

Humanities Accelerator Course (HAC) Tenets

The four tenets described below represent essential elements of the HAC model to which instructional practices and materials must be aligned. They are interdependent and will have multiple points of crossover.

Identity	<p>The first of the four core tenets of this course is identity, which Dr. Muhammad names as being composed of “who we are, who others say we are (in both positive and negative ways), and whom we desire to be.”¹ The instructional materials and practices honor that identity is intersectional, layered, and evolving. The instructional materials and practices make clear that academic frustrations are not due to any lack of student ability and support students to identify themselves as successful learners. The course creates space for students to affirm, cultivate, challenge, and develop their own identities such that they become capable readers, writers, and speakers who can confidently negotiate the world.</p>
Community²	<p>The second of the four core tenets of this course is the idea of establishing an authentic learning community in which all students feel a sense of welcome, belonging, and psychological safety. In the context of this course, community includes the relationships, classroom environment, and practices that together serve to promote individual and collective learning and growth. Community must be intentionally and explicitly developed to strengthen student understanding of their identity and identities of others, cultivate criticality, and build literacy knowledge and skill.</p>
Literacy	<p>The third of the four core tenets of this course is the idea that literacy is a life skill, and all students are capable and deserving of developing reading, writing, and speaking that will serve them throughout their whole lives. Students will learn to read to ask and answer questions about texts, both what is on the page and what is omitted. Students will develop their lens for understanding and questioning whose stories are told—and whose stories are not told. Equally important is building knowledge through study of topics grounded in both state social studies standards and student identities and interests. As a result, students will strengthen their understanding of their identity and identities of others, cultivate criticality, and foster community. In the context of this course, literacy is defined as reading, writing, and speaking at grade level, with sufficient, individualized, and personalized support designed around each student’s individual needs.</p>
Criticality³	<p>The final core tenet of this course is the idea of criticality, which is defined as reading texts (including print, visual, etc.) with an understanding of how power, oppression, racism, and equity impact society. Content and tasks of the course are oriented towards a critical lens, providing the structure and space for students to engage authentically in work that identifies and interrogates power and privilege in service of anti-oppression and anti-racism. Students will engage as socio-politically conscious members of their communities, with the power, skills, intellect, and curiosity to actively engage in issues, groups, topics, etc. that matter to them in a way that makes the world more just, liberated, and joyful.</p>

¹ Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literature*. Scholastic. p. 67

² Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin, a SAGE company.

³ This tenet is influenced by the following works:

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2009). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Muhammad, G. (2020). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic Inc.