

A SPECTRUM OF MODES OF THINKING

critical thinking

Characteristics:

Working toward a coherent, comprehensive judgment
 Disciplined
 Rigorous
 Self-correcting
 Non-linear methodology
 Reasoned judgments within the context of identified values
 Discerning process to resolve an identified issue or problem
 Objective assessment of the quality of the thinking

Process to support critical thinking

Sufficient time
 Compare and contrast, shifting perspective
 Groups working through a disciplined, transparent process
 Elements of reasoning
 Intellectual virtues
 Writing, mapping over time

associational thinking

Characteristics:

Subjectively assessed, if at all
 Brainstorming is a professional example
 Not-rigorous
 Typically not disciplined
 Built on a sequence of relationships, associations
 Common in casual, social situations
 Linear, based on sequence of associations
 Responsive to physical stimuli

Process to support associational thinking

Any kind of informal, group get-together
 Open-ended responses asked from a given stimuli
 Time is not usually an issue

Convergent

Divergent

concrete analysis

Characteristics:

Working toward one right answer
 Objective assessment of the quality of the thinking
 Repetitious
 Predictable
 Uniformity of results
 Rules and steps
 Restricted choices 010010011
 Can be rigorous
 Formulas, equations
 Lends itself to true/false, multiple choice
 Manipulation of finite variables

What kinds of process will support concrete analysis?

Step by step methodology
 Paper and pencil
 Calculator, rulers
 Spreadsheet
 Routine task analysis, direct instruction

Dealing with the material realm, language of the non-living

intuition

Characteristics

Figuring something out without the benefit of conscious reasoning "It just came to me."
 Subjectively assessed if it is assessed at all
 Cannot be forced but it can be supported
 Personal and singular - most commonly it does not lend itself to a group process
 Usually is informed by experience within a field
 Difficult as the basis for leadership as others can't adapt to an unstated rationale
 Highly related to the arts as opposed to written language, numbers, or mapping
 Usually undisciplined, not rigorous but alternatively, flows with relaxation
 Difficult to control or consciously improve
 Culturally, intuition experiences a lack of credibility
 Associated with spirituality, cross-culturalism
 As a decision-making mode, intuition is often suspect
 Gender-based bias
 Physical experience of certainty: "I know it in my gut," "My heart knows what is true."

Process that supports intuition?

Retreat
 The arts
 Physical attentiveness but relaxed
 Typically individuals derive intuition in isolation but groups
 can form to support individual
 Eliminate time constraints

imagination, fantasy

Characteristics:

Typically, unrelated to reality
 Purposeful exploration of random or unconventional images and ideas
 Can be disciplined
 Subjectively assessed, if at all
 Usually individual
 Often unconnected to language
 Unconstrained by the present time frame
 Difficult to control or consciously improve
 Typically discounted in western culture
 Young children thrive in this mode

Process to support imagination, fantasy

Lack of right/wrong
 Non-judgmental listening
 The arts
 Light
 Fresh air
 Relaxation
 Lack of time pressure
 Physical and psychological safety

CRITICAL THINKING, WITH A CAPITAL CT, MEANS USING ALL OF MODES APPROPRIATELY