

# Learning Arts Integration: One Teacher's Reflexive Journey

## After Saturday Workshop session #1

After the first ten minutes, I found myself thinking, 'What did I get myself into?!' I was incredibly overwhelmed and said there is no way that this is going to help my students learn. I thought the *Snapshots* strategy was the most humiliating thing ever and I hated the fact that I had to stand there and participate.

The strategies that were learned are not things that I would normally do with my students because I am too ashamed to be creative like that. Although I was very unsure of what I was doing and very embarrassed, I realized that this is a great way to engage my students.

The biggest insight that occurred was that I need to step out of my comfort zone and try different strategies to ensure that I am reaching all of my students, keeping them engaged so that they can develop a higher level of thinking.

Even though I started the day off very nervous, I am actually very excited to see how my students will react to this. To start off with, I plan to integrate the *Snapshot* strategy in their language arts materials.

Overall, this class--although scary--was very informational. I am very excited to see the demonstration in my classroom with my students. I am also excited to begin to implement the strategies to see how my students adapt to it.

## After Saturday Workshop session #2

I came to today's class with a much more open mind since I saw how the *Snapshots* really engaged the students. I was able to reinforce my understanding of *Individual Snapshots*, *Sculpted Snapshots*, *Partner Snapshots*, *Add-on Snapshots*, and *Town Meetings*.

I wasn't 100% comfortable having my students attempt the *Town Meeting* strategy. It was something that I was scared of because it did require a higher level thinking and it isn't something that has a straight forward answer.

I want my students to feel confident in their ideas and opinions. My hope is that these strategies will give them the tools necessary to think and form their ideas and opinions. I want them to realize that it is okay to have a voice and opinion.

The only way they are going to be successful in life is if they develop the higher level thinking and reach a higher depth of knowledge. I just need to encourage the students to not be afraid.

### **After Saturday Workshop session #3**

My favorite part of the day was when we sat down with teachers of the same grade level and looked at their work. It helped give me ideas on what I could do. I also got an opportunity to share what I was doing with my kids.

I've really seen how these strategies can have a positive impact on student achievement. I am so glad that I got up the courage to take this course. I can see my students who struggle being engaged and excited about their learning. These strategies can only positively impact my student learning and this will lead to an impact on their overall achievement.

I had some reservations about all of these strategies, but through implementation, I am seeing how great it is and how much my kids love it. I had concerns about behavior but my students enjoy it so much that they aren't bored and don't act out. I also feel more confident after the workshop. Being allowed to converse with colleagues and ask any questions helped put me at ease.

### **Workshop Culmination**

I have adjusted my practice to try to incorporate the *Snapshot*, *Human Barometer*, and *Town Meeting* strategies.

Every week, I've looked at my stories and what concepts I'll be teaching and have looked for ways to incorporate one, two, or all three of the strategies. It doesn't take a lot of time to incorporate this and the amount that the students gain from it is just amazing and worth the 45 minutes it could take. It allows them to develop their writing skills since they are getting ideas and information through the *Town Meeting*.

This course pushed me beyond my comfort level and when I get pushed I shut down and don't want to do it. I did not want to continue with this course, I wanted to run away as far as possible. The only two problems were that I paid for the course and I didn't drive that day. My opinion has changed drastically since then. I am by no means perfect at utilizing these strategies, but I know with continued practice and time I will get better. I actually decided to implement a lesson utilizing these strategies for my EES observation. I was a little nervous because I wasn't 100% sure how my principal would feel about it, but I felt that these strategies helped target the different domains. I'm thrilled to report that my principal really enjoyed the lesson. I don't believe that he has seen these strategies before but he was just so impressed with it all.

Overall, I've truly enjoyed this course. I've seen how these strategies can positively impact student learning, behavior, and attitude.

Most of my students love school now and it is because I've learned a way to engage the students and their learning!