic vocabulary includes words teachers want students to retain and have access to when speaking and writing in school and for career and college readiness. Specialized content vocabulary is domain-specific, often low frequency, and supports students' access to the curriculum.

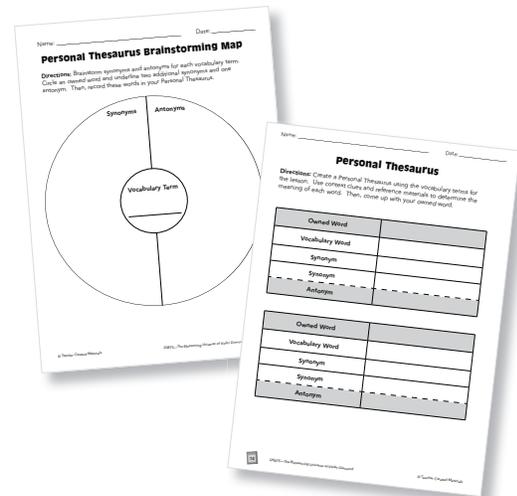
Personal Thesaurus and Personal Dictionary

In the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection, the Personal Thesaurus and Personal Dictionary are used to build academic language. The Personal Thesaurus is modeled with various response protocols to support students in understanding general academic vocabulary (Tier II). The Personal Dictionary is modeled with various response protocols to support students in understanding specialized content vocabulary (Tier III).

Personal Thesaurus

The Personal Thesaurus concept is rooted in Dr. Mary Montle Bacon's work during the 1990s. Dr. Bacon reminded educators that students do not come to school as blank slates. The graphic organizer originated during Dr. Hollie's time as a professional coordinator in the Academic English Mastery Program in Los Angeles Unified School District, directed by Dr. Noma LeMoine in collaboration with colleague Anthony Jackson (Hollie 2015).

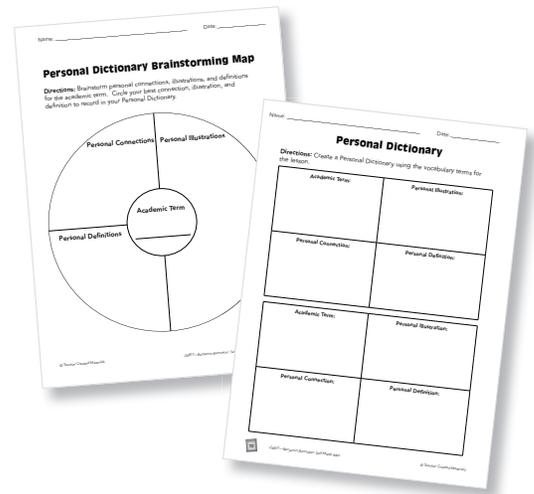
The theoretical basis is housed in schematic learning (Inhelder and Piaget 1958; Rumelhart 1980) and synonym development. According to Dr. Hollie (2015), schematic connections are made when the student is able to connect the concept of their home word with the concept of the target vocabulary word. As a result, the student develops a host of academic synonyms for the target word. This enables



the teacher to validate and affirm and build and bridge. Consequently, the Personal Thesaurus is a powerful and popular tool for reading, writing, and speaking in academic situations. The Personal Thesaurus is meant for Tier II words and slang terminology.

Personal Dictionary

To better prepare students for academic learning, it is helpful to front-load key vocabulary terms or concepts by generating and building prior knowledge (Goldenberg 2011). This can include sharing some related content with students to help them make relevant and meaningful connections to better comprehend the new information.



Front-loading Vocabulary to Scaffold Academic Language

Prior to starting the Personal Dictionary activity, front-loading of specialized content-specific vocabulary (Tier III) occurs through reading contextual sentences in the text, use of the Personal Dictionary Brainstorming Map, and student discussion of various related images illustrating the academic term.

The Personal Dictionary is intended for use in content-specific areas (Hollie 2015). Vocabulary instruction in these areas focuses on Tier III words, which students rarely encounter in speech or print and for which they would have difficulty generating synonyms. Whereas the Personal Thesaurus is more homegrown for CLR teaching, the Personal Dictionary is a tool based on research, specifically the Frayer Model (Frayer, Frederick, and Klausmeier 1969). Blachowicz and Fisher (2006) identify seven possibilities the Frayer Model has for developing students' understanding of technical vocabulary. The model can be used for the following purposes:

- define a new concept, discriminating the relevant attributes
- discriminate the relevant from the irrelevant
- provide an example
- provide a non-example
- relate the concept to a subordinate concept
- relate the concept to a superordinate concept
- relate the concept to a coordinate term

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of instruction and should be conducted on an ongoing basis to check for student progress. “Evaluating student progress is important because it enables the teacher to discover each student’s strengths and weaknesses, to plan instruction accordingly, to communicate student progress to parents, and to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies” (Burns, Roe, and Ross 1999).

