

Links to Learning

Edition Four: December 2010

Welcome to this terms copy of Links to Learning; our termly curriculum news letter, providing you with information, as well as activities, related to the teaching and learning experiences your children are part of.

Our aim is to provide you with some news of curriculum and learning happening at CWBS, as well as include some great activities to do with your children. We publish this newsletter once a term to keep you informed of updates from our classes as well as provide ideas and examples of a range of inquiry thinking and learning skills you can all connect to.

Through considering many of these activities and ideas, you can build up some enjoyable ways to inspire and extend your children's inquiry experiences. This will also help us all gain a greater understanding of how our curriculum and learning encompasses a variety of skills. The "inquiry experience" is a truly dynamic opportunity for personal learning for all.

The PYP as a transdisciplinary curriculum

The PYP endorses a belief that students learn best when the learning is authentic and transdisciplinary - relevant to the real world - where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas, but it supports and is enriched by them. The use of the word transdisciplinary is to mean **knowledge residing within the subject areas "transcends" - going between, across and beyond different disciplines (subjects)** - to develop both a new vision and experience of learning."

PYP classrooms and schools provide learning environments where coherent, authentic teaching and learning takes place, as opposed to the all-too-often compartmentalised, disconnected teaching and learning experiences that can happen in traditional classrooms. The PYP allows **transparent connections** to be made across the teaching and learning, so that students are aware of the relevance of their learning to their reality and are encouraged to respond with a higher level of understanding and engagement.

Transdisciplinary contributes to the international dimension of the programme, in which six themes of global relevance, *indicators of our shared humanity*, are identified and defined. It provokes the learner into connecting with, reflecting on, and reconsidering what he or she believes about the world and his or her place in it.

The challenge of the PYP has been to define the knowledge component, what is worth knowing that is of relevance to 3-12 year olds, wherever they are in the world and regardless of which ethnic or cultural group they belong to. These require **learning about what is real in the world** and the connectedness of the human condition - who we are as human beings.

To make you smile from the mouths of babes

- * No one notices what I do until I don't do it
- * The more mistakes I make, the smarter I get



- * You're never too old for a teddy bear
- * In all the countries I've been to, everyone understands a smile

"I'm being haive!" 2 year old son, when his mother told him to behave

"Why don't you get some expensive money?" 3 year old daughter, when told by her mother that she could get a small toy but that the ones asked for were too expensive

"There's no one in there." 6 year old son, in response to seeing his father hanging pictures and tapping on the walls to find the support beams.

"Don't kid me, Mom, I know they're my feet." 3 year old son, when his mother told him his shoes were on the wrong feet

"I'm glad I'm finally eight. This is the oldest I've ever been in my entire life!" 8 year old son.



Let's talk about our Thinking Hats



We often hear the phrase “Put on your thinking hats” when asking children to think. The Six Thinking Hats strategy uses the metaphor of different coloured hats to engage students in different types of thinking.

Using the hats demonstrates to students that thinking is a skill to be learned and improved upon with practice, the Six Thinking Hats provide a framework for focused, constructive and productive thought. It acknowledges that feelings and emotions are an important part of thinking. The process is fun to teach and learn at all levels.



Each one of the coloured hats stands for one kind of thinking and when a particular hat is called upon, only the type of thinking represented by that hat is allowed at that time. **Prompts for each of the hats are provided on the next page of this newsletter.**

In this way students may look at an issue or idea from six very different viewpoints before deciding upon the value of an idea or upon a course of action to be taken. **The Thinking Hats are a core critical thinking tool being taught in all classes at CWBS this term.**

The six different thinking hats developed by Edward De Bono include:

White Hat:	Thinking about FACTS	Students describe the information about something
Red Hat:	Thinking about FEELINGS	Students describe what they feel about something and why
Yellow Hat:	Thinking about STRENGTHS	Students consider what is good and positive about something
Black Hat:	Thinking about PROBLEMS	Students identify potential issues, problems and difficulties
Green Hat:	Thinking about NEW IDEAS	Students consider what is now possible, what we can now do
Blue Hat:	Thinking about THINKING	Students consider what thinking is needed to move forward

Let's find some ways at home where we can use the Thinking Hats together

Caution Thinking



Using the White and Black hats ...

