Visible Thinking in action at Moranbah East State School
What is Visible Thinking?

Developing thinking dispositions whether it is a disposition to strive for understanding, to figure out the complexities of fairness, to seek truth, or hunt for creative solutions occurs within a cultural context. It is within cultural contexts that we develop our patterns of behaviour and thinking that become our habits. Therefore, Visible Thinking uses an enculturative approach to develop students’ thinking, immersing students in a rich culture of thinking in schools and classrooms.

Within a culture of thinking, students experience school as a place where thinking is valued and given time, rich opportunities for thinking abound in their day-to-day classroom experience, models of thinking are present in the form of seeing teachers and peers as fellow thinkers, and the environment is full with the documentation of thinking. Such environments not only provide for the practice of students’ thinking skills but also help them to foster an inclination toward thinking and to develop a greater awareness of thinking occasions.
A Thoughtful Classroom

The idea of visible thinking helps to make concrete what a thoughtful classroom might look like. At any moment, we can ask, "Is thinking visible here? Are students explaining things to one another? Are students offering creative ideas? Are they, and I as their teacher, using the language of thinking?"
Goals of Visible Thinking

Visible Thinking is a broad and flexible framework for enriching classroom learning in the content areas and fostering students' intellectual development at the same time.

Some of its key goals include:

• Deeper understanding of content
• Greater motivation for learning
• Development of learners' thinking and learning abilities.
• Development of learners' attitudes toward thinking and learning and their alertness to opportunities for thinking and learning (the "dispositional" side of thinking).
• A shift in classroom culture toward a community of enthusiastically engaged thinkers and learners.
Flexible Approach

Visible Thinking is a flexible and systematic approach to integrating the development of students' thinking with content learning across subject matters.

Visible Thinking has a double goal, to cultivate students' thinking skills and dispositions, and to deepen content learning. By thinking dispositions, we mean curiosity, concern for truth and understanding, a creative mindset, not just being skilled but also alert to thinking and learning opportunities and eager to take them.
The Visible Thinking project is organised around a set of thinking ideals that capture naturally occurring goals, strivings, or interests that often propel our thinking.

Our four chosen thinking ideals—understanding, truth, fairness, and creativity—cover much of the breadth of what constitutes good thinking, though of course it would be possible to come up with additional ideals. Due to their breadth, the investigation of each ideal provides a frame for the examination, investigation, and integration of different types of thinking.

The ideals are not meant to be curricular topics on their own but to provide a lens through which the topics of the curriculum can be investigated and examined, often in new ways.

The thinking ideals are generative in nature in that they are easily accessible to students, provide many opportunities for making connections, and often propel conversations and thinking in new and interesting directions.
Thinking Routines

The routines are a central element of the practical, functional and accessible nature of Visible Thinking. Thinking routines are easy to use mini-strategies that are repeatedly used in the classroom. They are a small set of questions or a short sequence of steps that can be used across various year levels and content. Each routine targets a different type of thinking and by bringing their own content, teachers integrate the routines into their classrooms.

What makes these routines work to promote the development of a students thinking and the classroom culture are that each routine:

• Is goal oriented in that it targets specific types of thinking
• Gets used over and over again in the classroom
• Consists of only a few steps
• Is easy to learn and teach
• Is easy to support when students are engaged in the routine
• Can be used across a variety of context
• Can be used by the group or by the individual
Core Routines

- Think Puzzle Explore - A routine that sets the stage for deeper inquiry.
- Think, Pair, Share - A routine for active reasoning and explanation.
- Circle of Viewpoints - A routine for exploring diverse perspectives.
- I used to Think... Now I think... - A routine for reflecting on how and why our thinking has changed.
- See, Think and Wonder - A routine for exploring works of art and other interesting things.
- Compass Points - A routine for examining propositions.
- Here Now There Then - A routine for considering present attitudes and judgments.
- Making it fair: Now Then Later - A routine for finding actions.
- Reporter's Notebook - A routine for separating fact and feeling.
- Tug of War - A routine for exploring the complexity of dilemmas.
- Claim, Support and Question - A routine for clarifying truth claims.
- Hot Spots - A routine noticing truth occasions.
- Stop Look Listen - A routine for clarifying claims and seeking sources
- Tug for Truth - A routine for exploring tensions of truth.
- Red Light, Yellow Light - A routine focusing students on signs of puzzles of truth.
- Creative Hunt - A routine for looking at parts, purposes and audiences.
- Creative Questions - A routine for generating and transforming questions.
- Does it fit? - A routine for thinking creatively about options.
- Options Diamond - Exploring the tensions of decision making routine.
- Options Explosion - A routine for creative decision making.
- Step Inside: Perceive, Know, Care about - A routine for getting inside perspectives.
Understanding Ideal

The Understanding Ideal helps students delve into the complexities involved in directing one's own learning for understanding.

It aims to:

• Increase students' appreciation for what is involved in developing understanding – as opposed to merely working to remember knowledge and skills.

• Develop students' awareness of occasions when it is important to invest time and energy in working to understand something.

• Provide students with strategies that they can use to develop their own understanding.

• Engage students in reflection and communication that fosters the thinking skills involved in developing understanding.
The Fairness Ideal helps students develop an understanding and appreciation of the complexities involved in figuring out issues of fairness.

It aims to:

• Increase students' awareness of the daily moral issues that they face.

• Create a habit of being thoughtful about many of these issues.

• Teach students how to navigate through situations of confusion, doubt and conflict.

• Engage students in reflection and communication that fosters different thinking skills involved in the solution of moral and ethical issues.

