This paper demonstrates how teacher educators can empower preservice teachers to develop a rationale for honoring diversity in their classrooms by building upon an awareness of learning style preference, cooperative learning, and multicultural nonsexist education. A human relations course at the University of Northern Iowa that is taught concurrently with the student teaching experience demonstrates how student teachers become involved in collaborative relationships with their peers by sharing weekly seminars, planning presentations, doing action research, and engaging in classroom instruction. The model involves personalization of concepts through experiential learning in which group building and team teaching are key strategies. Learning from experience is the theme as future teachers are first allowed to experience learning as a learner and then apply this learning to their new role of teacher. Appendices provide a sample activity, "What's in a Name," a way for student teachers to learn the names of persons in the group; and information on learning style preference. Contains 21 references. (LL)
Honoring Diversity in Teacher Education:  
Infusing Learning Styles, Cooperative Learning 
and Multicultural Nonsexist Education 
into the Student Teaching Semester

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Presentation Outline:

A. Introductions & Activity
B. Overview of the Session
C. Group Building MCNS Activity
D. Experiential Learning with Cooperative Learning
E. Team Teaching through Learning Styles
F. Closure
Experience is the best teacher

Human Relations Course integrated into the Student Teaching Semester

SELF

LEARNING STYLES
TEAM TEACHING
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
GROUP BUILDING ACTIVITIES

MULTICULTURAL NONSEXIST CURRICULUM

HONORING DIVERSITY IN
SELF STAFF STUDENTS SOCIETY
Honoring Diversity in Teacher Education: Infusing Learning Styles, Cooperative Learning and Multicultural Nonsexist Education into the Student Teaching Semester

by

Janey L. Montgomery
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Judy Lindholm

Various reforms in teacher education have emphasized empowering preservice teachers to honor diversity in their classrooms. In addition, research on "learning to teach" has focused on the question of how novices acquire teaching expertise (Huling-Austin, 1992). However, seldom are specific instructional strategies or practices described in the literature (Kagan, 1992). Peterson and Comeaux (1987) concluded that telling novices what experts know or do will not produce the needed expertise because it does not tell the novice how or why the expert arrived at the teaching decision.

Unless the explanation is broken down in such a way that the novice can assimilate and retain the information and unless the novice is given many different opportunities to practice the procedure, it is unlikely that expert information will have any impact on the novice's schema or on his/her acquisition of expertise. (p. 300)

Thus "telling" preservice teachers to honor diversity will not empower them to do so in their future classrooms. To honor
diversity in the classroom, prospective teachers need to experience diversity in a variety of learning situations, reflect upon the influence of students' diversity on learning and achievement, and have repeated opportunities for teaching.

Although many teacher education students may have knowledge or awareness of multicultural perspectives, or specific instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning or learning styles prior to admission to teacher education, teaching strategies for implementing such practices in the classroom may not have been integral features of practicums or student teaching (Baker, 1983, Kohut, 1980, Valencia, 1992).

Typically, knowledge of learning styles or techniques such as cooperative learning are included in methods courses. Likewise, Multicultural Education in professional education is often found in specially designed courses, rather than integrated into the total teacher preparation program (Baker, 1983). Valencia (1992) suggests that while such courses provide pertinent strategies, perspectives and issues, teacher education students run the risk of not being able to transfer content learning in professional education coursework to field-based practicums and student teaching activities in public school classrooms (Kagan, 1992, Valencia, 1992).

To meet the needs of prospective teachers in the next century, an "integrated approach" which refers to the inclusion of multicultural aspects in the objectives, content and activities of all professional educational courses including
practicums and student teaching (Baptiste & Baptiste, 1980, Tiedt & Tiedt, 1990) will be needed.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how teacher educators can empower preservice teachers to develop a rationale for honoring diversity in their classrooms by building upon an awareness of learning styles preferences, cooperative learning, and multicultural nonsexist education. This "integrated" approach will focus on a model which brings theory into practice by utilizing facilitator skills and experiential learning as a basis for self-discovery, reflection, and self evaluation during the student teaching semester.

The content and style of cooperative learning activities (Johnson & Johnson, 1986) and information on learning styles preferences utilizing the Myers Briggs Type Indicator are used with student teachers. Thus, the authors include the concepts of learning styles and cooperative learning within in the total scope of multicultural options available to teachers.