Use the caution sequence to consider the consequences of:

- Not letting someone know where you are going
- Throwing most of your lunch in the bin every day
- Playing a trick on a friend
- Playing in the classroom when there are no teachers there to supervise
- Leaving your homework until the last minute to finish
- Spending all your money at once, when it is given to you



Evaluation Thinking



Using the Yellow and Black hats

.....
Using the Evaluation sequence to consider the positive and negative effects of:

- Staying up late on a week night (during the school term)
- Swapping toys with friends
- Spending all your pocket money rather than saving any
- Not doing your homework at all
- Eating lots of sweets everyday
- Being unkind to someone else
 - Not sharing with someone in class when they need some help



Design Thinking

Using the Red, Green and Blue hats ...

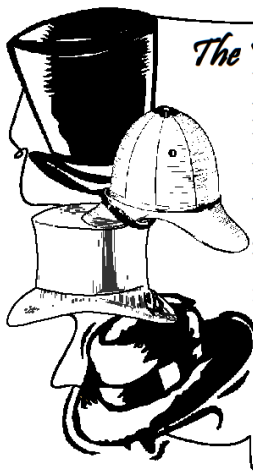
Using the Design sequence to create:

- A better type of toothbrush
- An easy way to keep fit
- A quicker way to learn
- Alternative ways to finish our homework quickly
- A new way to communicate with your pets
- A better school bus
- A cool computer for kids
- A **new** toy for Year 1's
- Designing a new dream house for my family to live in

Remember: no matter what we think, we must learn to justify our ideas by explaining why we have those opinions! The word “because” becomes our “strongest tool” to achieve this!

Prompts to help us use our Thinking Hats

Here we go with some prompts to explain and assist you when discussing and using the Thinking Hats. When taking on a question or challenge, use whichever of the related prompts listed below and work with your child as you discuss your thinking and ideas together.

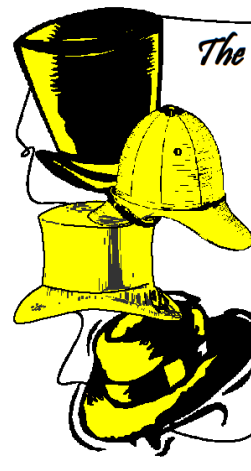


The White Hat

What information/facts do we know?
What information is missing?
What information/facts would we like to have? How are we going to get the information?
What is relevant? What is most important? How valid is this?

- * Examine the facts, figures and information
- * Note all information, formal and informal

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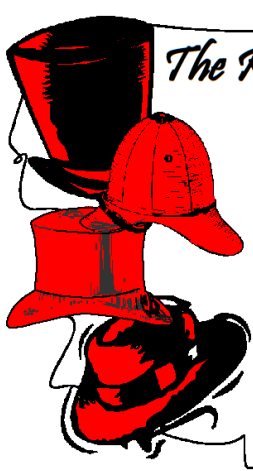


The Yellow Hat

What are the good points?
What are the benefits?
Why will this idea work? Why is this worth doing?
How will it help us? Why can it be done?

- * Optimism and sunshine
- * Logical positive view of things
- * Feasibility
- * Opportunity.

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The Red Hat

How do I feel about this right now?
How cold or warm do I feel about this?
How am I reacting to this?

- * Intuition
- * Feelings
- * Hunches
- * No need to justify feelings.

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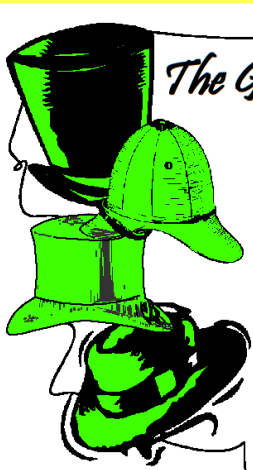


The Black Hat

Is this true? Will it work?
What are the weaknesses?
What is wrong with it?

