

The Development of a Culture of Thinking in My Classroom: Self-Assessment

Imagine someone were to stop into your classroom on any random day or time. How likely would this visitor be to notice each of the following actions described below. For each statement assign a rating between 5 and 1 using the following scale:

- 5 = Hard to miss it
- 4 = Highly likely to notice
- 3 = Hit or miss depending on the circumstances
- 2 = Not very likely to notice
- 1 = I doubt anyone would notice.

EXPECTATIONS	Rating
1. I make a conscious effort to communicate to students that my classroom is a place in which thinking is valued.	
2. I establish a set of expectations for learning and thinking with my students in a similar way that I establish behavioural expectations.	
3. I stress that thinking and learning are the outcomes of our class activity as opposed to 'completion of work'.	
4. "Developing understanding" is the goal of classroom activity and lessons versus knowledge acquisition only.	
5. Student independence is being actively cultivated so that students are not dependent on the teacher to answer all questions and direct all activity.	

LANGUAGE	Rating
1. I make a conscious effort to use the language of thinking in my teaching discussing with students the sort of thinking moves required by verbs such as 'elaborate', 'evaluate', 'justify', 'contrast', 'explain' etc.	
2. I seldom use generic praise comments (good job, great, brilliant, well done) and instead give specific, targeted, action-oriented feedback that focuses on guiding future efforts and actions.	
3. I use "conditional" phrases such as 'could be', 'might be', 'one possibility is', 'some people think' or 'usually it is that way but not always'.	
4. I try to notice and name the thinking occurring in my classroom. For example, might I be heard to say things like, "Sean is supporting his ideas with evidence here", or "Sam is evaluating the effectiveness of that strategy right now", or "Iris has presented an interesting analogy today".	
5. I use inclusive, community-building language by talking about what "we" are learning or "our" questions.	

MODELING	Rating
1. Thinking is regularly on display (my own as well as students) in the classroom.	
2. I demonstrate my own curiosity, passion, and interest to students.	
3. I display open-mindedness and a willingness to consider alternative perspectives.	
4. It is clear that I am learning too, taking risks, and reflecting on my learning.	
5. Students model their thought process by spontaneously justifying and providing evidence for their thinking.	

TIME	Rating
1. I make time for students' questions and contributions.	
2. I provide the "space" for students to extend, elaborate, or develop the ideas of others.	
3. I avoid disseminating an abundance of ideas without the time to process them.	
4. I give students time to think and develop ideas before asking for contributions.	
5. I monitor the amount of time I talk so as not to dominate the classroom conversation.	

OPPORTUNITIES	Rating
1. I ensure that rich thinking opportunities are woven into the fabric of my teaching and students aren't just engaged in work or activity.	
2. I focus students' attention on big subject matter issues, important ideas in the world, and in meaningful connections within my discipline and beyond.	
3. I provide students with opportunities for students to direct their own learning and become independent learners.	
4. I take pains to select content and stimuli for class consideration in order to provoke thinking.	
5. I provide opportunities to reflect on how one's thinking about a topic has changed and developed over time.	

ROUTINES	Rating
1. I use thinking routines and structures to help students organise their thinking.	
2. I use thinking routines flexibly, spontaneously, and effectively to deepen students' understanding	
3. I am good at matching a routine with appropriate content so that students are able to achieve a deeper level of understanding.	
4. Have thinking routines become patterns of behaviour in my classroom; that is, do students know particular routines so well that they no longer seek clarification about the mechanics of the routine, instead going straight to the thinking.	
5. Students' use routines and structures to further their understanding and as a platform for discussion, rather than as work to be done.	

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Rating
1. Displays in the room inspire learning in the subject area and connect students to the larger world of ideas by displaying positive messages about learning and thinking.	
2. I arrange the space of my classroom to facilitate thoughtful interactions, collaborations, and discussion.	
3. My wall displays have an ongoing, inchoate, and/or dialogic nature to them versus only static display of finished work.	
4. I use a variety of ways to document and capture thinking, including technology.	
5. A visitor would be able to discern what I care about and value when it comes to learning.	

INTERACTIONS	Rating
1. I ensure that all students respect each other's thinking in my classroom. Ideas may be critiqued or challenged but people are not.	
2. I make it clear that mistakes are acceptable and encouraged within my classroom.	
3. Students are pushed to elaborate their responses, to reason, and to think beyond a simple answer or statement? For example, by using the "What makes you say that?" routine.	
4. I listen to students and show a genuine curiosity and interest in students' thinking. It is clear I value their thinking.	
5. I listen in on groups and allow them to act independently rather than always inserting myself into the process.	