Multicultural Education is defined as,

a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures. Ideally, it encourages people to see different cultures as a source of learning and to respect diversity in the local, national and international environment. It stresses cultural, ethnic and racial, in addition to, linguistic differences. It is often broadened to include socio-economic differences, professional differences, sex and religious differences. Multicultural education refers first to building an awareness of own's own cultural heritage, and understanding that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another; secondly to acquiring those skills in analysis and communication that help one function effectively in multicultural environments. Stress is placed on experiencing cultural differences in the classroom and in the society rather than simply studying about
them. Multicultural education is not just a set of ethnic or other area study programs, but an effort to demonstrate the significance of similarities and differences among culture groups and between individuals within those groups (Hoopes & Pusch, 1981, p.4)

Key concepts of this paper which are inherent in this definition include 1) seeing culture as a source of learning, 2) respecting diversity, 3) becoming aware of one's own self 4) not viewing one culture or style as intrinsically superior to another, 5) developing skills for communication, 6) experiencing diversity for oneself, 7) finding significant similarities and differences, and 8) recognizing that individuals differ within groups.

Program Model

Each year over 80 perspective teachers complete student teaching in an off campus center of a medium sized midwestern university (13,000 students). A three hour semester course, Human Relations, is taught concurrently with the student teaching semester (12 hours). Objectives of the Human Relations course focus on bias, prejudice, stereotyping, communication, power and oppression, authenticity, and methods and materials for multicultural nonsexist education in K-12 curriculum. The rationale for this combination supports infusion of previous learned topics and techniques into the student teaching semester. Thus, the Human Relations course is the delivery system for a variety of educational issues bridging theory and practice.

This experiential model allows student teachers to become closely involved in diverse collaborative relationships with their peers by sharing in weekly seminars, planning presentations to peers, doing action research, and classroom instruction.
Diversity in personality type, gender, and teaching levels is essential to encourage collaboration so essential to honoring diversity through experience.

The model is based on honoring diversity within self and others in various settings. The model involves personalization of concepts through experiential learning in which group building activities and team teaching are key instructional strategies. With student teachers from the midwest who have limited experiences with "racism", this model enables them to develop an awareness of differences through learning style preferences. As they begin to experience cooperative learning strategies, they become more aware of their own learning style preferences, other student teachers and eventually the pupils in their classroom. The "tremendous" scope of multicultural nonsexist education seems to make more sense to student teachers after experiencing learning style preferences and cooperative learning.

The "essence" of infusion of content information (learning styles, cooperative learning and multicultural education) and techniques for teaching (modeling of lessons by teacher education faculty) are closely linked. For example, from the first day of the semester, student teachers experience a "teaming" approach to learning the Human Relations curriculum which closely parallels their own application of these effective teaching strategies as they begin their student teaching.

As teacher educators model specific strategies evoking active participation through cooperative groups, student teachers
experience the "learning" and then process the experience by identifying specific teaching and learning outcomes. Since student teachers represent a variety of subject areas and grade levels, these discussions show how effective instructional techniques span the K-12 curriculum. As they integrate these concepts into their classroom teaching, additional reflection can be shared at weekly seminars with other student teachers and/or supervisors.

As student teachers begin the transition from student to teacher, two key concepts are essential to this model: 1) processing as a learner and 2) debriefing as a teacher. As novices experience new learning they need to process their learning as a student. How? Why? Where did the learning take place? What was effective? What was not effective?

During processing distinct preferences for organization, structure, judgement, creativity, and brainstorming surfaced as they processed their learning. It is important for novices to experience learning from the viewpoint of self. Whether the novice will ultimately use this technique in his/her classroom has been traditionally influenced by his/her style. Kagan (1992) reports "a novice's self-image as a teacher may be strongly related to the novice's self-image as a learner" (p. 145).

That is in constructing images of teachers, novices may extrapolate from their own experiences as learners, in essence, assuming that their pupils will possess learning styles, aptitudes, interests, and problems similar to their own. This may partially explain why novices' images of pupils are usually inaccurate. (p. 145)
Gaining accurate perceptions of pupils is yet another reason for helping novices understand their own learning style preferences and those of other student teachers in a Human Relations class before attempting to apply these concepts during student teaching.