- * Caution
- * Judgement
- * Assessment.
- * Logic
- * Evidence
- * Consequences
- * Weaknesses
- * If things will work

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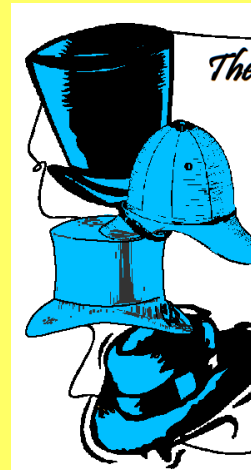


The Green Hat

What are some possible ways to work this out? What are some other ways to solve the problem?

- * Plants springing from seeds, movement, creativity..
- * New, different ideas
- * Suggestions
- * Alternatives and enhancing
- * Ways to solve problems
- * Proposals

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The Blue Hat

What have we done so far?
What do we do next?
What decision have we reached?

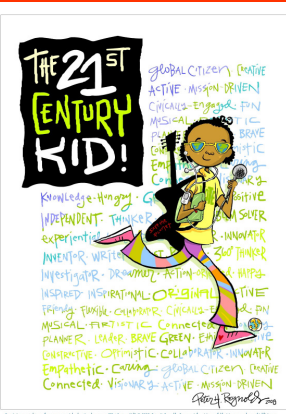
- * Controlled
- * Orchestra conductor
- * Thinking about thinking
- * Organisation
- * Getting focus & purpose
- * Making up a thinking plan
- * Making decisions & conclusions

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Let's discuss what we think, using the six hats



21st Century Skills



Wherever we go in our educational travels these days, we seem to be carrying on one global conversation with variations of the same themes and questions:

- How has the world changed and what does this mean for education?
- What does everyone need to learn now to be successful?
- How should we learn all this?
- How is the 21st century learning different from learning in the 20th century and what does this really look like?

The four question exercise makes us consider the following:

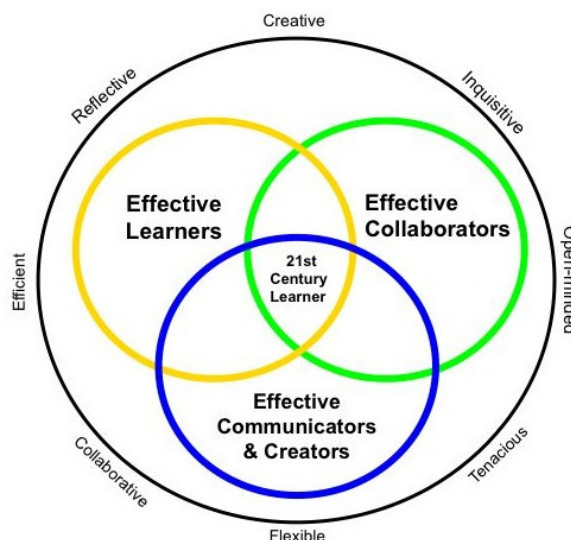
- 1) What will the world be like twenty or so years from now and when your child has left school and is out in the “then real” world?
- 2) What skills will your child will need to be successful in this world you have imagined 20 years from now?
- 3) Now think about your own life and the times when you were really learning, so much and so deeply, that you would call these “peak learning experiences” of your life. What were the conditions that made your high-performance learning experiences so powerful?
- 4) What would learning be like if it were designed around your answers to the first three questions?

As a whole the **four question exercise** is a quick way for us to collectively sketch a blueprint of the future of learning.

Four powerful forces are converging and leading us towards new ways of learning for life in the 21st century: namely **knowledge work; thinking tools; digital lifestyles and learning research.**

These four forces are simultaneously creating the need for new forms of learning, supplying the tools, environments (within and outside school), as well as the guiding principles required to support 21st century learning practices

Each future edition of Links to Learning will look at understanding some sets of 21st century skills, so together we can understand the needs of future education and the associated skills we need to consider and develop.



Thought provoking questions ...

We all need to acquire the skills of learning to ask relevant and challenging questions, when seeking to understand something further.

Here are some simple ideas on the types of questions we could ask and share with our children when encouraging them to answer and explore more than the information or current understandings they already have.

Questions that ask for reasons:
Why did you say that?

Questions that ask for evidence:
How could we prove this?

Questions that ask for definitions:
What does that meant?

Questions that probe assumptions:
How do you know?

Questions that ask for explanations:
What are some possible causes?

