

READER'S GUIDE

This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

Task-Based Reading Activities Using Authentic Materials and Skills (Pages 2–9)

Pre-Reading

1. What materials do you use when you teach reading? How much freedom do you have to choose reading materials for your classes?
2. What, to you, are authentic materials? What access do you have to authentic materials? How do you use them in your teaching?
3. Have you used task-based lessons in your teaching? What did your students do? What was your role? How satisfied were you with the results?
2. The author gives examples of authentic materials—"old receipts, tickets, brochures, and notes that are lying around most people's homes or classrooms"—but there are many others. By yourself or with colleagues, gather authentic materials from your school, community, or homes. You can also ask students to collect some. What types did you find? How can you categorize or separate them to be placed at stations?

Post-Reading

1. What are your feelings about using stations, as described in the article? What are the main benefits? In your teaching situation, what is the biggest challenge with using stations? What are some ways you can work around or eliminate that challenge?
3. Look at the three worksheet examples in Table 1. Notice that questions 1 through 6 are the same for all three texts; only questions 7 and 8 differ. Try creating similar worksheets for authentic texts you find. How long does it take to create each worksheet? Could you ask colleagues to help you create worksheets and start a collection? Could your students eventually help create more for future use?

4. Table 2 gives example questions for a travel-based scenario. How could you adapt the scenario and questions based on your situation and the materials you have available for students?
5. Take another look at the suggestions in the Further Applications section near the end of the article. Do these suggestions give you ideas about using this activity—or similar activities—in different ways for different purposes? How else might you use stations in your classes?
6. If you don't teach a "reading" course, how might you incorporate this activity into one or more of your courses? Think of topics or themes that you cover. Could this activity help students explore any of those topics or themes in a new way?

Finding Heterogeneity in Cultural Homogeneity (Pages 10–21)

Pre-Reading

1. What does the title of the article mean to you? What do you expect to read about in this article?
2. How important to you is including "culture" in your teaching? How important do you think it is to your students?
3. Would you say that your students basically share the same culture? Or do they have different cultural backgrounds?
3. In the opening paragraph, the author notes that in her teaching context, most or all of her students share the same first language and cultural background and are about the same age. Is that similar to the situation in which you teach? What are possible advantages to teaching students with similar backgrounds? What are potential limitations?
4. The author suggests a number of activities but says, "It is possible and even likely that not all of the activities will be appropriate where you teach." Are any of the suggested activities inappropriate where you teach? Why do you think so?

Post-Reading

1. For you, what is the most important takeaway from this article? Why do you think the author felt it was important to write the article?
2. Did anything in the article surprise you? If so, what? Do you know why you were surprised?
5. Try one of the activities with your students (or, for practice, with your colleagues). You might try a fairly basic one, such as Good Morning (page 12). What are the results? What differences, if any, does the activity reveal?