The second skill, debriefing as a teacher, enables student teachers to brainstorm possibilities for using teaching strategies in classrooms with different age levels or content areas. Since teaching in the classroom is the foremost concern of student teachers, debriefing is usually very easy. They are eager to share ideas and discuss the possibilities of future lessons.

Description of Three Components

Infusion of Learning Styles

Student teachers experience their own and others' style strengths through a team teaching format. By self-identifying their own personality preference type through the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator model, the preservice teachers begin by appreciating their own style preferences and strengths. They move to honoring others who perceive and process differently to actually seeking diversity of style types in their collegial relationships. This evolvement happens naturally as student teachers proceed through a number of cooperative, team teaching experiences throughout the semester.

All persons are born with natural style preferences. These preferences are enhanced or squelched by environmental experiences. Student teachers come to Human Relations and to
Student Teaching with their styles in place. Teacher educators, as facilitators, need to help novices recognize their own preferences and realize that we teach as we ourselves learn (Kagan, 1992). It is our belief that awareness and honoring of learning style differences can truly be the common denominator in helping people accept and honor all forms of diversity which is the goal of the Human Relations course.

As professionals, our challenge is to stretch our styles in order to honor all learners in our classrooms. All styles will be there! Traditional school has not always been equal opportunity for all learners. In our experience, style aware teachers do a more effective job of honoring diversity in styles by stretching and offering diverse approaches in their instruction.

Experience in valuing type differences begins the first day of Student Teaching and Human Relations. Student teachers are placed in heterogeneous cadre groups, which will remain constant throughout the semester. Within one hour of arrival, the cadre groups are involved in sharing refreshments, determining seating arrangements, and planning their first team teaching assignment! The panic and overwhelmed feeling is quickly relieved as the student teachers begin to experience synergy when six to eight varying styles approach this task. They came as strangers three hours prior to team teaching as a group!

An important component to the model is to allow the necessary time for processing as learners and debriefing as teachers. In processing this first experiential team teaching
activity, the student teachers realized they had collectively relied on the strengths of all of their group members in order to do a very challenging task, i.e., teach your peers on the first day! In debriefing as teachers, the instructional techniques which had elicited active participation, individual accountability, and interdependence were reviewed.

During the first eight weeks of student teaching, the teacher education faculty use style concepts in an informal way during debriefing, often looking at the varying styles within the teaching and supervision team. The student teachers experience our honoring of diversity as we share how we are making decisions, planning activities, which make us stronger because of our diversity in leadership.

During an interim human relations week, between two student teaching assignments, three hour seminars in both learning styles and cooperative learning offer the student teachers a more in depth look at the theories, terminology, models, and application to the classroom. This allows student teachers a broader knowledge base to assist in their decision making for the second eight weeks of student teaching.

A recent student teacher shared in a written essay question in the Human Relations class,

> A wise teacher will hopefully have had such insightful workshops as we have had on learning styles and cooperative learning. These two have both been recognized to be very important considerations in teaching. The combination of the two in application in the classroom could be extremely effective in eliciting wonderful learning results. Hurray for the knowledge we have, let's go use it!" (Amy Johnson, Fall, 1992)
As they review, study, and experience the learning style research, the student teachers now know why "experience is the best teacher" for a majority of learners.

Cooperative Learning Strategies

At the university level, Teacher Education professionals often discuss the problem of teacher isolation throughout the profession. Recent applications of adult learning theory suggests that adults learn more rapidly when they have the opportunity to interact with peers (Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983). Current research on teacher induction suggests that beginning teachers need frequent opportunities to solve problems and share with other first year teachers (Schlechty, 1984, Huling-Austin, 1992). Carter and Richardson's (1988) focus on networking among beginning teachers attaches importance to such cohort groups.

In a recent article in Educational Leadership, "What research on learning tells us about teaching," three insights are presented: 1) that there are multiple forms of learning, 2) that students must build on prior knowledge, and 3) that learning is a social act (Leinhardt, 1992). These insights have important implications for both teachers and teacher educators. However, how often do we read such articles when our perspective of the learner is only the K-12 pupil? The same principles apply for adult learning, and such issues are especially crucial to discuss and debate when the "pupil" is a student teacher.

