

Co-construct Cultural Connections

More Like Me

Students will:

- Students will read a passage and rewrite it so that it reflects their personal experiences
- Students will use descriptive words to connect text to their culture
- Students will discuss words and descriptions from other cultures that are new to them

Before Activity

- Select an upcoming reading passage in the language of instruction that can be read aloud. Cultural relevance does not need to be considered for this text, since each student will be rewriting the story to make it culturally relevant to them.

During Activity

- Read the selected passage aloud or have older students read silently or in pairs.
- Display the text and highlight parts that can be rewritten to reflect your own culture. Model how to make meaningful connections, and use your own experiences as an example. Using a key phrase such as, “This reminds me of...” allows students to begin to visualize and hear how connections are made.
- Rewrite the sentences and discuss how they now reflect your own personal experiences.
- Ask students to write their own version of the text, highlighting parts to change, revising words and phrases, and adding details about memories that come to mind in their personal lives.
- Provide time for students to share and comment on their rewritten version in small groups.
- Have students work in groups to list any new words they learned about their peers’ culture. Provide time for students to share the new word and its significance.

Evidence of Success

- Students rewrite a passage and make it representative of their personal experiences.
- Students are able to use and describe words to connect the text to their culture.
- Students learn words describing topics such as emotions, activities, and food, represented in their peers’ writing.

Quick Tips

- Depending on the age of students, the changes they make can span from changing nouns and objects (e.g. potato to yucca) to reflecting on in-depth questions such as “What does this remind me of in my life?”
- This activity can be adapted to other content areas and provide opportunities for students to connect the learning to their background knowledge. For example, a student can compare an historical event that occurred in the U.S. to an event that took place in their native country.

Watch Out For

- Refraining students from the use of their native language will inhibit their connection to the text. Allow them to use words in their native language that represent family, emotions, and traditions.
- Avoid evaluating or correcting grammar or writing mechanics. The focus of this lesson is to provide students the opportunity to display their culture with pride, connect to a story by tapping into their background knowledge, and learn about their peers’ cultures and prior experiences.
- Don’t make assumptions that students will make a certain connection or rewrite based on something associated with a certain group of people. Allow students to lead with what their ideas are rather than suggesting for them.

Grades: K-12

Domains: Writing, Reading

Grouping: One On One, Full Classroom

High Support: 1s and 2s

- Allow students to use visuals instead of written text.
- Provide word banks of common food, holidays, places, traditions for students to use in their writing.

Moderate Support: 3s and 4s

- Allow students to work with a language partner and create a rewritten version of the story that represents both of their cultures and experiences.

Light Support: 5s and 6s

- Challenge students to write write additional sentences.

Dual Language Teaching Tips

- Allowing students to relate culturally to a story or text encourages them to feel pride for their culture. They not only have the opportunity to see themselves represented in a positive way, but become involved with the story and have an easier time visualizing the story line.
- As you engage with students about their writing, display commonly used terms for foods, holidays, and places and in an area that all can refer to. Encourage students to continue to add to the list as they write and share.
- Students are expected to use all of their linguistic skills as they link text to cultural practices and strengthen cultural understanding.