



Methods and Literacy: What's the Connection?

To illustrate my teaching practices, I describe activities from four 2.5-hour class meetings. These activities not only integrate two or more literacy processes (e.g., reading, writing, discussion), but also foster active engagement and peer collaboration. Furthermore, these activities represent instructional techniques and strategies which are suitable for teaching integrated literacy. Other transferable techniques and strategies are identified in the figure at the top of the page.

The Activities: What Did They Entail?

Each activity was part of a 2.5-hour lesson which also included an introduction, an input segment (e.g., reading, lecture, media), and a closure. Each activity was designed to allow PSTs to apply the concepts or skills addressed during the input segment.

1. Case Studies

After presenting Ladson-Billings's model of *culturally relevant pedagogy* (CRP), I shared a case study from [her book](#) and modeled how to analyze it for the six components of CRP. Next, I divided the class into groups and gave each group a case to read, analyze, and discuss—just as I had done moments earlier. About 15-20 minutes later, I began asking groups to present their cases. Each group summarized their case, provided examples of at least four of the six components of CRP, and added those examples to a whole-class concept map.

2. Jigsaw Reading

At the end of the previous class meeting, I had divided PSTs into three expert groups and assigned each group a "homework" article on one of the following topics: learning modalities, multiple intelligences, or introversion-extroversion. First, the PSTs met in their expert groups, where they discussed their article and recorded important information in the first column of a three-column chart. Next, I redirected the PSTs into [jigsaw groups](#) with one person from each expert group. Each PST facilitated a five-minute lesson on their topic, and helped their peers complete the next column of the chart. Last, the PSTs wrote a plan for an activity/lesson which included two (or more) learning modalities, three (or more) intelligences, introversion, and extroversion.

3. Silent Discussion

After a practice activity in which PSTs wrote questions pertaining to a well-known children's story, I asked them to apply their questioning skills to content from their concentration area (e.g., English). First, they drew a three-column chart, which included one column for each level of Costa's model and wrote an appropriate question at the top of each column. Next, they took part in a silent discussion during which they provided each other written feedback with the support of accountable talk stems. Each group of PSTs formed a circle, passed their papers to the person on their right, and provided written feedback for 90 seconds. This process continued for 10-15 minutes or 7-10 passes. Then, each PST retrieved his/her paper and used the peer feedback to revise his/her original questions.

4. Socratic Seminar

After presenting background information on content literacy and disciplinary literacy, I asked PSTs to read and annotate a two-page excerpt from "Content and Disciplinary Literacy: A Case for the Radical Center." I asked them to underline/highlight important points and write their reactions and questions in the margins. After about 10 minutes of silent reading, I facilitated a [Fishbowl Socratic seminar](#) to address the question, "Which concept is more valid—content area literacy or disciplinary literacy?" Prior to class, I had already arranged the tables and chairs in a manner appropriate for a fishbowl discussion. The PSTs seated at the center of the room (i.e. in the fishbowl) participated in the discussion, while those on the sidelines evaluated the discussion. When only 50% of the discussion time remained, the two groups of PSTs switched places. After the discussion, each PST answered the focal question in a short, informal essay.