

Attending to Foundational Skills Instruction and Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education¹

Add, Adjust, or Substitute?



Learn More

For more information about the importance of **foundational skills and knowledge building** in early reading, see this [resource collection](#). To learn more about the approach to Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education, [see this document](#).

Systematic foundational skills instruction addresses the tightly interrelated but discrete sub skills (e.g., phonics, phonological awareness, concepts of print, fluency) specific to each language. This instruction strengthens students' ability to read relevant, grade-level texts **with fluency** over time and is critical to reading instruction. Instructional materials, built with a **scope and sequence**, are necessary to support teachers and students, but materials alone won't provide instruction that is thoughtfully addressing the individuals in the room with culturally responsive-sustaining practices.

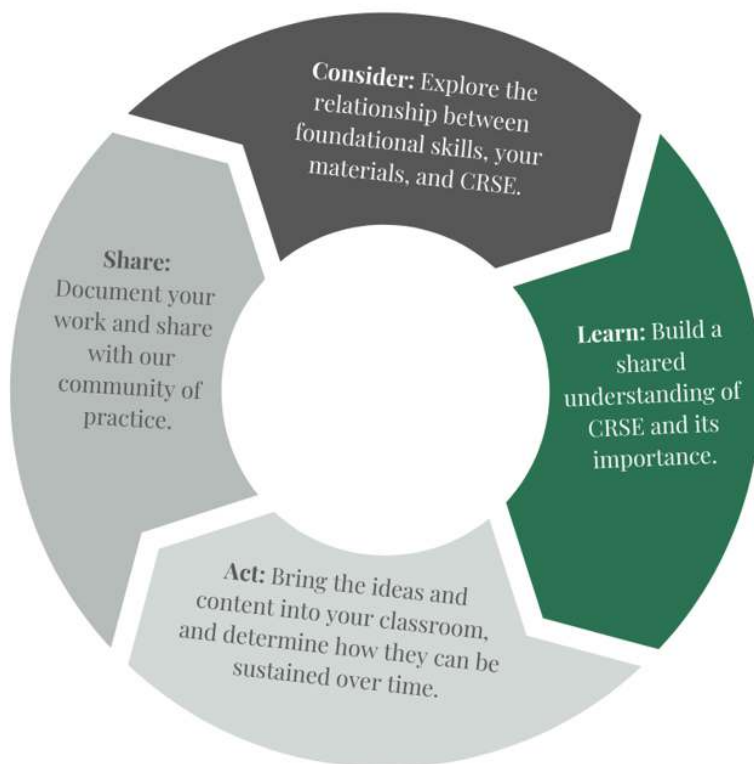
This work:

We asked a group of practicing teachers²: *How might we adapt foundational skills instruction, making use of the strengths of standards-aligned materials, to attend to culturally responsive-sustaining practices in the classroom?*

Defining Culturally-Sustaining Education (CR-S)

"The CR-S framework helps educators create student-centered learning environments that: affirm racial, linguistic and cultural identities; prepare students for rigor and independent learning; develop students' abilities to connect across lines of difference; elevate historically marginalized voices; and empower students as agents of social change."

We asked educators to:






¹ This work was built off of a teacher learning community. A guiding reference for the work is the New York State Education Department. "[Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#)". (2019).

² Thank you to our teacher Community of Practice members, Bianca Baquerizo, Danielle Goins, Tassia Rosa and Kareba Williams.

Adapting³ in pursuit of a Welcoming and Affirming Environment

Consider




- How are you learning about **students, their cultures, language, and communities?**
- How are you supporting **social-emotional growth?**
- How are you **representing** and **affirming** student **identities?**

 Add	 Adjust	 Substitute
<p>Ask: “Do you agree/disagree? Why?” to help students hear their voices and feel respected.</p> <p>Add opportunities for students to build on one another’s answers.</p>	<p>Make connections between the sounds in English and the sounds in students' home language and/or dialect⁴!</p> <p>Explain the “why” even when this is not included in the task.</p>	<p>Individual responses for turn and talks to build opportunities to work together.</p> <p>Allow for home language partnerships for discussion and to encourage translanguaging.</p>

Adapting in pursuit of Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment

Consider

- How are students serving as **co-designers** of the **curriculum?**
- How are you using **instructional strategies** that adapt to **diverse learning needs?**

 Add	 Adjust	 Substitute
<p>Add a chance for error analysis with students to help students understand their thinking.</p> <p>Add a chance for peer evaluation.</p> <p>Add songs and chants to make things sticky!</p> <p>Add movements for tricky words (example: say the word, spell it while bouncing your basketball, say it again and shoot the hoop!)</p>	<p>Model step-by-step thinking through a “think aloud” and have students do the same.</p> <p>Adjust tasks to include additional checks for understanding to monitor progress.</p> <p>Adjust tasks to include scaffolds for students who need it, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence starters • Graphic organizers • Additional visuals 	<p>Consider pacing! Swap out a new lesson for a review to accommodate student needs. This might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small groups for reteaching and extension (without moving on/ creating new gaps) • Full class review of a challenging concept • Modified support such as partnerships or teacher led work stations <p>Find opportunities for student choice- allow them to self-select tasks.</p>

³ All adaptations were done with the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum.

⁴ Comparing and contrasting languages will vary based on the principles of the additional languages. A Spanish example: “I know in Spanish, this letter “j” represents the /h/ sound like Julio’s name. In English, it represents the /j/ sound like June.” [See this article](#) for examples of how this can be attended to with dialect.