



Help Students Become Great Thinkers

Mitch asked his student, "What would you do if you broke something in the grocery store?" The student answered, "I would leave fast. I might get arrested." Mitch used some simple follow-up questions to help his student think about his solution in more detail.

Jennifer encouraged students to reason by asking them to wrap an object in a scarf and give her clues so she could guess what they were holding. Emma hid a small horse figure and gave these clues, "It's something that gallops, has a tail, and has stick-up ears."

These SLPs are using careful planning and observation to create an environment that encourages students to think critically. Critical thinking, cognition, effective communication, and academic success are inextricable. Children can become thoughtful problem solvers if they are encouraged to plan and reflect on their actions. At the very core of critical thinking are the skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Critical thinkers will become productive citizens and experience greater success in work, personal relationships, and life.

Promote quality thinking and learning by requiring students to:

1. State and explain goals and purposes
2. Clarify the questions they need to answer and the problems they need to solve
3. Gather and organize information and data
4. Explicitly assess the meaning and significance of information you give them
5. Demonstrate that they understand concepts
6. Identify assumptions
7. Consider implications and consequences
8. Examine things from more than one point of view
9. State what they say clearly
10. Test and check for accuracy
11. Stick to questions, issues, or problems and not wander in their thinking
12. Express themselves precisely and exactly
13. Deal with complexities in problems and issues
14. Distinguish significant matters from insignificant ones

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