

FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month



(Developed by Zygouris-Coe V., & Glass C., 2004)

Rationale:

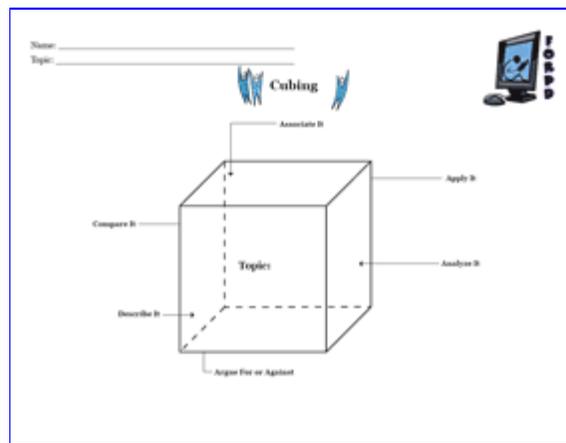
Cubing is a strategy designed to prepare students in reading and writing (Cowan & Cowan, 1980, Vaughan & Estes, 1986). In writing it can be used as a pre-writing activity to stimulate students' thinking about a topic. In reading, cubing can be used to strengthen students' comprehension of a topic or concept and help expand students' understanding of a topic, concept, character, and/or text from various perspectives. Many teachers create a visual (cube) prop so students have something tangible to work with. Teachers can use the cubing as a post-reading strategy to discuss issues that lead students to think critically about the topic under study. A teacher can use the strategy with the whole class, as small group work, and/or on a one-on-one basis. Almost any topic can be cubed. Cubing requires students to apply information they have been studying in new ways. The cubing method can also be modified to allow the teacher to create his or her own parameters or perspectives.

This strategy allows students to explore a topic from six different points of view. The name cube comes from the fact that cubes have six sides and students explore a topic from the following six perspectives:

- **Describe it:** How would you describe this topic/issue/event/person? Describe key characteristics/points/and/or attributes including size, shape, and colors.
- **Compare it:** What is it similar to?
- **Associate it:** What does it make you think of? How does the topic connect to other topics/issues/subjects? How does this decision/event connect to other decisions/events? How does this person/character relate to other people/characters?
- **Analyze it:** Tell how it is made or what it is composed of. How would you break the topic/problem/issue/event/decision into smaller parts?
- **Apply it:** What can you do with it? How is it used? How does it help you understand other topics/issues/decisions/events?
- **Argue for or against it:** Take a stand and list reasons for supporting or not supporting it.
 - I am for this because. . . .
 - I am not for this because. . . .
 - This works because. . . .
 - This does not work because. . . .
 - I agree because. . . .
 - I disagree because. . . .

How to Use the Strategy:

Begin by selecting the topic to be cubed. This is a good end of unit activity since students need to be very familiar with the topic prior to beginning this activity. Next, divide students into six small groups; assign one of the six perspectives to each group. Then have each group of students brainstorm ideas about the topic from their assigned perspective. Following the brainstorming and discussion within their group, each group chooses a scribe and collaboratively writes a paragraph exploring that perspective. Afterwards, each group reads its paragraph to the class. Other students react to connections the group has made and may pose ideas for revisions and make new connections. Finally, after each group has shared its paragraph with the class and made any needed revisions, each paragraph is taped to a side of a cardboard cube and displayed in the classroom.

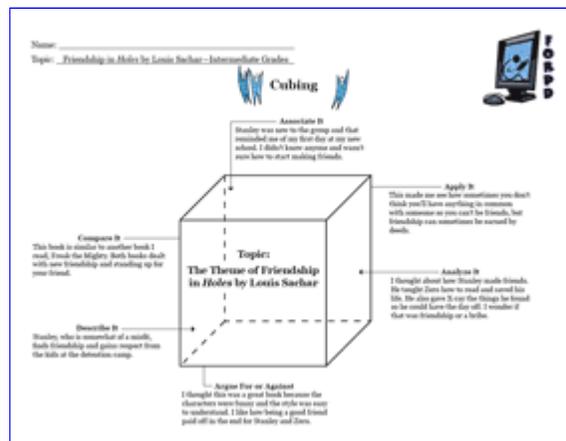


(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of the Cubing worksheet or go to the [html file](#).)

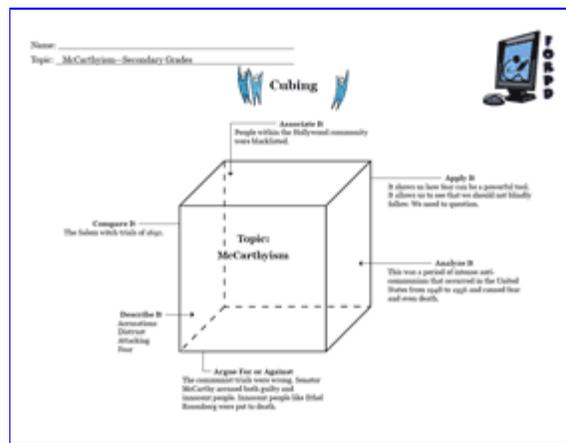
Make sure you first **model how to use the strategy** to your students and **explain why** you chose **Cubing**.

Ideas for Assessment:

In terms of informal assessment, teachers can look for students' strengths and challenges either in pre-writing or in having a well-developed knowledge of a concept, topic, or text. Each side of the cube refers to a set of cognitive skills and can be used to informally assess students' writing skills, vocabulary, and comprehension. For example, teachers will be able to informally assess their students' understanding of democracy by collecting data from the following: "Describe the concept of democracy."; "Compare it with other forms of government we have learned about."; "What does US democracy make you think of?"; "Tell how one would be able to recognize democracy in a society - what should one look for?"; "How do you use elements of democracy in your everyday life?"; "Take a stand for or against the benefits of democracy." Informal assessment of knowledge, association, application, and evaluation will allow the teacher to know how to adjust his/her instruction and provide any additional knowledge and experiences that will help students develop a solid understanding of the topic under study.



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of the Theme of Friendship in *Holes* worksheet.)



(Click on the graphic above to go to a pdf file of the McCarthyism worksheet.)

For more informative links on the Cubing strategy:

Examples on various topics (e.g., energy sources, numbers, bear stories, trigonometry, questioning)
<http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/services/ctr/javits/Instruction/Cubing.htm>

References

Cowan, G. & Cowan, E. (1980). *Writing*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Vaughan, J. & Estes, T. (1986). *Reading and reasoning beyond the primary grades*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.



[Go to Adobe PDF instruction page.](#)

Last Updated July 08, 2004
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FOR-PD is a project of the [ITRC @ UCF](#) College of Education and administered under a grant from the [Florida Department of Education](#) and [Just Read, Florida!](#)