Demystifying Thinking:
Helping All Students Learn How to Learn

The Thoughtful Classroom
2 June, 2012
Melbourne Graduate School of Education
Why does classroom and school culture matter to the learning of every child?

What does it mean to have a “thoughtful classroom” that supports the thinking & learning of all students?

How do we demystify thinking and help all students to learn how to learn?
Why Culture Matters

Children grow into the intellectual life around them
ENCULTURATION

CHILDREN GROW INTO THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE AROUND THEM
Is a process of gradually internalizing the messages & values that we repeatedly experience through our interaction with the social environment.

This internalization takes time as we identify the messages and values that are consistent and recurring in our environment.
What is the story of learning you were “told” when you were in school? What did you learn about learning? How it happens? Its purpose and value?
A Story of Work

The goal of school is the completion of work done for someone else.

The larger purpose behind activities isn’t always clear. Thus, assignments become ends in themselves.

Grades are the pay off/outcome for work.

Doing school work is seen as students’ job.

Good students do the work they are assigned without question.
School isn’t about me, my life, my culture.

School isn’t about learning, it’s about having the answers.

Some people are just smart and know how to do it, others (like me) can never get it.

Rewards go to those who can guess what the teacher wants.

You study by memorizing.

Smart means being fast with the answer.
A New Story

What is the story of learning we truly want to tell and make a reality for our students?
A New Story

What messages about learning are the students in this classroom receiving?
Learning is a consequence of thinking.

Learning and thinking are as much a collective enterprise as they are an individual endeavor.

Learning involves uncovering complexity and delving deeply.

Learning is often provisional and frequently changes with time.

Learning is an active process and involves getting personally involved.

Questions not only drive learning but also are outcomes of learning.
Beginnings of a New Story

cultures of thinking
Cultures of thinking are places in which a group’s collective, as well as individual, thinking is valued, visible, and actively promoted as part of the regular, day-to-day experience of all group members.
cultures of thinking

ARE PLACES IN WHICH A GROUP’S COLLECTIVE, AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL, THINKING IS VALUED, VISIBLE, AND ACTIVELY PROMOTED AS PART OF THE REGULAR, DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE OF ALL GROUP MEMBERS.
What Kinds of Thinking Do We Value?

Wondering
What am I curious about here?

Uncovering Complexity
What lies beneath the surface of this?

Consider different Viewpoints
What’s another angle on this?

Make connections
How does this fit?

Describe what’s there
What do you see and notice?

Build Explanations
What’s really going on here?

Reason with evidence
Why do you think so?

Capture the heart and form conclusions
What’s at the core or center of this?
Simple Tools, used in one’s learning to support specific thinking moves.

Structures and scaffolds through which we explore, discuss, document, and direct our thinking and learning.

Patterns of behavior that we adopt to help us use our minds well in new situations.
Jordyn: 2nd grade