

Student Learning Contract

NAME: _____

I am interested in learning about _____

Here is exactly what I plan to learn: _____

I will use the following resources: _____

My finished product will be _____

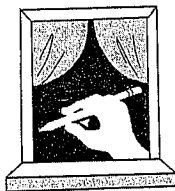
It will be finished on _____

I will present my product on _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE: _____

TEACHER SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____



Human Continuum

Like the four strategies that follow, the Human Continuum is a pre-assessment that lets you find out your students' initial level of knowledge, skills, interests, and attitudes. This information will help you plan your instruction at the most appropriate level for each student.

In addition, your students will be motivated and involved as they become partners in the learning process. They'll gain a better sense of what they already know, as well as a clearer idea of what they need to know. Use this strategy to supplement ones you might already be using—quizzes, questions, observation, etc.—in pre-assessing your students.

STEP BY STEP

- Place labels at the front of your classroom (perhaps along the top of the chalkboard) along a continuum as follows:
 - ✓ I know this!
 - ✓ I know something about this!
 - ✓ I don't know much about this!
- On the floor in front of the cards, make a line with masking tape.
- Ask each student to write on a piece of paper where he would position himself along the continuum to best describe his understanding of the content. (Writing down his self-assessment encourages the student to be honest rather than just following his friends.)

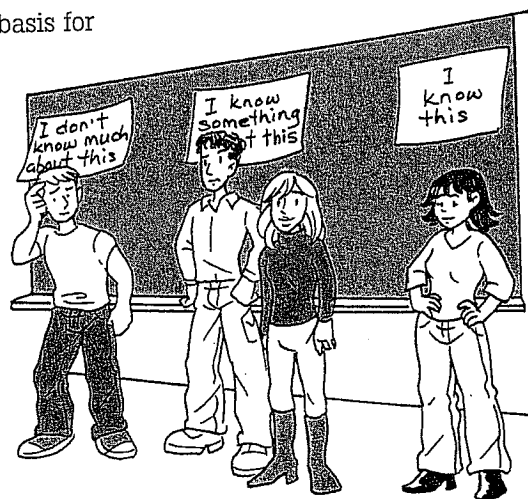
- Once everyone has done that, ask students to stand at the appropriate spot along the masking tape.
- Ask each student to turn to a neighbor and discuss what she knows about the topic and/or why she chose to stand where she did. Or have students share with the whole class.

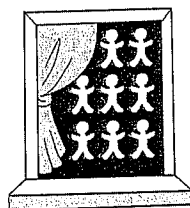
VARIATION

For an interesting twist, ask students to fold the line in half and then ask each student to share with the person standing opposite him. This means that those who don't know much about the topic end up facing those who think they know quite a bit. You may find that this leads to an interesting discussion!

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

With this quick and simple activity, you've already pre-assessed the students, helped them learn how to assess themselves, and developed a basis for differentiating your instruction of this subject.





R.A.F.T.

R.A.F.T. is an acronym that stands for Role, Audience, Format, Topic. The R.A.F.T. format asks students to write from a viewpoint other than their own to an audience other than the teacher and in a format other than answering questions at the end of a story or textbook chapter. By incorporating four ingredients of writing and also giving students the opportunity to process and manipulate content, this anchor activity can bring fun and creativity into writing in your classroom.

STEP BY STEP

- Explain to students that this activity requires them to think creatively in response to specific writing prompts.
- Model a sample R.A.F.T. activity. For example, for a unit on health, the assignment might be as follows:

R(OLE)	HEART
A(UDIENCE)	FRENCH FRIES
F(ORMAT)	COMPLAINT
T(OPIC)	EFFECTS OF FAT IN THE DIET

In other words, the heart is to write a letter to the french fries, complaining about the effect on the body of the fat in the fries.

This example will certainly elicit smiles from students, and if you can get middle- or high-school students laughing and thinking, that's quite an accomplishment.

- Write on the board the outline for another R.A.F.T. assignment and ask students to complete it on their own. For a science unit on plants, the R.A.F.T. outline might go like this:

R(OLE)	PLANT
A(UDIENCE)	RAIN
F(ORMAT)	THANK-YOU NOTE
T(OPIC)	RAIN'S ROLE IN GROWTH

- To differentiate, try varying the difficulty of the R.A.F.T. assignments, then asking certain students to complete specific R.A.F.T. activities. Or differentiate by students' interests, letting each student choose the R.A.F.T. exercise she wants to complete.