At the K-12 level cooperative learning strategies (Slavin, 1986, Johnson & Johnson, 1986) have been extensively adopted and
debated across the country. Cooperative learning refers to "a set of instructional methods in which students work in small, mixed ability learning groups" (Slavin, 1987, p. 8). Slavin explains,

The cooperative learning methods developed in the 1970s Student Teams Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournaments (Slavin, 1986); Jigsaw Teaching (Aronson et. al. 1978); and Johnsons's methods (Johnson & Johnson, 1986) and Group Investigation (Sharan et al., 1984)--all are generic forms of cooperative learning. They can be used at many grade levels. (Slavin, 1987, p. 10).

This model has taken these strategies and applied them to preservice student teachers. Whether student teachers are meeting together in triads (3), small cadre groups (5), seminars (15) or class presentations (40), they quickly develop the sense of being members of an important group that shares an ordeal. They understand that others are experiencing the same stressful period. Learning from experience is the theme as future teachers are first allowed to experience learning as a learner and then to apply this learning to their new role of teacher. Like their younger counterparts in the public schools, university students who are in their final semester collaborate Slavin's research findings that "that students working together in small cooperative groups can master material...better than can students working on their own." (Slavin, 1987, p.8).

During the Human Relations course, many of the cooperative learning techniques are demonstrated by teacher education faculty and consequently used by student teachers during the semester of classroom teaching. For example, Teams-Games-Tournaments
(Slavin, 1986) and Group Investigation Techniques (Sharan, et al., 1984) are used as student teachers work in cooperative groups to research one facet of Multiculturalism (age, race, gender, class, exceptionality, etc.) and write exam questions for the Human Relations course. Each group is responsible for teaching one chapter from a selected text (Gollnick & Chinn, 1990) and writing eight multiple choice or true false questions. Each group submits questions and answers which are duplicated for other groups and this serves as the "card deck" for the TGT method. Student teachers use the TGT format to review Human Relations content and at mid-term take a written exam either individually, or with a group of three persons.

During processing as learners, student teachers criticized other groups for not writing "good" test items. A review of the essentials of good test items followed this activity. A frequent view of TGT as a process was "the test was too easy" rather than "we learned this material very well." As teachers, they debriefed the nature of testing, the ability of students, and whether groups would work together. Some of these ideas later became topics for action research projects.

During student teaching seminars the Jigsaw technique (Slavin, 1986) is used to review the basic components of good lesson design. Expert groups are formed to discuss 1) beginning the lesson (e.g., anticipator set, etc.) 2) objectives 3) active participation 4) evaluation and 5) closure. After time for sharing and review of handouts, new groups of five persons are formed with one person from each of the five expert groups. The
new group is instructed to design a short lesson (usually less than 10 minutes) that they will teach to the group. Focusing on skills, such as "tieing a tie" can be easy and fun for the group to experience.

During processing as learners, most student teachers commented how easy it was to learn the new skill when all the elements of effective lesson planning were present. As teachers, they suggested that when things get rushed in the classroom, they don't take the time for an adequate introduction or often skip the closure. A new appreciation for all the elements of good lesson design was a typical outcome for student teachers.

A use of triads during the first week of student teaching focus on "big concerns" for the semester. One person is designated as the "speaker" and is the only person in the group who can make statements. He/she is encouraged to talk about their "big concern" for the student teaching semester. The second person is designated as the "questioner" and can only ask questions. His/her responsibility is to clarify and help the speaker to think and to reflect about their concern. The third person is the "observer" who may not talk and is instructed to watch the nonverbal behavior of the speaker and questioner and to give feedback at the end of the activity. The first person speaks for 3-5 minutes depending on group, topic, etc.. This activity is repeated three times until all three persons have had the opportunity to experience all three roles.

During processing as learners, student teachers expressed insights about the difficulty in listening and not speaking, in
asking questions and not making statements. During debriefing
students commented on the "built-in" aspects of active
participation for each student as a preventive measure for
classroom management or discipline. In their teacher role, they
began to ask questions about how groups were formed and
monitored.

