

# New Tech Network Practices Cards Sample Set

Equity-Centered  
Practices to Foster  
Equitable Opportunities



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## ICON KEY

### NEW TECH NETWORK LEARNING OUTCOMES



Knowledge  
& Thinking



Oral  
Communication



Written  
Communication



Collaboration



Agency

### PREP TIME INVESTMENT



Small/Little  
to No Prep



Medium/  
Some Prep



Large/Thoughtful  
Time and Prep

### FREQUENCY



All the Time



Frequently



Infrequently



As Needed

### Note:

Each practice card provides a recommended frequency of use and an expected prep time investment.

Before designing and implementing all practices, be mindful of:

- Your professional context (e.g. amount of preparation time and type of instructional materials available)
- Your learning environment (e.g. school schedules, daily agendas, and project timelines)
- Your learners' needs (e.g. learners need weekly one-on-one conferring or learners need daily mindfulness practices)



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# About the Card Sets

## SYSTEM OVERVIEW



This resource is a compilation of key cultural, instructional, and reflective practices that support educators in ensuring all learners have access to opportunities. These equity-centered practices, curated in card sets, provide different strategies to design and implement learning that embodies authentic, complex thinking and problem solving and creates safe, inclusive and emotionally supportive environments.

To purchase a hard copy  
of the entire  
NTN Practices Cards  
deck, please visit  
[www.newtechnetwork.org/store](http://www.newtechnetwork.org/store).



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# Learner-Centered Practices



**Cultivating Equitable  
Learning Environments  
Through Meaningful and  
Equitable Instruction**

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# Overview

This set of cards provides practices in support of communities who actively commit to meaningful and equitable instruction that:

- Engages learners in authentic complex thinking and problem-solving
- Emphasizes equitable collaboration and discourse
- Extends and builds learners' knowledge, skills, and mindsets – including their ability to critically examine systems (and system inequities) and engage in positive change
- Encourages diverse voices and perspectives
- Is culturally responsive to learner needs
- Centers learner assets and voices

## OVERVIEW



Each of the Learner-Centered Practices reflects an underlying shift in the way learners and facilitators cultivate their day-to-day instruction.

**From Teacher-Centered to Learner-Centered** - The practices curated in this set cultivate a learning environment where communities take ownership of their learning and center the instructional approach on authentic, complex thinking, and problem-solving. When designed with an intentional focus on encouraging cultural assets and identities, these practices can be highly responsive and lead to sustained learner assets and growth in learning outcomes across all subgroups.

**Culturally Sustaining Approaches** - The practices curated in this set encourage opportunities to extend and build learners' knowledge, skills, and mindsets – including their ability to critically examine systems (and system inequities) and engage in positive change.

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### Research/Supporting Resources

- Hammond, Zaretta. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*.
- Gorksi, Paul. *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty*.
- Gibbons, Pauline. *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning*.
- Walqui, Aida et al. *Scaffolding the Academic Success of Adolescent English Language Learners*.



## LEARNER-CENTERED

# Card Sort



### What?

Learners sort cards with information or vocabulary into meaningful groups.

### Why?

Gives space for learners to provide their own reasonings and promotes self-assessment; serves as a formative assessment.

NTLO



FREQ.

PREP.

NO.

4

## How?

1. **Decide which concepts or terms** you want learners to learn and prepare cards with the name of each concept or term. Make enough sets of cards for pairs or trios of learners to use.
2. **Have learners sort the cards** into meaningful groups or matches. Depending upon the level of learners' experience with this practice, you may want to model the conversation learners will have with one another to determine how to sort their cards or how to match them. A "closed" sort means that the facilitator provides the categories for sorting. (Example: please sort using the following categories: nouns, verbs, and other.) An "open" sort means that learners create the categories themselves.
3. **Discuss the categories or matches.** Ask groups to explain how they decided to sort their cards.

### REFLECT

- How can you use this practice to help learners learn something about themselves and/or about others?
- What challenges might you face in implementing Card Sorts and how might you overcome them?
- How can you utilize Card Sort to support students in their understanding of key vocabulary and project terminology?
- How will you ensure there is equitable dialogue where each and every learner's voice has an opportunity to share their thoughts?
- What concepts or terms are learners sorting and how might that engage their thinking about power and equity and the disruption of oppression?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "Card Sort" on The Teacher Toolkit website. Visit [www.theteachertoolkit.com/](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/)



## LEARNER-CENTERED

# Chalk Talk



### What?

Learners respond to prompts in writing and then respond to what other students said, also in writing.

