

## Thinking it through

*Linking language skills, thinking skills and drama*

# Thinking it through

Linking language skills, thinking skills and drama

- Creative approaches
- Lesson plans
- NC links



**Thinking it through**

Also available:

*Teaching Thinking Skills Across the Early Years*

Belle Wallace

1 85346 842 8

*Using History to Develop Thinking Skills at Key Stage 2*

Belle Wallace and Peter Riches

1 85346 928 9

*Thinking Skills and Problem-Solving – An Inclusive Approach*

Belle Wallace, June Maker, Diana Cave, Simon Chandler

1 84312 107 7

*Using Science to Develop Thinking Skills at Key Stage 1*

Max de Boo

1 84312 150 6

*Thinking in Literacy at KS 1*

Paula Iley

1 84312 282 0

*Thinking in Literacy at KS 2*

Paula Iley

1 84312 283 9

# Thinking it through

Linking language skills, thinking skills and drama

Gill Thompson and Huw Evans

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2005 by David Fulton Publishers.

Published 2017 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

First issued in hardback 2017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

David Fulton Publishers is a division of Granada Learning Limited, part of ITV plc.

Note: The right of the authors to be identified as the authors of their work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Copyright © Gill Thompson and Huw Evans 2005

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

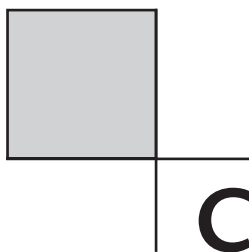
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 13: 978-1-138-41982-7 (hbk)

ISBN 13: 978-1-84312-190-9 (pbk)

The materials in this publication may be photocopied only for use within the purchasing organisation. Otherwise, all rights reserved. No part of this may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Typeset by FiSH Books

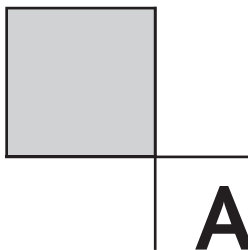


# Contents

About the authors	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	viii
1 Language and thinking	1
2 Thinking skills	6
3 Drama and thinking	14
4 Assessment and planning	17
5 Literacy lesson plans	20
6 Numeracy lesson plans	39
7 Starters and plenaries	54
Conclusions	61
References and further reading	62
Resources	63

## **Accompanying CD**

All lesson plans and resources are copied on to the accompanying CD for readers to amend if necessary and print out.

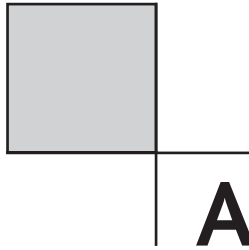


## About the authors

Gill Thompson is currently the head teacher of a small rural primary school in Herefordshire. She has been involved in delivering courses for teachers and teaching assistants to support children with learning difficulties and communication disorders and has contributed to the LEA training courses for teachers, SENCOs and teaching assistants. She is also a qualified Speech and Language Therapist and has worked in France, the USA and South Africa as well as in England.

Gill is the author of *Supporting Children with Communication Disorders – A handbook for teachers and teaching assistants* (David Fulton Publishers).

Huw Evans is the head teacher of a Hereford primary school and is involved in initial teacher training and headship mentoring within the county. He has a special interest in raising children's self-esteem, encouraging the use of thinking skills throughout the curriculum and developing environmental awareness within the school setting. In 2002 he had a year's secondment as a KS2/3 Maths Consultant for the LEA. Huw visited Latvia in spring 2004 as a member of a team investigating teaching and learning styles and looking at provision for gifted and talented pupils.



# Acknowledgements

This book has been a collaborative venture, made possible by the children we teach and the staff and students we work with. We are grateful to the writers of books, journals and articles that have informed our writing and to the leaders of courses and conferences who have reinforced the ideas presented in our writing.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of our families.





# Introduction

Teaching children to ‘think’ has now become an acceptable part of educational practice and the benefits of using activities to develop thinking skills are well researched. It is not, however, always possible to fit this into an already congested timetable and, along with drama and other creative subjects, it is often an occasional ‘add on’ rather than an integral part of teaching.

The three main methods that are used for developing thinking skills are

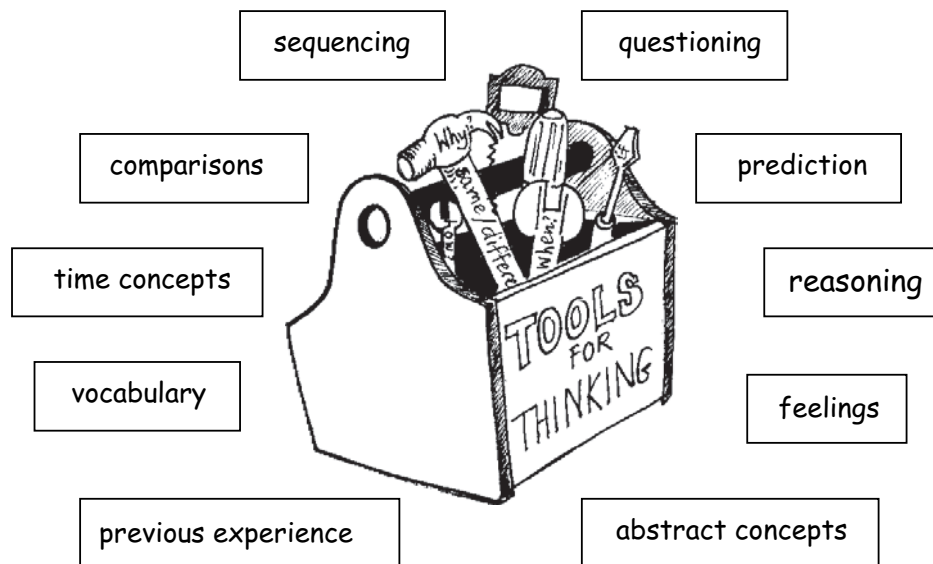
- through the delivery of a structured programme such as the ‘Somerset Thinking Skills Course’ which is timetabled separately from other subjects
- by using subject-specific thinking activities in science, mathematics or geography
- by a cross-curricular approach to teaching which promotes and encourages the development of thinking opportunities.

