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Summer is almost here! It's time to rejuvenate, refuel and reflect. Picture yourself on a lounge chair, by the pool with your favorite beverage. It just so happens that you have your computer and wifi as well! Why not take this time to explore various critical thinking tools and their potential in different instructional situations? While exploring the tools, you'll be provided sample questions to consider that can be used in a *Before* or the *After* of the *Before, During, After* (BDA) process with teachers to spark a conversation about ways students can use technology to foster critical thinking. (Click on the links for a list of tools.) Let's look at student-created assessments, assuming a persona and building a character sketch, and transacting with text.

[Student-Created Assessments](#)

Student-created assessments provide students with an opportunity to create questions that may be answered from the text. There are many [free tools](#) available for teachers and students to use to create their own quizzes and surveys. Many of them provide downloadable results in spreadsheet form, so the results can be analyzed. In your

Before

with a teacher, consider these questions:

- What goes into creating strong writing prompts or test questions?
- How can students use survey tools to make student-created assessments?
- How well would a student need to understand content in order to ask the right questions in the right way?
- Before sharing the assessment with their classmates, how will students need to analyze the questions and the possible responses?

[Assuming a Persona and Building a Character Sketch](#)

When a student creates a character sketch or assumes the persona of someone (or something) they are learning about, they have to have a deep understanding of the character or persona.

Questions such as those below can be discussed in the *Before* to show that character sketches can be used in all subject areas. Check out some digital tools

[here](#)

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- What does a student get out of building a character sketch or assuming a persona?
- What would Hydrogen say to Oxygen if they were texting each other? How would Oxygen

respond?

- If Linear Equations had a Facebook page, who would "his" friends be? What would his profile say about him?

- What do you think Abraham Lincoln would have tweeted just before his death? What would Lee tweet after Lincoln's death? Grant? Ordinary people in the South and the North?

[Transacting with Text](#)

Although we traditionally transact with text using paper, pen, and highlighter, documents are increasingly being shared electronically. As more schools move to digital textbooks and 1:1 initiatives, we spend more time reading screens than paper. Do our tried-and-true methods still apply while [reading digital text](#) ? Yes! As a coach working within the PIIC 4 quadrant framework, consider:

- How can coaches help teachers see that you really can transact with digital text in ways that will enhance student learning?
- How can teachers have their students read digital text and apply their transacting with text skills?
- How can students make notes and record their thinking on digital text?

Now that you've reflected on digital critical thinking tools for student use, how can you take your teachers on a journey from simple fascination with a tool to seamless incorporation of tools to benefit instructional practices?

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