Options for Assessments

In the *Culturally Authentic and Responsive Texts* collection, ongoing formative assessment involves routine observation of students during partner, small-group, and whole-group discussions. Summative assessment options include having students orally summarize the text, assessing students on their understanding of Tier II vocabulary, and finding evidence of students’ abilities to use academic language during discussion and in writing. The provided Discussion Rubric sets expectations for students’ listening and speaking skills during reading and assesses the same skills after reading in the Culminating Discussion section.

Formative Assessments

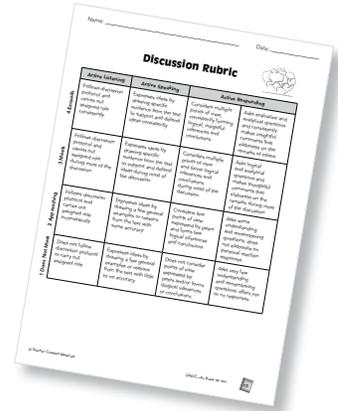
Teachers use formative assessments to help them drive their instruction to meet students’ needs (Honig et al. 2000). By taking anecdotal notes of students’ speaking and listening skills during partner, small-group, and whole-group discussion, the teacher is able to address the individual needs of students and provide specific feedback, appropriate scaffolding such as modified sentence frames, and explicit instruction on situational appropriateness during each of the discussion activities.

Summative Assessments

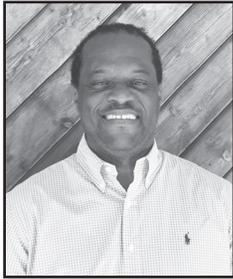
The purpose of summative assessment is “to judge the success of a process at its completion” (Airasian 2005). Summative assessment provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of new learning, which in turn helps guide instructional planning. This type of assessment shows growth over time and helps teachers set instructional goals to address students’ needs. It guides the strategies or steps students require to continue along their academic and/or instructional paths.

Discussion Rubric

Discussion rubrics may be used as effective methods to set expectations for students to make a conscious effort to participate. Rubrics also provide students with feedback in regards to how to improve upon their listening and speaking skills. Effective rubrics show students the extent to which their performances pass muster on each criterion of importance, and if used formatively, they can also show students what their next steps should be to enhance the quality of their performance (Brookhart 2013).



Lead Contributors and Consultants



Sharroky Hollie, Ph.D., has spent nearly 25 years in education as a teacher and leader at the secondary and post-secondary levels. Dr. Hollie is the executive director of the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping educators become culturally responsive. He has written numerous books and articles and coaches thousands of teachers each year in culturally responsive pedagogy.



Lydia McClanahan, MLIS, is a veteran educator, with more than 20 years of experience working with underserved students. She earned her Masters in Library Information Science at San Jose State University. She began her journey in cultural and linguistic responsiveness in 1998 as a facilitator for Los Angeles Unified School District's Academic English Mastery Program, and she went on to become one of the founding middle school teachers at the Culture and Language Academy of Success (CLAS). During her time at CLAS, McClanahan began serving as an instructional coach for the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning. She has served as a lead instructional coach for the last seven years, during which time she began to curate Responsive Reads, a newsletter that illuminates diverse authors and culturally authentic texts.



Aubrie Nielsen, M.S.Ed., is a content director, former elementary teacher, and instructional coach. Nielsen earned her degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, before beginning her teaching career working with diverse groups of underserved students in Los Angeles Unified School District. Nielsen worked in schools in California and internationally for ten years before joining Teacher Created Materials in 2010. She now leads a team of educators in developing resources to support innovative instructional methods.



Christina Hin, M.A.T., served as the editorial lead on these collections. Hin attended the University of California, Irvine, where she earned her Master of Arts in Teaching in elementary education and multiple-subject teaching credential. With more than five years of teaching English language learners and students with disabilities in one-on-one, small-group, and whole-class settings, Hin has developed a repertoire of teaching strategies through the application of research-based pedagogy. She strives to bridge the educational achievement gap by ensuring that all lessons are highly engaging, challenging, and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.

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