

ST. DAVID'S HIGH SCHOOL - THINKING SKILLS POLICY

POLISI MEDDWL - YSGOL UWCHRADD DEWI SANT

Developing Thinking.

What do we mean by developing thinking skills?

This can be defined as developing patterns of thinking that help learners acquire deeper understanding and enable them to explore and make sense of their world. It refers to processes of thinking that we in Wales have defined as **plan, develop and reflect**. These processes enable learners to plan their work, to think creatively and critically and to reflect on their learning, making links within and outside school. Developing thinking pedagogy has considerable overlap with the principles of assessment for learning.

Fundamental Principles

There are several fundamental principles, which need to be considered before attempting to shift pedagogy.

- Intelligence is modifiable therefore every learner can improve.
- Deep understanding is more important than superficial learning
- Learners need explicit strategies for **how** to learn
- Challenge and interest can lead to motivation.
- All participation is valued.
- Collaboration (learning with others) will allow learners to take greater educational risks and take their learning forward.
- Metacognition (thinking about thinking) is at the heart of the learning and teaching process.
- Skills and knowledge must be transferred both within the school and in the wider world.

The aim of this policy is:

- To incorporate thinking skills into the whole school approach of the Accelerated learning cycle.

The accelerated learning cycle incorporating thinking skills and assessment for learning



Teachers and learners should explore, and take account of:

- what learners already know (subject knowledge and thinking strategies).
- what learners can do.
- what strategies may be useful to tackle the problem.
- learners' misconceptions.
- They should actively listen, ask questions, summarise and explain their understanding.
- Teachers and learners need to and collaborate and work in groups.

Teachers should:

- Provide opportunities for students to engage in thinking rich activities.
- Ensure that learning is linked to previous learning, other subjects and contexts.
- Ask more higher order, open questions, allowing time for learners to think.
- Provide opportunities to use rich, challenging or application tasks to equip learners with the learning skills and dispositions that will be useful in lifelong learning situations.

All learners should:

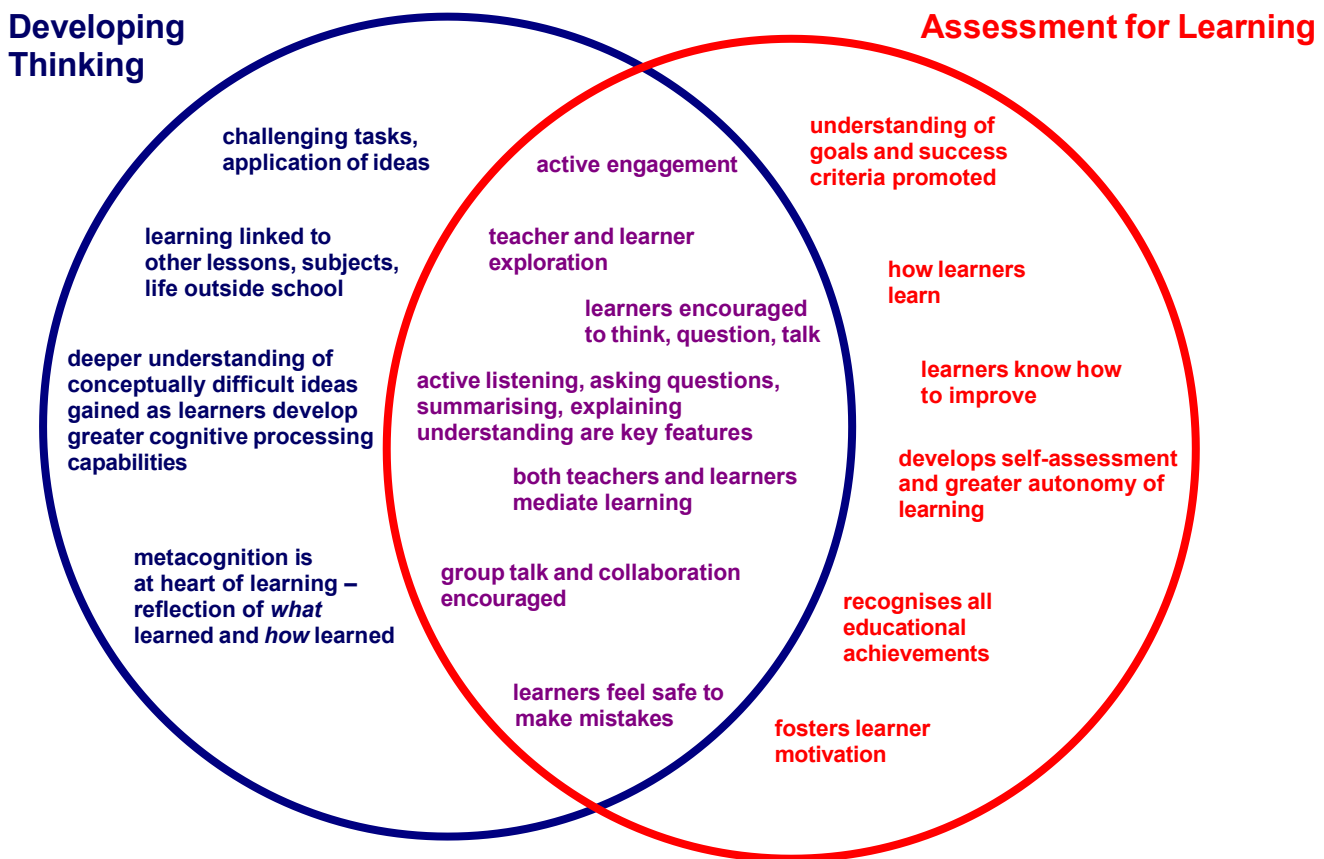
- Be actively engaged from the start of the lesson.
- Be encouraged to think, question and talk.
- Be able to articulate, using appropriate vocabulary, and clarify their learning.
- Create and develop ideas.

- Be allowed focused talk in lessons in order to evaluate their own understanding and add to that of peers.
- Connect teachers, their own and other peoples ideas/thinking.
- Think logically and look for patterns/relationships/connections.
- Consider evidence, information and ideas.
- Explore causes and effects.
- Make inferences.
- Form opinions and make decisions.
- Demonstrate their new understanding – explain, summarise, outline, take notes etc...
- Learners are encouraged to link their learning to other lessons, subjects and/or life outside school.
- A deeper understanding of conceptually difficult concepts or ‘big ideas’ in curriculum subjects as learners develop greater cognitive processing capabilities.
- Know their learning outcomes, review success criteria and set the scene for what comes next.
- Be engaged in metacognition – i.e. thinking about thinking. *How* did they learn, and how might they modify their approach next time?

The environment is sensitive, constructive, and reflective so that learners feel safe to make mistakes.

Characteristics of lessons that develop thinking and assessment for learning

The following Venn diagram summarises the characteristics of lessons developing thinking and assessment for learning in the classroom. It clearly shows that the two are inextricably linked so that development of one should influence the other. This also means that similar strategies may be employed to promote the quality of thinking and learning. However, the specific characteristics of each are also important; these may require different strategies to be employed.



**Reviewed by Governors
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