### Why?

Allows learners to articulate, expand on, and revise their knowledge.  
Allows learners to connect with and gain insights from each other.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

5

### How?

1. **Create questions, prompts, ideas or math problems** to post on pieces of chart paper around the room, creating various stations. (Images, documents, or quotes may also be used.)
2. **Learners silently move from one poster to another** to analyze what is posted and record their individual response(s) on the chart paper or their own sheet.
3. **After 3-5 minutes, have groups rotate to the next station** and repeat until all groups have visited each station, still silently responding in writing. Learners can also respond to what others have written.
4. **Allow learners to view all the responses** when finished.
5. **Reflect as a class** to discuss what they noticed, any connections, and wonderings.

### REFLECT

- What agreements might be needed to set or model to help guide this activity?
- In what ways can accountability be created for individual input and participation?

### GO DEEPER

- See EL's resources on chalk talks at [www.eleducation.org/resources/chalk-talk](http://www.eleducation.org/resources/chalk-talk)
- Search "Chalk Talk" on the National School Reform Faculty website at [www.nsrffharmony.org](http://www.nsrffharmony.org)



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## LEARNER-CENTERED

# Four Corners



### What?

Four Corners is an interactive way to respond to questions that involves physical movement.

### Why?

Four Corners is an interactive question response activity that involves physical movement.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

11

## How?

- 1. Prepare:** Generate open-ended questions that have good potential for discussion and can be answered several ways. Often, these might be in the form of statements with which the learners can agree or disagree. You should also generate 2-4 answers.
- 2. Introduce statements or questions:** Project your question, or post it on your board. When you present the question to the learners, tell them that they should not move immediately. Ask learners to take a moment to reflect on their answer and rationale first before moving to a corner. You might have learners journal their answers.
- 3. Move:** Announce the location for each answer, and have the learners move to the corner that corresponds to their own answer.
- 4. Learners discuss & share:** At their corners, provide them with a prompt to discuss their answer with someone else (2-3 minutes). Have one or two groups from different corners share their thinking with the whole class.
- 5. Repeat steps 2-4:** This is a time that you might want to debrief the question, or move on to the next question, depending upon how the rest of your lesson will go.

### REFLECT

- How will you ensure there is equitable dialogue where each and every learners' voice has an opportunity to share their thoughts?
- What scaffolds might be needed to support interpersonal communication?
- How can you use this practice to help learners learn something about themselves and/or about others?
- How will the questions you choose help engage learners' thinking about power and equity and the disruption of oppression?

### GO DEEPER

- This resource is adapted from Facing History. Learn more at [www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/four-corners](http://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/four-corners)





LEARNER-CENTERED

## Praise, Question, Suggestion Protocol



### What?

A process to provide constructive peer critique.

### Why?

To optimize critique and feedback in preparation for revision of work. It should be used after a draft of what will become a finished product is complete. The focus is on offering feedback that is beneficial to the author.

NTLO



FREQ.

PREP.

NO.

14

### How?

#### BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Provide agreements/norms for engaging in critique and feedback. See **"Establishing a Culture of Critique"** in **Assessment Practices**.
- Provide time guidelines to keep feedback effective and focused.
- Feedback can be written on sticky notes/supporting document and given to the author.

1. **Provide product descriptors and rubrics** as clear guidelines of the expectations and criteria for the piece of work that will be critiqued. (For example, a particular section of the project rubric.) If the work is written, providing copies for the critique group is helpful.
2. **The first learner presents a draft** of his/her/their work and offers a focus question(s) to the group.
3. **The group provides specific praiseworthy comments** that help the presenter with his/her/their work.
4. **Next, the group asks clarifying and probing questions** to get a better understanding of the presenter's work.
5. **Lastly, the group offers helpful and specific suggestions** based off of the criteria from the descriptors and rubrics. Feedback should **relate to the focus question(s) identified by the presenter**.
6. **After each member of the group has offered feedback**, the presenter thanks the group and reflects aloud on suggestions he/she/they want to implement.
7. **Others then present their work** in turn and cycle through the feedback process.

#### GO DEEPER

- See EL Education: "Management in the Active Classroom"





## LEARNER-CENTERED

# See, Think, Wonder



### What?

A structured routine to help learners make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations.

### Why?

To stimulate curiosity and set the stage for inquiry.

NTLO



FREQ.