Language is the vehicle that we all use to reason things out and to process the information that constantly bombards our senses. We hold ‘internal’ conversations with ourselves as we mentally examine auditory, visual and kinaesthetic stimuli and make informed judgements based on our previous knowledge and experience. Both language and thinking are instrumental in sorting and classifying received data, sequencing, comparing and relating that data to previous knowledge and experience.

Young children are involved in the constantly evolving process of learning, developing the closely linked systems of language and thinking to help them make sense of their environment. Children who do not have well developed language skills find it difficult to fully understand received information and do not have the ability to question what they hear or to extend their thinking.

If we think of language as a box of ‘tools’ which enables us, not only to communicate with one another, but also to unravel the complexities of day-to-day problems, then it is clear that the better the ‘toolbox’ is equipped, the easier it is to sort out the problems. Similarly, the very process of looking at a problem from different aspects and being helped to think a problem through can introduce us to a wider language base. Children do not necessarily acquire these reasoning and thinking skills automatically and strategies for thinking need to be taught as part of the whole curriculum through specially designed activities, use of careful questioning, discussion and reflective dialogue. This necessitates an approach to teaching that provides children with the skills and opportunities to reflect and draw conclusions as they evaluate information, explore possible outcomes and make reasoned judgements.

Children often need to be encouraged to become better thinkers, to look beyond the



## The Thinking Toolbox

literal and to make reasoned judgements. They do not, however, necessarily have the tools to enable them to process information, to reflect on the different aspects of a situation or to relate their own experience to problem solving. As teachers, we can help to provide the 'tools' for the 'toolbox' by promoting the development of receptive and expressive language skills, extending children's thinking, encouraging them to examine and investigate, and using the type of questioning approach that stimulates creative thinking.

The authors have worked together to provide a collection of practical ideas which incorporate thinking activities and drama into lessons across the curriculum. The activities are the result of first-hand experience and have been used successfully with children of different ages and abilities.

The following chapters include background information on the value of this approach, resources, examples of lessons and a framework for further lesson planning that any teacher can use or adapt without having to do a great deal of in-depth reading or preparation. The language skills that are targeted can be easily identified and could be part of the individual target-setting process or individual IEP objectives for pupils with specific language difficulties.

With the current emphasis on inclusion, teachers need to address an even wider range of ability within their classrooms and to plan accordingly. The lessons provided in this book are presented in a format which is easily accessible, can be quickly adapted for individual classes, shows National Curriculum links and also provides suggestions for differentiation and extension. Many of the suggestions could be used by teaching assistants when supporting individual pupils or groups of pupils, with the emphasis on questioning skills, language use and challenging children's thinking and learning.

## **Supplementary Resources Disclaimer**

Additional resources were previously made available for this title on CD. However, as CD has become a less accessible format, all resources have been moved to a more convenient online download option.

You can find these resources available here: [www.routledge.com/9781138419827](http://www.routledge.com/9781138419827)

Please note: Where this title mentions the associated disc, please use the downloadable resources instead.

# 1

## Language and thinking

Language is the ability to understand and use a structured system of communication. It is a component of the whole process of learning and is essential for accessing every aspect of the school curriculum. If a child has a difficulty in understanding or using language, it is likely to impact on everything that they do, in every facet of their lives.

Language skills are fundamental to literacy development – they are the foundation that underpins understanding, speaking and listening, communication of ideas, reading and writing. Children can think more effectively as they develop the language skills to structure their thought processes but, conversely, the development of thinking strategies helps with the acquisition of language skills, allowing the teacher to model language structures that the child can put to a purposeful use. By encouraging a child to be actively engaged in a learning situation you are helping them to plan and guide their own learning.

A study in America by Goodlad and Sizer (1984) showed that education has traditionally relied on a high percentage of ‘teacher talk’ as opposed to active involvement by pupils. This does not encourage the development of language and thinking but promotes a dependence on accepting information at face value without questioning it.

Where teacher talk is the main medium of transmission the child is effectively excluded from learning, to the frustration of both child and teacher.

(Nash *et al.* 2002)

In the classroom children can be helped to observe, compare, contrast, predict, sequence and use evidence to support their points of view. They need to learn to differentiate between fact and opinion and to internalise their thought processes through language, examining relationships and drawing conclusions about observed behaviour. By valuing children’s opinions and allowing them to discover things for themselves through questioning and experimentation we enable them to become more confident and more prepared to listen to and assimilate what others have to say.

The better we are at interpreting the data and challenging the assumptions behind them, the greater our chances of handling the riddles, the conundrums and the paradoxes that are so prevalent. Questions make it possible.

(Goodlad and Sizer 1984)

Early language development is linked with the development of cognitive, social and communication skills. Central to the development of language are the child’s abilities to