



Thinking Skills

IIP Assignment 2

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Introduction

Teaching and thinking skills in the primary years – Michael Pohl

Few people concerned with the education of young minds would argue that one of the primary objectives of schooling should involve the teaching of tools for *life long* learning.

When asked to list important tools for life long learning, many educators would place a high priority on empowering students with thinking skills such as:

- the ability to reason
- to make informed judgements
- to critically evaluate information
- to think creatively.



Why a whole school approach?

It is not uncommon to hear teachers in schools talking about developing a thinking culture within their learning communities

In developing a thinking culture, it will be important to provide teaching and learning activities that will:

- Empower students with the language, tools and strategies to engage in a wide range of analytical, critical and creative thinking tasks
- Provide on-going opportunities for developing, practicing and refining the skills of thinking
- Provide instruction and practice in ways of managing, organizing and recording thinking
- Engage students (*particularly the more gifted learners*) in the high order thinking skills
- Assist in the transfer of skills to everyday life and everyday situations as tools for life long learning.



Why a whole school approach?

- Achieving such outcomes will require more than the efforts of a *few teachers* occasionally using *one or two* thinking strategies as part of their normal classroom practice.
- “*An essential element in developing a thinking culture will be the explicit teaching of thinking skills to all students*”
- A whole-school approach that provides a scope and sequence for the introduction of thinking skills at specific year levels will have a much greater chance of success.



Benefits of a whole school approach

- A whole school scope and sequence for the teaching of thinking skills will assist in overcoming some of the less desirable practices to be observed in some schools e.g.
- **Feast or famine syndrome** – this occurs when in one year a class or group have many opportunities to actively engage their thinking but are staved of similar opportunities the next.
- **We're a six-hat school syndrome** – this occurs when a single strategy is adopted and used exclusively across the school. A range of strategies needs to be adopted.
- **Flavor of the month syndrome** – where for a short period of time everyone is designing teaching and learning activities around similar frameworks or models until something better comes along.



Thinking Skills Strategies

Six Thinking Hats



Yellow Hat - Strengths



Black Hat - Weaknesses



Red Hat - Feelings



White Hat - Information



Green Hat – New Ideas



Blue Hat – Thinking about Thinking

A yearly overview

Term	Strategy	Student learning outcome.
1	Six Thinking Hats (one at a time)	Students can: Explain the thinking for each hat Practice orally the appropriate thinking for each hat Give example of the hats i.e. yellow hat ideas etc
2	Hat sequence (evaluation)	Students can: Explain the evaluation sequence Employ yellow hat and black hat thinking
3	Hat Sequence (caution)	Students can: Explain the caution sequence Effectively employ black hat and white hat thinking
4	Hat Sequence (Design)	Students can: Explain the design sequence Effectively employ blue, green hat and red hat thinking.



Brainstorming

Introducing students to the acronym **LACE** ensures the widest possible participation during the brainstorming session.

L=Los of ideas (piggybacking on ideas ok)

A=All responses recorded (ideas judged later)

C =Criticism is not allowed (Of people or ideas)

E =Encourage way out ideas

(it might produce a better solution in the end)



Thinkers Keys

Tony Ryan first introduced his Thinkers Keys in the 1980s but his keys are still an easy and effective way to introduce different ways of creative thinking to our students.

Thinker's Keys can be easily included in contract activities, homework tasks, journal writing activities, extension tasks and as part of a Bloom's and Multiple Intelligence approach to teaching and learning.

"We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself."

(Lloyd Alexander)



S C A M P E R

- S** – **substitute** or switch
- C** – **combine** with something else
- A** – **adapt** or alter part of it
- M** – **modify** a part by magnifying or minifying
- P** – **put** to some other use
- E** – **eliminate** a part of it
- R** – **rearrange** a part of it

∞ The end ∞