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE!

You've kept students occupied with meaningful work, got them thinking, enhanced their writing skills, and potentially differentiated according to their interests and skills.

Anything-but-Horizontal Reading-Tac-Toe

FOR EXPOSITORY TEXT

Directions: Choose three options that do not form a horizontal Reading-Tac-Toe. Circle your choices.

<p>BEFORE READING</p>	<p>Look through the text. Find signal words that might indicate the structure of the text. List the words and decide in what structure the text is written.</p>	<p>Look through the text. List the access features (headings, subheadings, charts, graphs, etc.) that you see. Try to determine why specific access features were or were not included.</p>	<p>Pick two subheadings. Change them into questions.</p>
<p>DURING READING</p>	<p>Create a graphic organizer that matches the text structure. Use your graphic organizer to take notes while reading the text.</p>	<p>List some of the questions this text raises. List some questions it answers. Explain in writing how someone might disagree with the point this text makes.</p>	<p>Make a list of words that are unfamiliar to you. Find the definition of each one and write it in your own words. Draw a visual of the word.</p>
<p>AFTER READING</p>	<p>Write a one-page report telling how narrative and expository texts are different from each other.</p>	<p>Write four facts about the text you just read. Make three of the statements true and one not true. See if you can fool other classmates by asking them which one is not true of the text.</p>	<p>Draw a graphic representation of what was important in the text. Use color, pictures, and symbols.</p>

Think-Tac-Toe the MI Way

RESPONDING TO TEXT

Directions: Choose one activity from each line to make a Think-Tac-Toe. Circle your choices.

Write about the main character of your story. Be prepared to present a 10-minute report to the class.	In your journal, create a graphic organizer and use it to compare yourself to the main character.	Think of someone you know who is like one of the characters in the book. Write about how the real-life person and the character in the story are alike.
Draw a picture of the setting of the story.	Make up a rap or song about the setting of the story and set it to music.	Build a model of the setting of the story.
Make a timeline to show the major events in the story. Include visuals.	With a group of three other students, create a new ending for the story.	With a group of three other students, create a skit and act out the story.

reproducible

Four Square Products



VISUAL

Advertisement
Collage
Poster
Flowchart
Venn diagram
Painting
Map
Video
Story map
Timeline
T chart

AUDITORY

Audiotape
News broadcast
Speech
Debate
Lecture
Group discussion
Interview
Round table discussion
Book review
Teach others



KINESTHETIC

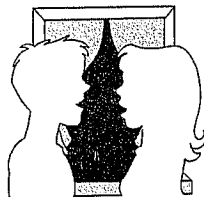
A model
Performance of a dance
or skit
Sculpture
Mobile
Diorama
Dramatization
Experiment
Pantomime
Role play
Display



WRITTEN

Book report
Letter
Poetry
Research paper
Story
Checklist
Journal
Essay
Newsletter
Survey





Snowball Fight

This activity involves movement and engages students. It can be used for reviewing, predicting, summarizing learning, and more. And if you live in the South, like me, this may be the closest you and some of your students ever get to seeing snow!

STEP BY STEP

- Let's say you'd like students to reflect on the day's course content. Ask each student to put his name on a piece of paper and then to write on that paper something learned in class that day. Encourage students to write clearly so that someone else can read what they've written.



THE BUTTON PUSHER

What do you do about the student who writes, "I learned nothing"? That student is probably trying to "push your buttons," so you might just say, "Well, I bet tomorrow you'll learn something." Later you might reconnect with that student to discuss what the problem is.

Other times maybe you'd rather address the issue of kids thinking they aren't learning anything when they really are. It can make for a great discussion to have the whole class talk about what they've learned.

- Have students bring their papers and form a large circle.
- Tell students that each of them should wad her paper up into a ball. On your signal, they should all throw their papers into the center of the circle. Then each student should grab somebody else's "snowball" from the pile and throw it into the center of the circle.
- Continue this "snowball fight" for as long as you can stand it (like about one minute), and then signal for the students to stop.
- Have each student pick up any "snowball" that has landed close by.
- Call on a few students to read to the rest of the class the contents of the "snowballs" they've found. Be sure to comment on the lessons/facts written on the papers. For correct information you might say something like, "I can tell you were really listening today." For incorrect information, you might say something like, "Interesting thought. Let's discuss it a minute."
- Collect all "snowballs" for assessment purposes.