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NO.

# 15

### How?

1. Ask learners to make observations on a resource like artwork, image, artifact, topic, article, quote, work sample, etc.
2. Ask learners to use the prompts to unpack what they see, think, and wonder about the resource.

**See:** What do you see? (I see...) This is a moment to describe what is seen in the resource, avoiding judgments or assumptions.

**Think:** What do you think about that? (I think...) This is a moment to make sense of what is seen. Encourage learners to provide reasoning and rationale for their interpretations.

**Wonder:** What does it make you wonder? (I wonder...) This is a moment to discuss connections or implications to the driving question or other Need-to-Knows.

### 3. Debrief

#### Variations:

- Ask learners to share in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class.
- Ask learners to write down their responses.
- Try the same process through “**Hear, Think, Wonder.**”
- Use these prompts with “**Chalk Talk**” in **Learner-Centered Practices**.
- Consider using this practice in the Project Entry Event to spark inquiry and interest.
- Consider using this practice to elicit student knows and need-to-knows. See “**Knows and Need-to-Knows**” in **Learner-Centered Practices**.

### REFLECT

- What scaffolds will you provide to help participants engage with this practice?
- How might you use this practice to build understanding of multiple perspectives?
- How can you use this practice to help learners learn something about themselves and/or about others?

### GO DEEPER

- This Thinking Routine is adapted from Harvard Project Zero. Learn more at [www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/see-think-wonder)



## LEARNER-CENTERED

# Think, Pair, Share



### What?

Think, Pair, Share (aka turn and talk) is a simple social talk structure that gets learners thinking and engaging with a partner.

### Why?

It's a powerful tool to encourage learners to connect with and learn from each other. It promotes equitable discourse and engages active listening and participation.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

20

### How?

1. **Create a question or prompt** that requires learners to reflect on, expand, or synthesize their knowledge and thinking.
2. **As needed, review Think, Pair, Share structures** or expectations with learners.
3. **Ask learners** to quietly reflect or write about the question/prompt. If helpful, provide sentence starters to encourage the process.
4. **Have learners share** their thinking with a partner. Divide the time to ensure each learner has a chance to share.
5. **Provide gentle accountability** by asking a few random learners to share what their partners said.

### REFLECT

- How will you ensure there is equitable dialogue where each and every learner's voice has an opportunity to share their thoughts?
- How can you use this practice to help learners learn something about themselves and/or about others?
- What challenges might you face as you try to implement this strategy in the classroom? What might you need to prevent or overcome those challenges?
- What types of agreements need to be in place prior to engaging in this activity? How will you ensure learners hold themselves to these agreements?

### GO DEEPER

- See the protocol in action at EL Education:  
[www.eleducation.org/resources/classroom-protocols-in-action-think-pair-share](http://www.eleducation.org/resources/classroom-protocols-in-action-think-pair-share)



## LEARNER-CENTERED

# What? So What? Now What?



### What?

An opportunity for learners to connect to one another and to each other's work, while at the same time allowing all group members to get useful feedback.

### Why?

To access peer feedback around a current challenge or success and reflect on new insights and possible next steps.

NTLO



FREQ.



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NO.

# 22

## How?

### 1. Outline a Challenge or Success (5 minutes)

- Learners individually outline a current challenge or success related to their work. They answer 2 questions: What? (What did I do? What am I working on?) and So What? (Why is this important to me?)

### 2. Feedback Rounds (15 minutes each round)

- The first presenter explains what they've written to their group, ending with a focus question. Learners in the group take notes/write questions.
- Group asks 2 or 3 clarifying questions (only).
- Individuals in the group talk amongst themselves, while the presenter listens into the conversation, taking notes and considering new insights and possible next steps. The presenter is silent during this step. The group takes up each of the following questions in some way, along with any other focused discussion the presenter has asked the group to have.
  - "What I heard the presenter say was..."
  - "Why this seems important to the presenter is..."
  - "What I wonder is..." or, "The questions this raises for me are..."
  - "What this means to me is..."
  - "What I might suggest is..."
- Reflection by the presenter to the group. Now What? Repeat for each learner in the group.

### 3. Debrief

- Examine the process with the whole group. Did we stick to the protocol? Did we answer each presenter's focus question? How could we improve this process in the future?

