

The Four Cs Text Protocol

Introduction: A text-based protocol allows instructors to ensure a thorough reading and understanding of a given text (article, chapter, poem) by providing a timed or sequential format that gives all readers opportunities to share, interpret and reflect on the material.

The 4 Cs represent these four perspectives—connections, challenges, concepts, and changes. The paraphrasing encourages and affirms good listening and summarizing skills.

Purpose: The purpose of this protocol is to allow all voices to be heard and reinforced as participants grapple with the text from differing perspectives. A deeper understanding of the text, and of its ramifications, are equitably derived resulting in more focus and validity being applied to the work at hand.

Process: Participants work in groups of 4. They take turns at being the facilitator and timekeeper.

1. Read the article and highlight and write notes in answer to the following four questions:

Connections: what connections do you draw between the article and your own teaching?

Challenges: what ideas, positions or assumptions do you want to challenge or argue within the article?

Concepts: what key concepts or ideas from the article do you think are important and worthy to incorporate in your teaching and/or in other settings?

Changes: what changes in attitudes, thinking, or action are suggested by the article, either for you or others?

2. In a round, each person identifies one connection in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence.

3. Facilitate a discussion in which the group discusses the text in light of each of the remaining 'Cs', taking them one at a time - what do people want to challenge in the text, and note as a key concept(s)? Move seamlessly from one 'C' to the next, giving each 'C' enough time for full exploration. Consider allotting ten minutes for each question round.

4. Debrief the text experience.