

Eliciting and capturing cultural connections

What do we mean by eliciting and capturing cultural connections?:

Eliciting and capturing cultural connections means giving your students the time and space to connect their experiences and ideas to phenomena. This gives students the opportunity to think about their experiences in the context of science and connect their background knowledge to what they're learning in class.

How do we elicit and capture cultural connections?:

- As students experience a phenomenon, they generate as many responses as they wish to the question: "Where have you seen other things acting in similar ways?"
 - This gives a broad invitation to students to consider their own experiences and draw similarities and parallels to the phenomenon.
- All student ideas are recorded and organized into categories.
- Equipped with the student-generated list of connections, the students work in small groups to evaluate them.
 - They consider each connection in terms of similarities and differences to the phenomenon.
- To complete their evaluations of the connections, each group places the connections on a "target".
 - The most similar connections are placed closest to the bullseye, and the most different connections are placed far from the bullseye. This provides a visual representation of the connections in relation to the phenomenon.
- A whole class discussion creates a collaborative "target" that may be updated as the students learn more concepts and have a greater understanding of the connections.

Where have you seen other things acting in similar ways?

Group Members: _____

Below are the suggestions of things members of the class have seen that may be similar to a rocket launch. As a group, discuss each suggestion and decide (and record) ways it is similar, and what ways it is not. (Do a little research if you need to!)

Blow torch	Similarities	Differences
Car	Similarities	Differences
Flammable hydrogen gas (like in the Types of Reactions lab)	Similarities	Differences

Why should we elicit and capture cultural connections?:

- Student empowerment by honoring their experiences and background knowledge.
- Students' diverse sensemaking strategies are visible to peers and teachers as they evaluate their own knowledge.
- Fostering community through the sharing of ideas and the discussions they inspire.
- Setting a culture and routine of honoring connection to content to return to throughout the year.

Draw a chart - think like a target with the rocket launch as the bullseye. List each suggestion in the appropriate proximity to the rocket - according to your group discussions.

- closer = more similar
- farther away = less similar



Challenges:

- Presenting a phenomenon to the students that is engaging and interesting, that students can find connections to in their lives.
- Crafting a student-led evaluation of the connections that is appropriate in scope (for your space, members of your classroom, the content you are teaching).

Conclusion:

Which suggestion did you decide is the most similar? _____

Explain why:

Ideas for your classroom:

- What phenomena are you already presenting in your classroom that could be adapted to this method?