### GO DEEPER

- This resource is adapted from School Reform Initiative. Learn more at [www.schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/what\\_so\\_what.pdf](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/doc/what_so_what.pdf)



# Culture Practices



**Cultivating Equitable  
Learning Environments  
through a Supportive and  
Inclusive Culture**

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# Culture Practices

## OVERVIEW

This set of cards provides culture practices that support communities who actively commit to cultivating a supportive and inclusive culture. One that:

- Fosters a relationship-rich environment focused on belonging, care, community and growth
- Creates opportunities for all learners to explore and sustain their cultural assets and identities
- Affirms the cultural identities of learners and deepens the understanding of the diverse identities of others
- Fosters a learning community focused on collaboration and learner voice based on learner feedback and needs
- Supports social-emotional well-being of all staff and learners
- Creates an asset-based mindset and the belief that all students can achieve at high levels

## OVERVIEW



Each of the Culture Practices reflects an underlying shift in the way learners and facilitators cultivate an equitable learning environment. The Culture Practices Cards are grouped in the set by these key shifts:

**Adopt an Asset-Based Mindset** - These self-reflective practices help learners shift from a deficit-based mindset by examining the deeply held beliefs, behaviors, and practices that influence their perspectives, work and interactions with others.

**Cultivate a Learning Community** - These practices help shift power dynamics from a teacher-centered environment to a learner-centered environment. In this space, each learner is an active contributor in the community.

**Engage in Restorative Discipline** - These practices help shift traditional discipline practices to those that center humanity and prioritize social, academic, physical and emotional well-being.

**Support Social-Emotional Well-Being** - These practices help shift toward processes that empower learners to self-regulate their emotions and manage their thoughts and feelings to return to an integrated brain state.

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### Research

- Ladson-Billings, G. *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*
- Paris, D. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: A Needed Change in Stance, Terminology, and Practice*



## CULTURE

# Storytelling



### What?

Asking learners (and their families and communities) to share stories about who they are, their academic histories, etc.

### Why?

To help you learn about an individual's strengths, needs, backgrounds, values, and mindsets.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

5

### How?

1. **Determine open-ended questions** that elicit stories, such as, "Tell me about a time you felt really successful at school," or, "Describe a time you felt supported at school to do your best work." "Describe a time where you felt care and belonging."

2. **Determine how** you will gather stories.

#### You might...

- Start the year with a project, possibly school-wide, that includes getting to know students or communities via storytelling.
- Try engaging students in "**Hopes and Dreams**" (see **Culture Practices**).
- Use empathy interviews or focus groups to elicit student voice (see "**Empathy Map Canvas**" or, "**Focus Group**" in **Culture Practices**).
- Provide surveys, community circle check-in questions, journals, or other reflection tools to elicit stories.

### REFLECT

- Making time to ask for and listen to stories can be challenging. How will you make space to engage in this practice? What might you need to give up?
- What structures, rapport and agreements need to be in place to ensure learners can show up with their full selves to share their stories?
- Listening to others' stories is a privilege. How will you honor their voices and intentionally lift up their stories? How will you utilize what you've learned to inform your work? How will you leverage their stories to cultivate equitable learning environments?

### GO DEEPER

- Read "Making Stories Inclusive and Equitable" at [www.practice-space.org/storytelling-guide/](http://www.practice-space.org/storytelling-guide/)



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## CULTURE

# Establish a Warm, Demanding Stance



### What?

Hold learners to high standards, convince them of their own brilliance, and help them to reach their potential in a disciplined and structured environment.

### Why?

To foster an atmosphere of belonging and connectedness where learners can engage and bring their full-selves as active contributors in the community. To build a foundation of trust and mutual respect so that collegial conversations and learning allyship is possible.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

10

## How?

### 1. Build relational trust and rapport

- Explicitly build in incremental moments to listen to your learners.
- Weave storytelling into lessons to share personal experiences and struggles (see **"Storytelling"** in **Culture Practices**).
- Bond over similar interests and incorporate them into projects.
- Make an effort to connect with learners outside of the classroom.
- Help learners get unstuck.

### 2. Use verbal and non-verbal communication to express care and warmth (e.g. through genuine smiles, a warm and firm tone of voice, etc.).

### 3. Show competence through your teaching.

### 4. Articulate high standards, and then follow that with the emotional support and the scaffolding necessary to achieve those high standards.

### 5. Acknowledge that productive struggle will happen and affirm it when it does.

### 6. Share power and foster learner agency (see **"Lift up Assets through Co-Facilitation," "Co-Design Learning Environments"** in **Culture Practices**).

