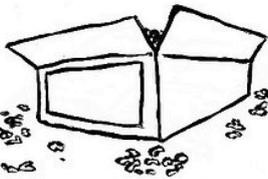


Age of Reptiles



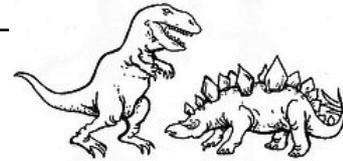
How SMALL was the littlest dinosaur? Put your question in the box.



Watch Jurassic Park. Jot down info about dinosaurs. Circle the info you think is false.

Look at the models – what do you think they ate? How fast could they go? Your questions?

What do you already know about the giant reptiles of the past? Add your info to the class web on the wall.



Federation

Look through these great books to get a taste of our next unit.



Who might not have been happy about the colonies seeking independence? List your candidates below:

Browse:

<http://cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/federation>

1. Look for a topic that you would like to become the class expert on.
2. Jot down any questions that come to mind.

2...

Show, Don't Tell - Thinking Processes

The well-known Bloom's Taxonomy provides a good way to demystify the thinking process and help students get a grip on what full learning involves.

Benjamin Bloom was an educational psychologist and professor at the University of Chicago during the mid and late 20th century. One of his interests was the cognitive domain, how people take in and process new information. He collaborated with other members of the American Psychological Association to explore the processes of learning and out of that work came a document often referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy, "a hierarchy of learning" (Chronicle of the University of Chicago). For the past half-century teachers have used the taxonomy as a framework for ensuring that higher-level thinking skills are embedded in their units. Recently, other scholars have revised Bloom's Taxonomy. This revision can be viewed at http://odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm. The following strategies are based on the traditional taxonomy.

Metacognitive approaches to instruction have been shown to increase the degree to which students will transfer to new situations without the need for explicit prompting.

—National Research Council, 2000

Designing higher level thinking tasks for young adolescents who still think in concrete terms seems like a conundrum. This challenge is not insurmountable, however, if teachers build a bridge of prior knowledge for students between the concrete application of a thinking skill and its abstract definition. Combining explicit instruction that employs hands-on experiences with metacognitive strategies will help make transparent the thinking processes of the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Don't omit the thinking out loud piece of the instruction. Research on how people learn is very clear about the benefits of sharing the thinking processes involved in a task.

Naturally these demonstrations of thinking processes should not be taught in isolation. Each would be a lead-in to a specific curriculum task. By taking time to teach or reinforce a specific type of thinking, we demystify a thinking process and help our students develop their own mental maps of the components of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Think about how a team could work together to implement a cross-curricular approach to teaching thinking skills! Share the responsibility for direct teaching and reinforcement of thinking processes by mapping out a plan at the beginning of the year. Look at your units to see which type of thinking process goes best with which unit.

A digital version of this strategy could be created on a class wiki, with each poster a separate page of the wiki. After the pages are shared, students could add information to each other's digital charts. The originators of each page would be responsible for making sure that the information is accurate. In other words, the students would be creating their own little wiki about African geography. A chart or wiki page might look like the one below.

Arid is a word that describes Africa's desert regions because there is so little water. The Sahara is the biggest desert in Africa.

Blue Nile is a river in Ethiopia and rises out of Lake Tana.

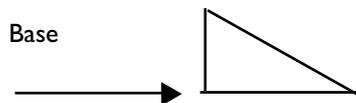
Savannas are wide-open spaces with lots of grassland. The Serengeti is a famous savanna.

The class then could look online for a school in a country in Africa to contact and ask to verify or add additional information to the wiki. Perhaps the students from the African school could also add pictures. Together, the two groups of students would be creating a web resource for other students around the world studying the continent of Africa.

Students can also use images to create their ABC posters. In a maths class studying geometry, one might look something like these:

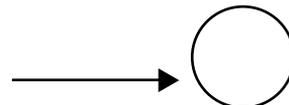
Angles in a polygon must add up to 360° .

Base is the name of the bottom side of a triangle.

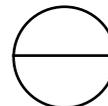


Spheres are not polygons.

Circumference



Diameter



Tetrahedron – tetra means 4

- Pre-arrange desks in table groups.
- Encourage students to write large enough that the posters are readable from the other end of the classroom. Make a model to share with students.
- Have a way to designate the person from each group who will share (oldest, tallest, longest hair, etc.).

