

Contents

Introduction

Using this book in the classroom.....	4
---------------------------------------	---

Productive thinking

Productive thinking grid	6
Fluency	7
Flexibility	13
Elaboration	21
Originality	29

Productive planning

Productive planning grid	38
Evaluation	39
Planning	47
Forecasting	55
Decision making	63

Resources

Other relevant resources	70
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Introduction

Using this book in the classroom

Activities for developing Thinking Skills provides instruction and suggestions for the explicit teaching of thinking skills to all students. It provides a balanced approach to creative and critical thinking, developing both divergent and convergent thinking skills as part of the thinking process.

The book is divided into two halves, Productive thinking and Productive planning, both of which have four sections:

Productive thinking

Fluency
Flexibility
Elaboration
Originality

Productive planning

Evaluation
Planning
Forecasting
Decision making

Each section can be completed in three-to-four thirty-minute sessions over the course of a week. Each section includes:

- **Explanation**

An explanation of the skill with examples.

- **Warm-up exercises**

One of these can be completed at the start of each session. The warm-up lessons should be simple, brief practice sessions used to motivate and relax students. They should be performed:

- daily
- usually 2-3 minutes
- usually oral.

- **Independent lessons**

Three non-curriculum specific activities are provided for students to practise the skill. These three exercises can be scored using the Wellner tally sheets (see below) and the relevant criteria.

- **Curriculum lessons**

This section includes ideas for use in the different subject areas: maths, English, science, humanities, art, music etc.

- **Wellner P/T or P/P tally sheets**

The Productive thinking (P/T) and Productive planning (P/P) tally sheets allow you to score individual students in each skill area. The P/T tally sheet (p. 6) and the P/P tally sheet (p.38) have specific criteria included in each section for scoring each skill.

- **Conclusion**

All of the ideas and activities in this book, and others you develop, can be put onto cards, or sheets of paper and laminated as a very valuable resource. Enjoy *Activities for Developing Thinking Skills!*

Productive thinking

Fluency

Flexibility

Elaboration

Originality



– To exercise the mind...

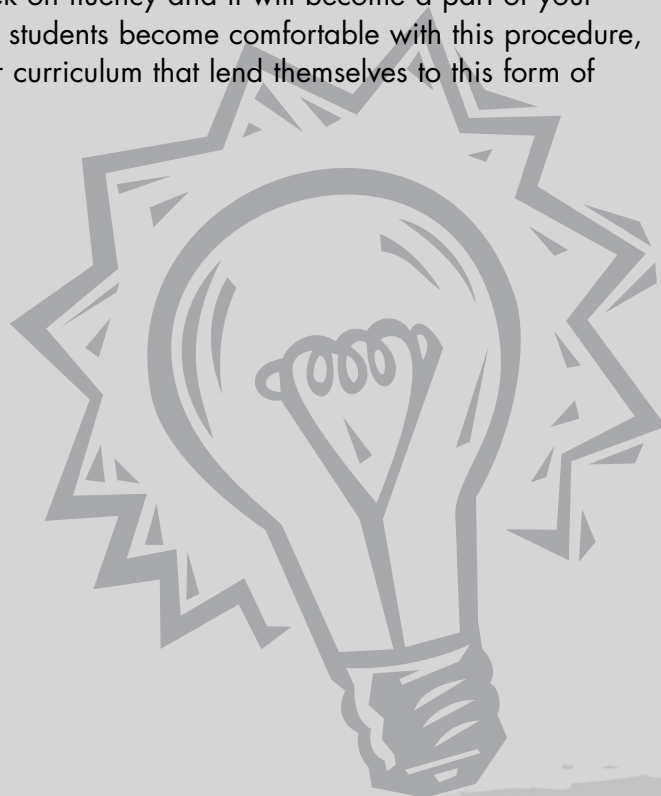
Fluency

Fluent thinkers have the ability to think of many, many ideas, responses, questions and solutions. The students produce a quantity of ideas, products and/or suggestions for doing things.

Examples of fluent thinkers:

- The child who has a flow of answers when a question is asked.
- The child who draws several pictures when only asked to draw one.
- The child who usually has several ideas about something while others struggle for one idea.
- The child who asks many questions.
- The child who uses a large number of words for expression.
- The child who produces more than others in class.
- The fastest worker in class who does more than just one assignment.

Fluency is the beginning of divergent thinking or the retrieval and use of stored knowledge. Spend about a week on fluency and it will become a part of your teaching style. As you and your students become comfortable with this procedure, you will find more areas in your curriculum that lend themselves to this form of productive thinking.





Fluency

Warm-up lessons

The following exercises should be used as a warm-up during the week to encourage fluency.

Exercises:

Think of all the things above your head.

List red things.

List hollow things.



Fluency

Independent lessons

Encourage students to work independently or in small groups and make up their own fluency lists. Teachers may select one or more activities from the list or allow students to choose. To encourage fluency, create a productive thinking board display to use with Activity 2, and each day add a new picture or phrase to it.

Exercise:

Activity 1

- Name things with which to build a house.
- List all the things in your room which come from a tree.
- Select a common object in the room and describe its size in as many ways as possible.
- List all the ways nature changes during different seasons.
- List as many words as you can containing the vowel pattern of 'oi', 'ea' etc.
- List things which come in pairs.
- Harold has a very messy room. List all the things that you might find in his room.

Activity 2

Productive thinking board display:

- Name creatures that could live in a barn. (picture of a barn)
- List all things that could be inside this box. (use a box)
- List things that are crunchable. (pieces of cereal)

Activity 3

- Write down as many multiplication equations you can think of that will give you a product ending in zero.
- List as many loud, heavy, giant words as you can.
- List as many ways as you can of how a spoon and a car are alike.
- List as many words as you can that mean the same as 'bright'.
- Illustrate words beginning with each consonant: B, F, K.
- Write as many words as you can that begin with *star*.



Fluency

Curriculum lessons

The curriculum lessons in fluency can be used throughout the school year. Exercises in fluency should be used in all discipline areas as a means of better understanding the basic curriculum. Store fluency exercises in a file or folder according to subject area.

Exercises:

English

List compound words.

English

List as many adjectives as you can to describe your best friend.

Maths

Write problems which have the answer *15*.

Maths

List as many different groups of coins that add up to a dollar.

Science

What things need water?

Science

List all the things that taste sweet.