## REFLECT

- How would you describe your current stance in the classroom?
- How might your learners describe it, and how might you find out what they think?
- What prework might you need to engage in to authentically practice a warm, demanding stance? (See **"Think Beyond Deficits"** or **"Recognize Your Triggers"** in **Culture Practices**)

## GO DEEPER

- See the chapter titled **"Establishing Alliance in the Learning Partnership"** in Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*.
- See Edutopia's article **"Warm Demander: An Equity Approach"**



## CULTURE

# Co-Create Community Agreements



### What?

A consensus-driven co-created process that identifies what each and every learner in the group needs in order to collaborate and feel supported and included.

### Why?

Collaborative agreements can generate active cooperation, collective sense-making and equitable inclusion of voices. Ensuring each and every learner has an opportunity to co-create shared processes for engaging in learning is a key component to equitable learning environments.



NO.

12

FREQ.

PREP.

## How?

### 1. Define two different types of agreements:

- **Relational** - How we want to be in relationship with each other (e.g. speak your truth; listen fully; seek out multiple perspectives).
- **Operational** - Procedures or structures (e.g. start and end on time; end with clear next steps).

### 2. Explore the purpose of community agreements and how they will support collective goals.

### 3. As a group, begin brainstorming community agreements that will help achieve collective goals.

### 4. Combine and generalize the agreements with a discussion.

### 5. State all of the final agreements positively and have few in number.

### 6. Display agreements, incorporate them in practice and reflect regularly.

#### Variations

- For younger learners, consider a read aloud to guide conversations around setting classroom agreements.
- Use small adhesive pads for learners to write their agreements on.
- Engage in a **"Chalk Talk"** protocol to generate ideas (see **Learner-Centered Practices**).
- Begin with **"Hopes and Dreams"** protocol (see **Culture Practices**).

**Before constructing agreements**, assess the conditions that will influence the process: What is the group's experience with community agreements? What is the group's existing culture?

#### REFLECT

- How are you providing opportunities for learners to deliberately practice and reflect on their agreements?
- How are you modeling the agreements for them? Are there opportunities for revision, if needed?
- How are all learners holding themselves and each other accountable?

#### GO DEEPER

- See National Equity Project's **"Developing Community Agreements"**



## CULTURE

# Community Circles



### What?

A ritual and routine that involves learners collectively connecting, reflecting, and developing social and emotional learning skills.

### Why?

Routine community circles support the cultivation of belonging, care and community within a learning environment. Agreements and co-facilitated discussions in circles build relational trust between community members and make space to value for cultural assets, identities and voices.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

14

## How?

### Tips

- Co-design agreements for engaging in community circles.
- Incorporate rituals and routines (see “**Establish Rituals and Routines**” in **Culture Practices**).

### For younger learners...

1. **Start with a Greeting:** Learners greet each other by name.
2. **Sharing:** Learners share information about important events in their lives. Listeners often offer empathetic comments or ask clarifying questions.
3. **Group Activity:** Everyone participates in a brief, lively activity that fosters group cohesion and helps learners practice social and academic skills.
4. **Message:** Learners read and interact with a short message written by the facilitator or another learner. The message is crafted to help learners focus on the work they'll engage in that day. Use this as an opportunity to emphasize learning outcomes or project benchmarks.

### For older learners...

1. Begin with a check-in question or greeting practice to help you and learners get to know each other and build trust. Be sure to participate in this process.
2. Follow with a lesson, mindfulness activity or reflection to support social and emotional learning, discuss and attend to healing to the classroom community, have fun, or reflect on academics.

### REFLECT

- How might you need to introduce circles in order to build buy-in?
- How might you develop the practice slowly over time?
- How might you invite learner voice to co-design the meetings?
- How can you incorporate knowledge and thinking in your circles/morning meetings?

### GO DEEPER

- See Responsive Classroom: [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org)
- See “Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles” at [www.healthiersf.org](http://www.healthiersf.org)



## CULTURE

# W.O.O.P.



### What?

W.O.O.P. (Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan) is a practical, accessible, evidence-based activity that helps learners set goals.

### Why?

To build learner agency and develop a step-by-step plan to achieve goals.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

18

### How?

#### 1. Set time aside with learners to engage in W.O.O.P.

**2. Share purpose for W.O.O.P. with learners.** "W.O.O.P. is a process that will help you with goal setting. We are more likely to accomplish our goals if we identify them, think about possible obstacles for achieving our goals, and plan for how we might get around those obstacles."