Since cooperative learning strategies are used by teacher
education faculty during the first part of the student teaching
orientation, student teachers were eager to use these strategies
in their student teaching classrooms. Feedback from student
teachers about the success or failure of their efforts to use
cooporative learning differed greatly from school to school
depending their pupils' experience with cooperative groups.
Therefore, student teachers are now encouraged to assess the
level of cooperative learning knowledge and skills in their
classroom and adjust their lessons before implementing
coooperative learning strategies.

Multicultural Nonsexist Education

Two sample activities which are completed during the first
or second day of student teaching orientation include Name
History and Welcome a Stranger (Varenhorst, 1981).

Name History is an excellent way for student teachers to
learn the names of persons in the group, to share impressions of
self through a name, to develop a network of trust within a
group, and to discover ethnic origins of names. Members of the
group sit in a circle and share their name history (see Appendix
A for lesson plan).
When processing as learners, student teachers felt it was a quick and easy way to learn many names in a short amount of time. Some student teachers felt "excluded" because they didn't know either the ethnic background of their family name or why they were given a certain name. For highly successful and achievement oriented college seniors, this feeling was uncomfortable and revealing. Others realized the importance of religion as many student teachers shared confirmation names. Humor resulted from individual stories which revealed information about family members. When debriefing as teachers, student teachers suggested that they would always "prepare" all students for this assignments by telling them ahead of time and thus avoid any kind of embarrassment at not being prepared to share. A typical insight among student teachers, and yet how often do teachers initiate activities for which certain students are unprepared to participate due to either class or language differences? Thus, style preferences surfaced for those who liked planned or assigned activities and a link was established for the relationship between self as a learner and self as a teacher.

Follow up reading (Appendix A) discusses cultural differences in Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong and other Southeast Asian names and the importance of the name in relation to self concept. Discussing with student teachers what they will called in the classroom and how they will introduce themselves is another extension topic from the activity.

Welcome a Stranger is a timely activity as student teachers are soon to become the "stranger" in their school building. In
this activity one volunteer from group of five or six people is
asked to leave the room. The remaining student teachers are told
that they are an experienced faculty with a national reputation
for excellence in teaching. In a few minutes they are going to
meet a new student teacher who has been assigned to their
building. The group will have mixed reactions to this new student
teacher. Some are eager to have a student teacher and others are
not. Students are told to decide which role they will play and as
a group, decide how they will welcome the student teacher to
their building.

Before the student teacher i.e., "stranger" enters the room,
he or she is told that a group of faculty members from their new
school will greet them and they are asked to be aware of their
feelings. If possible, encourage the stranger to observe what
types of things the teachers do or say that makes them feel
welcome. They are also told that they will be asked to share
their feelings at the end of this activity.

When processing "Welcome a Stranger" student teachers
focused on first impressions, nonverbal cues, and feeling tones
of the group meeting. They experienced a variety of approaches
to "welcoming" as well as an undercurrent theme, "I'm really not
welcome here". By identifying, labeling, and discussing the
thoughts, feelings, etc. of the individual and the group,
communication skills can be enhanced through practice and
observation.

While debriefing as a teacher, student teachers realized not
only are they the "newcomer" to the school faculty, but there may
be many "new pupils" in the classroom who will experience similar thoughts and feelings. Thus, student teachers understood the concept of "being new to a group" by experience and self reflection. Many other activities within the scope of multicultural and nonsexist curriculum are included in the Human Relations semester, but these two examples demonstrate the experiential level of activities for student teachers and the importance of processing as a student and debriefing as a teacher.

Davidman and Davidman, 1988, identified three teacher skills in creating elements of the multicultural learning environment as: 1) their ability to apply cross-cultural references and instructional approaches, 2) their capability to promote positive and constructive interaction with and between students of diverse cultural backgrounds, and 3) their ability to involve all students equitably in learning activities. These three elements relate directly to multiculturalism, cooperative learning and learning style preferences. If the purpose of integrating human relations skills into the student teaching semester seeks to help student teachers honor diversity in their classrooms through the infusion of learning styles, cooperative learning, and multicultural nonsexist education, then teacher educators can mold multicultural learning environments for classrooms of the future.
References


Appendix A

What's in a Name?

