



Literacy connects

A Content Literacy Newsletter from Regional Professional Development Program-Issue IV



Cubing

Cubing is a great way to explore a topic from various dimensions. The concrete visual of a cube with its six sides serves as a starting point to consider the multiple dimensions of any topic in any content area. Cubing can be used as a preview or background building strategy to engage students before a lesson; it is an excellent way to find out how much students know about a topic before, during, or after teaching a lesson; it also works well when students use Cubing to brainstorm all aspects of a topic before writing or as a concept review. To introduce this strategy, start with a familiar topic and model the process with the whole class. Once the students are comfortable with Cubing, introduce more complex topics and encourage them to use it in small groups or independently.

Cubing involves the following steps:

- Describe it (including its colors, shapes, sizes, textures, if applicable)
- Compare/contrast it (to what is it similar or from what is it different?)
- Associate it (of what does it make you think?)
- Analyze it (how is it made/of what is it composed?)
- Apply it (what can you do with it or what does it do?)
- Argue for or against it (take a stand and list reasons for supporting or not supporting it)

Example: An earth science student used Cubing to explore her knowledge of weathering after reading the chapter on weathering in her textbook. She **described** it as the process that breaks down rocks; she **compared** it to erosion and **associated** it with the Grand Canyon. In the second half of the cube, she **analyzed** weathering by listing the two types (mechanical and chemical) and by naming some causes of each (ice wedging, water, and acids). She **applied** it and **argued** for it by saying that weathering is essential for soil formation, land form development, and the replenishment of soil nutrients.