Questions that ask for alternatives:
What would be a different view?

Questions that ask for clarification:
Is this what you meant? Explain it to me

Questions that ask for counter examples:
When would that not happen?

Questions that ask for reasons:
Why did you think that?

Questions that ask for a summary of the process: What did we do well? What could we improve?

Thinking challenges for the family

To further develop our thinking strategies when inquiring into different subject areas, we need to practice thinking skills on a regular basis. This can be done in a fun and approachable way in which students want to participate and challenge themselves. We are including some activities in this section, which you can use again and again, as **you all** enjoy “bettering your brain power” while having a good time in the process. Compare your notes with each other after each activity and discuss your answers, as well as the reasons for your answers, and see just how much you learn from each other as well!!

In two minutes name things:

- That will roll
- That you can open
- That have seeds in them
- Tools that we use for working
- That you can wear on your head
- That can tie or bind things together
- That are square



A-Z Warm ups

In two minutes, write down as many answers as you can using the letters of the alphabet

- A- Z of all things yellow
- A-Z of all things for Xmas
- A-Z of Supermarket shopping goods
- A-Z of under (*Things that can be found under something ... Eg: Under the sea*)



Describe at least ten different uses for:

- A postage stamp
- An ice cube
- A cup
- A hair ribbon
- For an M&M chocolate drop
- A grain of sand



What are the similarities between:

- An apple and a paint brush
- A computer and a cup
- A ruler and a lion
- A box of crayons and a car
- A hamburger and a flower
- Mickey Mouse and Harry Potter
- School and holidays



Team Challenges for the family



Been to the movies?

Two movie fanatics meet on the street. They are good friends but have not been in contact for years. They have spent so much of their time watching movies and DVD's that when they start speaking they include movie titles in EVERY sentence they say.

Your challenge is to write down the dialogue that happens between them.
The dialogue must have movie titles in every sentence too—but must also make complete sense.



- Give yourself an agreed time limit to prepare your dialogue (*You can decide to do this either independently or in pairs*)
- Underline / High light all the names of movies / DVD's
- The title do need to make sense in context of the dialogue

You can change the movie idea to titles of Books or similar



Tower of Strength: A team building challenge

You need: 40 pieces of spaghetti, a roll of thick (sticky) tape, one marshmallow
(*The rest of the marshmallows you can eat while you are building the structure 8-)*)

- In pairs or groups you have ten minutes to build the tallest standing structure you can, using only the spaghetti, and thick (sticky) tape. The marshmallow has to be securely positioned on the top of your structure when it is built
- When the time is up—the winner will be the structure that is still standing on its own—and is not supported by hands or other objects .



Kids giving it a go!

Try and see if you can find some answers to these "Thinker Keys" and "Quizy Questions"



Maths challenges



There are eight different flavours of ice cream. You can choose two flavours each time. How many different combinations could you make for your cones

Arrange the numbers 1-9 into three 3 digit numbers ... and when you total these three 3 digit numbers Your final answer needs to add up to 999

"BAR" Key



B = Bigger
A = Add something on
R = Remove something

Using the BAR key criteria above, decide your answers and ideas for changing:

- A computer
- An umbrella
- A fridge
- A tent
- An I-phone



Reverse Key



List as many things that you can, that cannot be cleaned.....

Afterwards discuss why they cannot be cleaned

Alternative Key

Thinking about another way to do something without the usual tools we would use

Work out three ways to clean your teeth, without using a toothbrush.

You can write, draw or develop a diagram to show us



Any comments or ideas you would like to share, let Ms Salter know by sending an email to:

traci.salter@cwbs.edu.hk

Cool inventions



Learning to ride a bicycle Try this for training

What do you think? Would you change this? Could you improve this idea or design? Tell us how and why!

Traci Salter CWBS 2010

The Construction Key

When we use this Thinkers Key, we are using "unusual objects" to build a known object, or perhaps creating something new we need to invent.

You can either physically build this, or you may choose to design it through a drawing or possibly even a computer programme you may have and use.

This time we are going to use: a paper bag, six toothpicks, two bottle tops, one elastic band, a 50cm piece of string. You need some great creative thinking when using these.



We need to build a boat that can carry something small safely across this river.