Activity: Name History

Objectives: To learn names of persons in the group.

To develop awareness of ethnic origins of names.

To share impressions of self through a name.

To develop a network of trust within a group.

Materials:

- yarn ball 3-5" diameter
- Article: What's in a Name? Young Children, September 1989

Activity:

1. Members of the group sit in a circle of chairs or on the floor. It's important that everyone is facing each other.

2. The leader explains the activity "Name History" by explaining that you are going to learn all the names of the persons in the group by sharing their complete name and something about the name. For example:

"My name is Dr. Janey Luann Weinhold Montgomery. Dr. is important to me because that was my mid-career decision to go back to Iowa State and get the doctorate before my 50th birthday. Janey Brown was a radio personality of the 1940's that my mother liked. Luann is spelled Luann and that's important because my mother taught me to spell my middle name Louann when I was in school and I found out when I was 21 that what she taught me didn't agree with my birth certificate, and she was a teacher. Weinhold has roots in Pennsylvania Dutch and Montgomery has been my name for 25 years. My husband used to think he was Irish before he discovered his Scottish roots and now he plays the bagpipes. When I'm in the schools I would like to be introduced as Dr. Montgomery from UNI, but in seminar and during class you can call me Janey."
3. As the leader finishes the first "name history" you throw the ball of yarn to someone in the circle and they share their name history. Ask the group to listen carefully to each story so they can remember "one thing" about the person.

4. Continue the stories until the last person. Talk about how the web of yarn changed from first to last person (became more inter-twined, network, complex, stronger, etc. Encourage networking during the class, semester, etc.

5. As you unwind the web, return the ball of yarn to the person that threw the ball to you and share something that you remember about that person. As you share the story and the name, encourage participants to look at the person's face and think their name. Repeat 3-4 names and continue until the web has been untangled.

6. Processing: What did you learn? How did you feel?

7. Debriefing: How would you use this activity with students? What ages/levels? What subject areas/contexts?

8. If time permits, follow up with discussion of What's in a Name? article.
APPENDIX B
LEARNING STYLE PREFERENCES

SOME BEHAVIOR BASICS

"People do not behave according to the facts as others see them; they behave in terms of what seems to them to be so."
Arthur Combs

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."
Henry David Thoreau

Psychologist Carl Jung explained differences in human behavior by describing four basic functions of the human personality. When we perform these functions with more or less ease, we develop our own unique "style", which he called psychological type.

Jung's style model based on the four basic human functions:

1. The sensing function of taking in here-and-now sensory information (what's happening at this instant), and reacting to it.

2. The intuitive function of imagination and abstract thought.

3. The thinking function of organizing and analyzing information in logical fashion.

4. The feeling function of personal and emotional reactions to experience.

Everyone uses a blend of all four styles but most people have a dominant style they prefer and tend to use when interacting with others. Many people consistently shift to another style under stressful or unfavorable conditions. Jung claimed that behavior patterns are genetically determined and are reflected by infants during their first day of life.

Each person has a unique style of learning. The different ways people perceive, think and process knowledge, feel, and behave make up each learner's consistent pattern. Researchers believe that nature and nurture play a part in the development of a person's learning style. All styles are valuable. One is not better than another.
LEARNING PREFERENCES ASSOCIATED WITH DIMENSIONS OF MBTI TYPE

EXTRAVERSION
Talking, discussion
Psychomotor activity
Working with a group

SENSING
Tasks that call for carefulness, thoroughness and soundness of understanding
Going step-by-step
Tasks that call for observing specifics
Tasks that call for memory of fact
Practical interests

THINKING
Logical organization of teacher
Objective material to study

JUDGING
Work in steady, orderly way
Formalized instruction
Structured tasks

INTROVERSION
Reading/verbal reasoning
Time for internal processing
Working individually

INTUITION
Tasks that call for quickness of insight and in seeing relationships
Finding own way in new material
Tasks that call for grasping general concepts
Tasks that call for verbal fluency
Intellectual interests (independent of intelligence)

FEELING
Personal rapport with teacher
Learning through personal relationships

PERCEIVING
Work in flexible way, follow impulses
Informal problem solving
Discovery tasks

It makes sense that...

I wonder if...

I think...

I feel...