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A MODEL LESSON SEQUENCE

ONE

Do not mention the subject of the lesson, but start with a story or an exercise which illustrates the aspect of thinking that is the subject of the lesson.

TWO

Introduce the TOOL or SUBJECT of the lesson and explain simply what it does. You can use the introduction in the student workcards.

THREE

Carry out an open class example by setting a task and asking for individual responses. Repeat the letters of the tool or the subject as often as you can.

FOUR

Divide the class into groups of 4, 5 or 6. Set a practice item from the student workcards. Allow about three minutes or the time specified.

FIVE

Get feedback from the groups, for example by getting one suggestion from each of the groups (see also page 45).

SIX

Repeat the thinking with another item. Repeat practice items in this manner. Allow time to discuss the process of the lesson.

SEVEN

Use the principles given in the student workcards to have a discussion around the tool or subject of the lesson. If this discussion is weak, plug in a final practice item.

EIGHT

If it is customary to give homework, use one of the project items for this purpose.

For full details on the Standard Lesson Format, the teacher may wish to see *page 52*.

HOW TO RUN A PMI LESSON

PMI: Plus, Minus, Interesting

THE TREATMENT OF IDEAS

The **PMI** is a crystallization of the open-minded attitude into a tool that can be used deliberately. This is a very basic lesson which is introduced right at the beginning so that the **PMI** process itself can be used as a tool in the course of subsequent lessons. Instead of just deciding whether or not you like an idea, this thinking operation has you make an effort to find the good points (**P=Plus**), the bad points (**M=Minus**) and the interesting points (**I=Interesting**) about an idea. The interesting points are those which are neither good nor bad but are worth noticing. The **PMI** is a way of treating ideas, suggestions and proposals. The natural reaction to an idea is to like or dislike it, to approve or disapprove. If you like an idea, it is very unnatural to look for the negative or minus aspects. If you dislike an idea it is very unnatural to look for the positive or plus aspects. It is equally unnatural to pick out the merely interesting aspects of an idea.

Using the **PMI** as a deliberate operation gives students a means of by-passing the natural emotional reaction to an idea. Their objectives change from emotional reactions to carrying out with skill a formal operation.

Once the **PMI** has been practiced as a tool it can be asked for in subsequent lessons: "Do a **PMI** on that idea."

The **PMI** is never intended to prevent decision or commitment but to ensure that this happens after both sides of the matter have been considered and **not** before.

In simple terms the **PMI** operation enlarges the view of a situation; without it, emotional reaction to an idea narrows the way we look at it.

*See inset of the student workcard for an example of a **PMI** on the idea that all seats should be taken out of buses.*

Further example: Windows should be made of transparent plastic instead of glass.

- P:** They would not break as easily.
They would not be as dangerous when broken.
- M:** Plastic would be more expensive than glass.
Plastic would get scratched very easily.
- I:** Perhaps windows could be of all colors if they were plastic.
Perhaps we take it for granted that glass is best since we are used to it.

PMI: THE TREATMENT OF IDEAS

- P=Plus.** The good things about an idea – why you like it
- M=Minus.** The bad things about an idea – why you don't like it
- I=Interest.** What you find interesting about an idea

Instead of just saying that you like an idea, or don't like it, you can use a **PMI**. When you use a **PMI** you give the good points first, then the bad points, and then the points which are neither good nor bad, but are interesting. You can use a **PMI** as a way of treating ideas, suggestions and proposals. You can ask someone else to do a **PMI** on an idea or you may be asked to do one yourself.

EXAMPLE

- Idea:** All the seats should be taken out of buses.
- P:** More people can get into each bus.
It would be easier to get in and out.
Buses would be cheaper to make and to repair.
- M:** Passengers would fall over if the bus stopped suddenly.
Old people and disabled people would not be able to use buses.
It would be difficult to carry shopping bags or babies.
- I:** Interesting idea that might lead to two types of bus, one with and one without seats.
Interesting idea that the same bus would do more work.
Interesting idea that comfort may not be so important in a bus.

PRACTICE

1. By law all cars should be painted bright yellow.
2. People should wear badges showing whether they are in a good mood or bad mood that day.
3. All students should spend 3 months every year earning money.
4. Every adult should spend one week a year in the police force.
5. There should be a special TV channel for young people only.
- ✚ 6. In many countries there is a jury system in which ordinary people assess whether an accused person is guilty or not. Some other countries do not have juries but have three judges who do all the assessment themselves. Do a **PMI** on this three-judge system.
- ✚ 7. Do a **PMI** on the system which allows a lawyer to sue on behalf of a client and then to take a percentage of the damages awarded by the courts. If the lawyer does win the case, then he charges no fee.

PROCESS

DISCUSSION

- When is a **PMI** most useful?
- Does one always look at the good and bad points of an idea?
- Does a **PMI** waste time?
- Is it easy to do a **PMI**?

PRINCIPLES

- A. The **PMI** is important because without it you may reject a valuable idea that seems bad at first sight.
- B. Without a **PMI** you are very unlikely to see the disadvantages of an idea that you like very much.
- C. The **PMI** can show that ideas are not just good or bad but can also be interesting if they lead to other ideas.
- D. Without a **PMI** most judgments are based not on the value of the idea itself but on your emotions at that time.
- E. With a **PMI** you decide whether or not you like the idea after you have explored it instead of before.

PROJECT

1. All cars should be banned from city centers so that people can walk about freely.
2. Every young person should adopt an old person to care for.
- ✚ 3. People should be allowed to work 10 hours a day for 4 days and have the rest of the week free, instead of working 8 hours a day for 5 days.

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