- Share posters; look for similar questions. Note and number them.
 - Assign each one of the small groups to answer a common question and ask them to choose one or two other questions they find interesting.
 - Each group then goes back and rereads the text with the intention of responding to the questions.
 - Each group shares its responses and should be prepared to point to specific parts of the text where the answer was found, whether it is a literal or an inferential response.
- **What should I do?** – This strategy, adapted from a Jeff Wilhelm strategy, explores two different ways to approach a situation or issue and requires that students think deeply about a topic. With literature, you apply the strategy before the students finish the text and know its outcome. When using informational text, use this strategy to summarise, look at alternative outcomes or review for a test.
- Have students talk with partners or a small group about the pros and cons of taking different actions. The topic might be a dilemma that a famous person or scientist faced. (Don't skip this step!!) (5–7 min.)
 - *Ned Kelly*: Become a bushranger?
 - *John Howard*: Introduce GST?
 - *Scientist or politician*: Support stem cell research?
 - *Cell*: Mutate or not?
 - *Bridge builder*: Suspension bridge vs. Arch?
 - *Juliet*: Continue seeing Romeo?
 - Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the character or historical person. His or her job will be to listen to conflicting advice and then make a decision.
 - Ask for three or four volunteers to be the “right shoulder advocate” – they are going to try to persuade the character to take a specific action.
 - Ask three or four volunteers to be the “left shoulder advocate” – to focus on all of the reasons to take a different action.
 - Place advocates on either the right or left side of the character.
 - First have a right shoulder advocate give a 30-second pitch for acting in the “right” way.
 - Then a “left shoulder advocate” gets to make his or her pitch for 30 seconds.
 - Alternate back and forth until all of the advocates have had their 30 seconds.
 - Ask the character which side was the most persuasive and why.

Continue reading to find out what the character or person does or what the outcome is. Or, have a discussion focused on if _____ had made a different decision, what might have been the outcomes?

Be sure to emphasise thoughtfulness, accuracy and evidence as the class debriefs from this activity so that the next time the advocates will be even more persuasive.

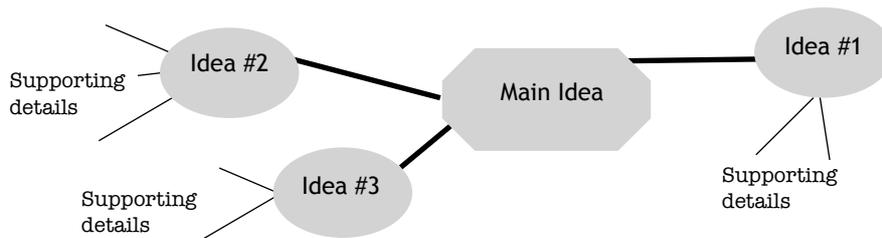
To help students feel comfortable with this strategy, do some practice runs with students using situations with which they are familiar.

- Should Jack and the Beanstalk's mum punish him for stealing the golden egg?
- Should Judge Judy send Goldilocks to reform school for breaking and entering?

- ❑ **Skits** – Divide the class into groups and ask each group to create a skit that incorporates major ideas pertinent to the writing assignment. Be specific in the criteria. Following are several prompts:
 - *Your group must show three dangers of early alcohol use.*
 - *Your group must demonstrate life in the Feudal System.*
 - *Your group must demonstrate the characteristics of reflective summary.*

- ❑ **Tinker Toys** – Kinesthetic learners process ideas more easily if they can manipulate objects while they are thinking. Demonstrate building a Tinker Toy construction to help think through the structure of a writing assignment. First model and then support students through the process. The steps are:

- Hold one of the large pieces with multiple holes around the edge.
- Discuss how this piece represents the main idea of your writing. Talk a little bit about the main idea.
- Then, begin to name some major ideas related to your main idea or thesis. As you decide on a major idea, insert one of the sticks in a hole on the main piece and then place a smaller circular piece at the end of the stick. It represents the major Idea #1. Continue to add pieces to represent the major ideas in your writing.
- Next, develop your main ideas with supporting details by grabbing some of the shorter sticks and smallest circular or square pieces. Add them to each major idea piece as you talk about them.



It is easy to identify which ideas need more detail because that part of the structure will be barren. After modelling, have students work together to build a model of their writing piece. They can either record their conversation as they build or one (or a support person) can act as the scribe.

- ❑ **Card sort** – Have students in small groups, pairs or individually, brainstorm all the possible ideas for their written piece. Have them lay out the cards in front of them and sort them into categories.