#### 3. Ask learners to identify a wish/goal they want to achieve.

**WISH** - What is an important goal that you want to accomplish for this project? Your goal should be challenging but feasible.

#### 4. Ask learners to imagine one positive outcome of achieving this goal and one obstacle that stands in the way.

**OUTCOME** - What will be the best result from accomplishing your goal? How will you feel?

**OBSTACLE** - What is the main obstacle that might prevent you from accomplishing your goal?

#### 5. Ask learners to make a plan for how they can get around that obstacle.

**PLAN** - What's an effective action to tackle the obstacle? Stated as a "when...then..." What supports might you need to carry out this plan?

#### 6. Debrief and set a date/time to revisit W.O.O.P.

### REFLECT

- What does it look like and sound like when learners are taking ownership over their learning?
- How are you meeting learners where they are to help them have ownership over this skill?

### GO DEEPER

- This resource was taken from Character Lab. Learn more at [www.characterlab.org/activities/woop-for-classrooms/](http://www.characterlab.org/activities/woop-for-classrooms/)



## CULTURE

# The Incredible 5-Point Scale



### What?

The Incredible 5-Point Scale is used to assist learners in becoming aware of their emotions and helping them advocate for what they need to self-regulate.

### Why?

The Incredible 5-Point Scale allows learners to reflect on how they are feeling. It helps the learner be proactive about attending to their needs so that they can engage in the learning. This process also builds awareness for the facilitator and provides data for the facilitator to adjust learning to be responsive to the needs of the learners.

NTLO



FREQ.



PREP.



NO.

24

## How?

1. **Introduce the scale** to learner(s). Explain what each level on the scale means.
2. **Model determining where you are** on the scale.
3. **Discuss how you might move** down to blue or green (1 or 2) if you rise above those levels. Discuss how a level 5 will require help from someone else.
4. **Describe when and how to use the scale.** See examples below.
5. **Review and reflect** on the use of the scale with learners. Adjust as needed.

### With learners in the classroom, you might:

- Ask learners to reflect on where they are on the scale during Community Circles (see "**Community Circles**" in **Culture Practices**).
- Keep a large version of the scale at the front of the room or small versions on learner tables. Ask learners to track where they are and check in with them as needed.
- Create a "calming corner" with the scale and suggestions and activities for moving down the scale like:
  - Have putty, glitter jars, or stress balls available
  - Use weighted lap pads, allow heavy work (lifting books, wall leaning, jump frog)
  - Have soft seating/bean bag chairs/exercise balls
  - Allow learners to use headphones or hoodies, practice mindfulness
- Use the scale with individual learners, focusing on a particular transition, behavior, etc.

### REFLECT

- What support will learners need to use the scale effectively?
- How will you ensure you reflect on and return to the scale with learners?

### GO DEEPER

- This resource is taken from "The Incredible 5-Point Scale" by Kari Dunn Buron. Learn more at: [www.5pointscale.com](http://www.5pointscale.com)



# Assessment Practices



**Cultivate Equitable  
Learning Environments  
through Purposeful  
Assessment**

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# Overview

This set of cards provides practices in support of communities that actively commit to cultivating purposeful assessment. One that:

- Emphasize peer feedback, reflection, and revision
- Informs instruction and emphasizes learner growth and intrinsic motivation
- Prioritizes asset-based feedback to further build on learner strengths and support growth over time

## OVERVIEW

Each of the Assessment Practices reflect an underlying shift in the way students and teachers approach assessment.

**Focus on Feedback** - These practices help shift a higher percentage of classroom interactions from transfer of information to feedback on performance. These practices innately shift power-dynamics in the classroom by centering self-reflection, learner voices and peer feedback as key drivers of formative assessment. When implemented with an asset-based mindset, and culturally sustaining approach, these practices affirm and extended cultural assets and identities and leverage learner voices to inform revisions in work.

**Assess for Learning** - These practices help shift from a culture where assessment is an evaluation of learning to a culture where assessment stimulates and informs learning. These practices emphasize reflection and center growth in the learning process.

**Grade for Equity** - These practices help shift grades as a single evaluation of learning to an emphasis on performance and growth across important knowledge and skills over time. These practices also shift power-dynamics in the classroom by centering learners as active contributors and co-conspirators to their final grade. These practices center transparency in grading and alliance between learners and facilitators to inform final grades.

