

Creating a Culture of Thinking

Project Plan

English II Students

McKinley Technology High School
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Facilitators

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Essential Question

How might we use specific strategies to evaluate texts?
(Based on DCPS ELA power standards and big ideas for evaluating and writing persuasive texts)

Throughline

THINK. LEARN. CREATE.

Understanding Goals

1. How will 150 English II students co-create a culture of thinking?
2. How will these English II students make their thinking more visible in a variety of student works?
3. How will these students evaluate a variety of texts with specific strategies for thinking well?

Understanding Performances

1. Use the four forces of enculturation and the six dimensions of the Tishman, Perkins, and Jay framework beyond the project. (The Harvard Model) to invent a culture of thinking. Tishman, S., Perkins, D. & Jay, E. (1995). *The thinking classroom: Creating a culture of thinking*. New York: Allyn Bacon.
2. Create works that make thinking visible.
3. Evaluate texts with one or more specific models (e.g. the Luke and Freebody model for critical reading or the Perkins model for metacognition, namely, knowledge as design).

Ongoing Assessments

1. Step by step, every two weeks in seven, interactive workshops, facilitators observe oral and written responses from each student. Some of the responses draw from the Luke and Freebody model for critical reading and the Perkins model for critical thinking, “knowledge as design”. Some draw from higher order questions about the powerful metaphor for each workshop. Most importantly, student works (oral and written) provide ongoing assessments of thinking.
2. At the mid point of the workshops, students write a knowledge as design analysis of a poem. At the end of the six dimensions workshops, students write a response to an engaging scenario that requires reflecting on the whole “Culture of Thinking” project and arguing about a futuristic content theme. The resulting three-page, persuasive paper--scored with a rubric for persuasive papers--provides another summative assessment. Both summative assessments represent higher order knowledge and transfer of thinking—the final two of the six dimensions of a culture of thinking.
3. Once the class completes the culture of thinking project, they have the capacity to construct a thinking classroom. They are able to practice using the language of thinking to empower writing, reading, speaking, listening, viewing, and, best of all, reasoning. They are able to practice the thinking dispositions that support sound thinking: ability to organize one’s thinking, reason clearly and carefully, think broadly and adventurously, be curious and questioning, give thinking takes time. They are able to use a few simple, yet powerful, methods for mental management such as the Luke and Freebody model for critical literacy or the David Perkins method for critical thinking, namely, knowledge as design; they are able to learn new strategies for problem solving and decision making. They can nurture strategic spirits, their own and those of their fellows. They are able to create works representing higher order knowledge: the knowledge and craft of solving problems in a discipline, dealing with evidence and explanation in a discipline, and the capacity to discover and invent in the discipline. Finally, they practice thinking transfer, putting their knowledge to work in other disciplines as well as their lives beyond school. At McKinley, writing a research paper about a career in 2025 provides a context for becoming a standards-driven thinking classroom and practicing the six dimensions and four forces of enculturation (model, explain, interact, and feedback).