

Making Thinking Visible

Bonnie Tsai

The world has changed and is changing more and more rapidly. We as teachers are faced with the greatest challenge: how to teach the 21st century learner. 21st century learners want to be challenged. They want to be involved in their own learning process. They want to be able to make connections between what they are doing in the classroom and the real world. They do not want to sit in a classroom where they are being asked to follow a boring out of date course book. They do not want a teacher who has no idea what their students' world is like. They do not want to learn "stuff" they will never use and will forget after the next test.

So how are teachers going to stand up and be counted as a 21st century teacher? Visible Thinking is a way of helping to achieve this goal. Visible Thinking is a broad and flexible framework for enriching classroom learning in content areas and at the same time fosters students' intellectual development. It is a means to enable students to become aware of their thinking through following a series of challenging frameworks that actually makes their thinking visible to themselves and you, their teachers.

Visible Thinking is made up of a number of thinking routines which teachers can use in their classes. They are easily adapted to different ages and different subjects. The best example I have of this is The International School of Amsterdam which uses Visible Thinking through their engagement to a Multiple Intelligence curriculum. Pre-primary children can be seen using small objects creating patterns and finding other children who have the same or a different pattern. Older primary children can be observed using I see...I think...I wonder routine to explore an abstract work of art. Older secondary students use the various routines to explore issues such as children's rights or migration.



Selecion of Thinking Routines that make up Making Thinking visible

Here are some of its key goals:

- Deeper understanding of content
- Greater motivation and involvement in learning
- Development of learners' thinking and learning abilities
- Development of learners' attitudes toward thinking and learning and their alertness to opportunities for thinking and learning.

This results in a shift in classroom culture toward a community of enthusiastically engaged thinkers and learners.

In this presentation you will gain insight into how to further your ideas about how thinking routines and other cultural forces can create a classroom atmosphere where learners are able to develop and use thinking skills. You will also learn how a culture of thinking is important at the level of teachers as well as students, and how teacher study groups can constitute a force for building a culture of thinking through a school. Finally, you will get acquainted with several other resources that can help you carry Visible Thinking further.

By the end of the presentation you will:

- understand how different thinking routines and other cultural forces provide the basis for developing thinking skills.
- understand the role of ways of thinking at the level of teachers and students.
- understand the resources available to carry Visible Thinking further.
- use the arts and artifacts as foci of thoughtful learning for understanding across the subject
- document student thinking so that both teachers and students are better able to understand and develop
- foster a culture of thinking and regard for thoughtful learning in the class
- build teacher collegiality and collaboration around a culture of thinking and thoughtful learning?

All of this work has been conducted as part of the activities of Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The principal researchers and developers involved have been David Perkins, Ron Ritchhart, and Shari Tishman.