

Learning at Trellech Primary

Schools have always existed to teach children the skills and knowledge they need to live their lives. However the world is very different now to how it was even 20 years ago. According to research, 80% of the jobs that today's seven year olds will do don't actually exist yet. By the time our school leavers reach the age of 38, they will have had 14 different jobs. If we accept therefore that we cannot possibly give them all the facts and knowledge that they will need to know for their future, it follows that we must shift our emphasis to giving them the skills they'll need to recognise and find out what they need to know. Since September 2008 here at Trellech Primary School we have somewhat shifted our teaching emphasis from developing knowledge and facts to skills. One major element of the new curriculum which came into place in September 2008 is 'developing children's thinking skills' and on this page we have tried to explain the main strategies that your child will, over time, encounter to develop their thinking and organisation of information. Most of these will not be new to the children and you will notice when you are in school that many thinking displays are evident in classrooms and corridors. Staff have undertaken training on these areas and will use these strategies according to the task being undertaken.

Our five main Thinking Skills strategies are:

- Thinking Maps
- Using Questions
- Plan - Do - Reflect Cycle
- Taking Responsibility for Our Learning - 'Learning to Learn'
- Assessment for Learning

Thinking Maps

To provide a structure for recording and extending their own learning which is progressive and accessible to all. Good for visual learners. A set of good planning tools to organise and plan how to approach a topic, argument, discussion etc.

When might we use this strategy in our teaching?

Planning & assessment tool, for differentiating work, inclusion especially in group work.

When might children use this strategy in their learning?

Comparing, revising, researching, recording, planning

- Circle Map -for defining context.
- Bubble Map - for describing with adjectives
- Flow Map - for sequencing and ordering.
- Double Bubble Map - for comparing and contrasting
- Multi-Flow Map - for analyzing causes and effects.
- Brace Map - for identifying part/whole relationships
- Bridge Map - for seeing analogies.
- Tree Map - for classifying/grouping.

Using Questions

To develop higher level thinking, to challenge pupils with more rigorous questions, to improve engagement of pupils. There is a hierarchy of questioning skills; the simplest level is 'Knowledge' (What colour is the dog? Does chocolate melt in the sun?) Answers are definite and simple, often yes or no. The 'highest level' of question is Evaluation. These questions require complex answers and need the child to draw information from a variety of sources and experiences. By moving towards higher level questions, learners are required to think 'more' and use their knowledge and previous experiences and therefore subsequent learning is more powerful and effective. However it doesn't necessarily follow that Reception children use 'Knowledge' questions and Year 6 children answer 'Evaluation' questions. This is about a hierarchy of question types – it is very possible for Reception children to answer simplified 'Evaluation' questions.

Knowledge (Lower order thinking)

What happened after....?

How many....?

Who was it that....?

Comprehension

Can you write in your own words....?

Can you write a brief outline....?

What do you think could have happened next?

Application

Do you know another instance where....?

Could this have happened in...?

Can you group by characteristics such as....?

Analysis

Which events could have happened....?

How was this similar to....?

What was the underlying theme of...?

Synthesis

Can you design a ... to?

Why not compose a song about...?

Can you see a possible solution to...?

Evaluation (Higher order thinking)

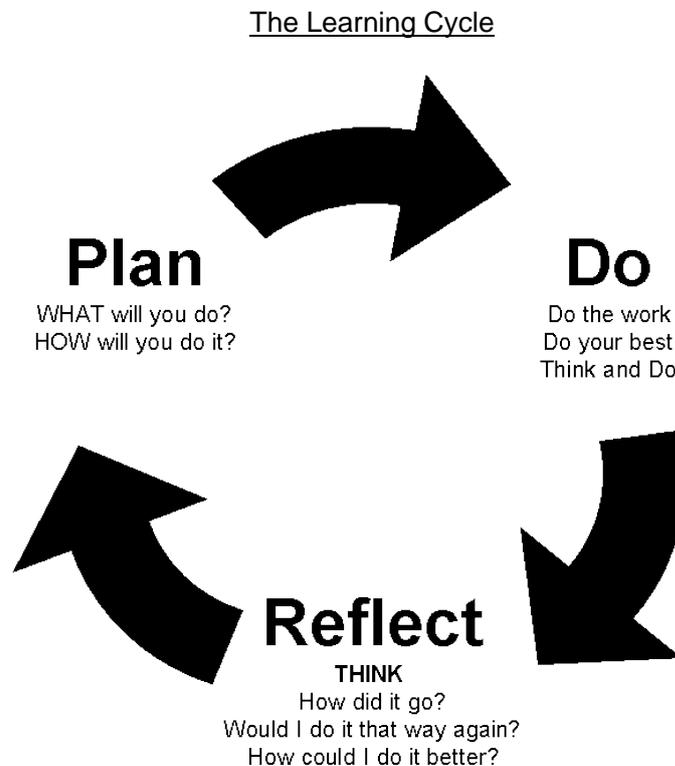
Is there a better solution to...?

Judge the value of...

Can you defend your position about...?

Plan - Do - Reflect Cycle

Children frequently use this simple cycle plan for planning and reviewing or evaluating their work. It's dead simple and is a good way of raising awareness of how we work, how effective this is and how we can always improve. Yes it's a simple flow diagram but actually it's more of a habit of mind and a process of working through an activity.



Taking Responsibility for Our Learning - 'Learning to Learn'

Think about it...How could you learn better? 7 Questions to help:

1. What have you learned today?
2. How can you help yourself to learn better?
3. Did you know before you read this that you can IMPROVE how well you learn?
4. What stops you from learning?
5. What do you do when you get stuck?
6. What are you doing when you learn best?
7. What is the noise level like in your classroom when you learn best?

Assessment for Learning

Through both self and peer assessment we use the following strategies-

Success Criteria
2 Stars and a Wish
Traffic Lights
Pink- I'm impressed