**Routinely Calibrate Assessments to Inform Instruction** - These practices help educators leverage learner work and quality criteria to reflect and build a collective understanding of how to improve the design and facilitation of their instruction. These practices center assessments to inform teacher instruction which allows instruction to be responsive to learner needs.

**Prioritize Performance Assessment** - These practices help shift the type of assessments learners most regularly engage in from those that only involve low level reproductions and regurgitation to those that require higher level creation, synthesis, and evaluation.

### Research

- Feldman, Joe. *Grading for Equity*
- Berger, Ron. *Leaders of Their Own Learning*
- Darling-Hammond, Linda and Adamson, Frank. *Beyond the Bubble Test: How Performance Based Assessments Support 21st Century Learning*
- Gorski, Paul. *Reaching and Teaching Students in Poverty*
- Hammond, Zaretta. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*
- Banks, C. & Banks, J. (1995) *Equity Pedagogy: An Essential Part of Multicultural Education*



## ASSESSMENT

# Asset-Based Feedback



### What?

Feedback protocol that reinforces academic mindsets by centering learner assets, affirming learner identities and promoting self-concept.

### Why?

To give learners useful feedback while affirming and lifting up cultural assets. To build awareness of the unique strengths and skills each and every learner bring to the community. To shift away from deficit-based approaches that place blame on the learner(s) rather than on the inequities in the learning environment (e.g. lack of access to opportunities, gaps in curriculum).

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## How?

1. **Start by checking in** with the learner with a ritual that builds relational trust and space for active listening to the learner (See "Establish a Warm, Demanding Stance," "Storytelling," "Hopes and Dreams" in *Culture Practices*).
2. **Review the reason for the meeting.** State your belief in the learner's ability to learn/grow and provide specific evidence.
3. **Review the task.** Ask the learner to reflect on what they know and need to know about the task and/or what might be easy or challenging. Reaffirm your belief in the learner's ability to achieve the task while acknowledging the challenging parts.
4. **Review what successful outcomes** would look like and where the learner is (e.g. using the appropriate rubric indicator). Give specific, helpful and concise feedback for achieving the described outcomes, while building on student assets.
5. **Create space for the learner** to restate what they heard, ask clarifying questions and share their thoughts on what success looks like. Ensuring this dialogue centers student voice and ownership over learning.
6. **Provide opportunities to support the learner,** encouraging their growth and reinforcing your belief in the learner.
7. **Determine when and how** to revisit the task and check in on how things are going.

### REFLECT

- How will you create time and space for feedback like this?
- How will you articulate your belief in each learner in a way that's concrete and specific?
- How will you capture what you have gained from this conversation to inform your instruction so that it is responsive to the learner's needs and growth?
- How will you ensure you actively embody an asset-based mindset while you engage with the learner?

### GO DEEPER

- See the chapter "Establishing Alliance in the Learning Partnership" in Zaretta Hammond's *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*.
- Read *Education Week's* article "Asset-Based Coaching: Focusing on Strengths"



## ASSESSMENT

# I Used to Think... Now I Think...



### What?

At the end of the day or task, learners reflect on their learning.

### Why?

To help learners reflect on their thinking about a topic or issue and explore how it has changed. To consolidate new learning as learners identify their new understandings, opinions and beliefs. To encourage learners to develop their reasoning abilities and to recognize cause and effect relationships.

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## How?

1. **Have learners end the day** or task with a formative assessment, either in writing or orally.
2. **Explain to learners** that the purpose of this activity is to help them reflect on their thinking about the topic and to identify how their ideas have changed over time.

### 3. For example:

- When we began this study of \_\_\_\_, you had some initial ideas about it. In just a few sentences, please write what you used to think about \_\_\_\_\_. Take a moment to think back... and then write down your response to "I used to think..."
- Now, I want you to think about how your ideas about \_\_\_\_\_ have changed as a result of what we've been studying/doing/discussing. Again, in just a few sentences, write down what you now think about \_\_\_\_\_. Start your sentences with, "But now, I think..."

4. **Have learners share** and explain their shifts in thinking. At first, have learners share with the whole group so you can push thinking/ask for evidence. Once learners become accustomed to explaining their thinking, they can share with one another in small groups or pairs. See "**Think, Pair, Share**" or "**Constructivist Dyad Protocol**" in **Learner-Centered Practices**.

## REFLECT

- When might this reflection technique serve as a useful assessment?
- When could you use this reflection technique to "catch" learners developing in their knowledge, skills, and mindsets? How will you use this opportunity to celebrate their growth?

