

CSI: Colour, Symbol, Image Routine

A routine for distilling the essence of ideas non-verbally

As you are reading/listening/watching, make note of things that you find interesting, important, or insightful. When you finish, choose 3 of these items that most stand out for you.

- For one of these, choose a colour that you feel best represents or captures the essence of that idea.
- For another one, choose a symbol that you feel best represents or captures the essence of that idea.
- For the other one, choose an image that you feel best represents or captures the essence of that idea.

With a partner or group first share your colour and then share the item from your reading that it represents. Tell why you choose that colour as a representation of that idea. Repeat the sharing process until every member of the group has shared his or her Colour, Symbol, and Image.

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine asks students to identify and distill the essence of ideas from reading, watching or listening in non-verbal ways by using a colour, symbol, or image to represent the ideas.

Application: When and where can it be used?

This routine can be used to enhance comprehension of reading, watching or listening. It can also be used as a reflection on previous events or learnings. It is helpful if students have had some previous experience with highlighting texts for important ideas, connections, or events. The synthesis happens as students select a colour, symbol, and image to represent three important ideas. This routine also facilitates the discussion of a text or event as students share their colours, symbols, and images.

Launch? What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

After the class has read a text, you might ask the class to identify some of the interesting, important, or insightful ideas from the text and list these on the board. Write CSI: Colour, Symbol, Image on the board. Select one of the ideas the class has identified. Ask students what colour might they use to represent the essence of that idea? What colour captures something about that idea, maybe it is the mood or tone. Select another idea and ask the class what symbol they could use to represent that idea. *You might define a symbol as a simple line representation or uncomplicated drawing, such as two crossed lines to denote an intersection of ideas, or a circle to represent wholeness or completeness.* Then pick another idea from the list and ask students what image they might use to represent that idea. *You might define an image as a visual image or metaphor that is more complex and fully developed than just a symbol.*