• Develop students' sensitivity to issues of fairness so that they recognise them even in situations that don't feel highly charged.
The Truth Ideal helps students develop understanding and appreciation of the complexities involved in figuring out issues of truth. Issues of truth come up constantly day to day, in personal life, politician's statements, scientific controversies, news reports, and many more. They also come up constantly in the subject areas: How can we prove this mathematical idea? How do we know this "fact" from history? How sure can we be of this scientific theory or historical or literary interpretation? Seeking truth is one of the fundamental threads in human thought and human affairs.

It aims to:

• Increase students' awareness of the many issues of truth and evidence that come up both in academic studies and in everyday life.

• Create a commitment to a habit of being thoughtful about such issues.

• Teach students how to navigate through situations of confusion, doubt and conflict regarding truth.

• Engage students in reflection and communication that fosters different thinking skills helpful for sorting out matters of truth and evidence.

• Develop students' sensitivity to issues of truth so that they recognize them even in situations that don't feel highly charged.
Creativity Ideal

The Creativity Ideal helps students develop their capacity to think creatively and to see the creativity embedded in things and ideas around them. Challenges of creativity are everywhere in daily life, wherever it is important to think of new ways of doing things, to look at things through new eyes, to go beyond conventional ways of thinking, to stretch beyond the obvious. Challenges of creativity also arise in all areas of the curriculum, from thinking creatively about how to solve problems in numeracy to looking for innovative ways to test a hypothesis in science, from finding an innovative topic for an essay to exploring alternative perspectives in history, from appreciating the creativity in historical figures' choices and actions to seeing the hidden inventiveness in the design of everyday objects.

It aims to:

• Increase students' awareness of the opportunities to think creatively and to see the creativity around them.

• Help students recognise taken for granted situations and make them better by reframing them as problems or puzzles that invite fixing.

• Teach students to notice how things and ideas are put together and to think creatively about how they could be put together differently.

• Help students to be sensitive to opportunities to think outside of the box, to stretch beyond the obvious, to look at situations in new ways.

• Encourage students to think of themselves as creative agents who can choose to transform the world around them.
Visible Thinking in action in Year 2

In our Year 2 group, we investigated Animals and The Human Body. As a group, we shared our prior knowledge, brainstormed ideas, considered other sources of information by researching the internet and in books and note taking. We established through negotiation, investigative questions for topics.

In maths investigations, we developed strategies that can be used to develop our own understanding to work out word problems.
Visible Thinking in Year 3

In our Year 3 group, we investigated The Drought. As a group, we shared our prior knowledge of what and who is affected by droughts. We considered other sources of information including, news reports, various information websites and written materials. We completed a note taking task with a news report and then had to use this information to inform others about the topic. We created information posters after researching and gaining further knowledge about the topic and presented it to our peers. To demonstrate an understanding of our topic, we created acoustic poems.
Visible Thinking in Year 4

In our Year 4 group, we investigated Reptiles. We did this using the core routines of Think Pair Share, I used to Think, See Think and Wonder and Think Puzzle Explore. Through our investigations we established guidelines for what classifies a reptile and researched a variety of chosen reptiles to produce an informative poster and board games. For our board games we created questions that could be answered by using the information provided on the board game. By creating the questions, we demonstrated a deeper understanding of reptiles.
Visible Thinking in Year 5

In our Year 5 group, we investigated Natural Resources and Electrical Circuits. We established our prior knowledge and brainstormed ideas of what we wanted to know more about and how we could gain a deeper understanding of the topics. For our Natural Resources topic, we watched news reports, researched the topic using the internet and a variety of books. We created information posters and presented them to our peers. We video taped the presentations and analysed our presentations to further enhance the delivery of them in the future. We also created a Natural Resources information booklet.

For our Electrical Circuit unit, we researched and challenged ideas of how to make a simple electrical circuit. We performed experiments that were fun and informative. To demonstrate our understanding of electrical circuits, we produced information reports and designed, made and appraised simple electrical circuits using a variety of materials including batteries, fruit and vegetables.

We also created a personal shield that we believe depicted ourselves through the sports we play, our academic ideals, our hobbies and our family relationships. We discussed how others see us and how we see ourselves.
Visible Thinking in Year 6

In our Year 6 group, we investigated the topic of Dinosaurs and created a powerpoint presentation and movie to demonstrate our gained knowledge and understanding of the topic. The negotiation process amongst our group was a valued tool in designing and creating our powerpoint and short movie. We learnt new skills in the area of technology and enjoyed the creative process of filming, editing and enhancing movie productions.
Visible Thinking in Year 7

In our Year 7 group we investigated the topic of Evolution of Town and Country. We explored a variety of issues relating to the changes that have occurred over time. Using the core routines of Think Puzzle Explore, Think Pair Share, Circle of Viewpoints, I used to Think... Now I think.. and Here Now There Then, we were able to develop an understanding of the topic and created and present powerpoint presentations and short narrative stories.
Visible Thinking includes a number of ways of making students' thinking visible to themselves, to their peers, and to the teacher, so they get more engaged by it and come to manage it better for learning and other purposes.

When thinking is visible in classrooms, students are in a position to be more metacognitive and to think about their thinking process. When thinking is visible, it becomes clear that school is not about memorising content but exploring ideas. Teachers benefit when they can see students' thinking because misconceptions, prior knowledge, reasoning ability, and degrees of understanding are more likely to be uncovered. Teachers can then address these challenges and extend students' thinking by starting from where they are.