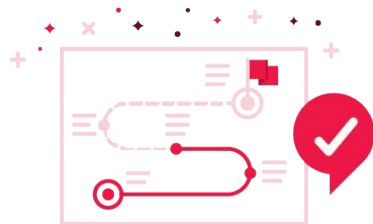
## GO DEEPER

- See [www.visiblethinkingpz.org](http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org) for more on Visible Thinking Routines.
- See "I Used to Think..., Now I Think..." at Harvard Project Zero: [www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think-vt](http://www.pz.harvard.edu/resources/i-used-to-think-now-i-think-vt)



## ASSESSMENT

# Visual Benchmarks



### What?

A visual timeline of a PBL Unit's tasks and benchmarks.

### Why?

To create clarity on projected timeline, deliverables and benchmarks. To help learners understand the process of the PBL Unit, where their individual or group progress lies in that process, and authentic next steps within that process. To create opportunities for reflection of knows, need-to-knows, and co-design of the PBL Unit that is responsive to learners' needs.

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# 13

## How?

1. **Build out the "Create the Path" portion of the NTN Project Planning Toolkit** or otherwise determine the key milestone moments in the project. It is common to have sections for the project launch, key project benchmarks (typically 2-4) and the culminating event.
2. **Create a physical version of the "Create the Path" to display in your classroom.** Often visual benchmarks occupy a front whiteboard or bulletin board in the room. You will also want to create markers to represent each group's progress or have groups create their own.
3. **Regularly reference and ask learners to reflect on the visual benchmarks** by connecting Need-to-Knows and workshops to current Next Steps, by having groups update their progress as well as reflect and share on the strategies and actions that have helped them move forward successfully.

### REFLECT

- How are you helping learners engage with the visual benchmarks so that they have clarity on the PBL Unit process and learning outcomes?
- How might you help learners keep track of where they are in the PBL Unit and understand what they need to do next in their learning?
- This practice emphasizes the importance of making learning visible so that the progression of the PBL Unit will truly be responsive and authentic to the learners engaging in that work. How will you alter the timeline, benchmarks and/or deliverables to be responsive to your learners? How will you know when you need to make changes?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "NTN Project Planning Toolkit" or "NTN Curriculum Frameworks" in the NTN Help Center.



## ASSESSMENT

# Running Rubrics



### What?

Building a collection of feedback on a print or digital version of the rubric through regular conferencing and other assessments.

### Why?

Using a rubric to capture ongoing conversations about progress helps learners understand criteria for the task and what next steps they might take to move their work forward. To help learners take action on feedback.

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# 15

## How?

- 1. Create an authentic rubric for an upcoming PBL Unit or task.** Search "Rubric" in the NTN Help Center for a host of resources to help you create an authentic rubric. See "Go Deeper." If possible, co-create the rubric or revise an existing rubric with your learners to ensure the criteria is clearly understood by all those engaging with it.
- 2. With your learners, decide how to curate and engage with the rubric** so that it is most responsive to those utilizing it. Will the rubric be a hard-copy document or will it live electronically? How will you and your learners use the rubric to engage in shared dialogue about feedback and growth?
- 3. With your learners, determine when check-ins with groups and/or individuals around their PBL Unit or task will happen** in the project timeline. Make sure to leverage project benchmarks as key moments to provide feedback (See Visual Benchmarks).
- 4. Meet with groups and/or individuals to support progress on their PBL Unit or task.** Use the rubric to engage in a shared dialogue and to guide understanding of the group or individual's progress. Document notes, progress and next steps to revisit the next time you conference with the group or individual.
- 5. Keep rubrics in a shared space where they will not get lost.** This can be a shared folder in Google Drive, a physical folder, or some other tool of your choice.

### REFLECT

- What data might you need to help you determine what indicators you will focus on? (Data can be formal or informal.)
- What kind of feedback is most effective in helping learners? How will you ensure learners have a voice in how they want to progress in their PBL Unit or task?
- How are learners engaging in their own self-assessment?
- What are you learning in your check-ins that you will need to consider in the future?
- How will you keep the rubric alive for yourself and learners?

### GO DEEPER

- Search "NTN Learning Outcome Rubrics and Templates" in the NTN Help Center
- Search "NTN Rubric Principles, Practices, and Examples" in the NTN Help Center
- See The Cult of Pedagogy's Single Point Rubric at [www.cultofpedagogy.com/single-point-rubric/](http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/single-point-rubric/)

