



“Check in and check it out” Activity

Here is a three-step process you can use, alone or with others, to get to know the **Express Ideas Competency** and to understand how and to what extent it is showing up in your learning community.

Part 1: *Make Meaning*

Take a few moments to read the competency and its skills. Then, jot down your initial impressions.

- What do you feel, notice, or wonder about the competency and its skills?
- What curiosities do you have about the competency’s skills?
- What feels familiar, and what feels new?

COMPETENCY	SKILLS
Express Ideas I can develop and communicate my ideas with purpose and clarity.	• Define audience, purpose, and format • Select and develop my message • Develop my craft • Finalize and share my product or performance

Part 2: *Investigate*

- a) **Check In:** Review the competency, competency statement, and skills check-in with your understanding of the competency and your ideas about your own learning community. Record your ideas in the [Check In](#) column of the table below.

Here are some prompts to get you started.

- Where do you expect to see these skills in action?
- How could these skills be amplified to deepen the ability to express ideas?
- If you are asked to do something, does knowing the reason for doing it matter to you? How do you go about determining the purpose of a project?
- Have you ever read an article that was hard to follow because it was not well organized? How about a podcast that meandered without a central idea? What was that experience like?

- When you are learning to do something new to you, what helps you learn to do it?
- Think about when you last worked on something important to you—a newsletter, a piano concert, a report for your boss... Did you revise or practice it? How many times?
- How did it feel to share your product or performance with others? Were there learnings that you want to be sure to carry forward into other opportunities?
- How and to what extent is this competency showing up in your learning community? How do you know?

b) Check It Out: Next, using **Express Ideas** as a lens, do a walkthrough of your learning community to check out your understanding of the competency and how it’s showing up. You might, for example, pop into several classrooms over the course of a week. Or maybe you’ll peruse displays of student work, or listen to student performances or presentations. As you do, jot down your observations and notes in the [Check It Out](#) column of the table below.

Consider these prompts if they are helpful to you.

- What skills are you seeing in action? What’s your evidence?
- In what ways are students able to define the format (essay, podcast, poem, multimedia presentation, etc.) of their product? Does being able to decide on format allow for more engagement and motivation?
- In what ways are students able to create work for an authentic audience (the town council, a local organization, a neighborhood small business, etc.)?
- In reviewing student work (narrative writing, book reports, literary critiques, argument writing, photo essays, poetry, videos, etc.):
 - How well are students able to convey their position or central idea and to organize details to support their message?
 - Are you able to see how students are developing their own sense of style and craft? What is inspiring them to do so?
- When learning a new craft or to do something new, what helps students learn to do it?

- How are learning and creating celebrated?
- Are you seeing any interdisciplinary connections or opportunities?

CHECK IN // CHECK IT OUT CHART

Competency	Check In	Check It Out
Express Ideas		

Part 3: *Synthesize and Reflect*

After you’ve investigated **Express Ideas** through **checking in** and **checking it out**, it’s time to come back and make some sense of what you saw and heard. Here are some questions you can use for solo or group reflection:

- Which skills are “loudest,” showing up the most obviously, or most often, in your learning environment?
- Which skills are “quietest,” or not showing up in your learning environment?
- Where was the strongest match between your “check in” and “check it out” notes?
- Were there any mismatches or surprises between your “check in” and “check it out” notes?
- What new insight has emerged from this experience that feels like something you want to pursue?