

How to Make the Most of the ITC Thinking Skills Framework

A Guide for Teachers

To gain the greatest effect from the ITC Thinking Skills Framework poster, we recommend that you:

1. Display the poster prominently in your classroom in clear view of all students.
2. Refer to the poster each time you set a task or a question, and ask students to identify the thinking category of the question. For example, 'Summarise the underlying reasons for the outbreak of World War I?' is at the 'analyse' level as it is asking students to act like a sorting tray, and to examine and break-up an issue into its component parts. If the question was asked, 'State three things you know about the moon', this would be at the 'understand' level and would ask students to act like a dictionary, and to give definitions and explanations.



By drawing attention to the visual metaphors found on the Thinking Skills Framework poster, you will ensure that students have a common understanding and expectation of the different categories of thinking. Empowered with this awareness, students are far better equipped to comprehend the intended outcome of questions or activities posed by teachers. Most important of all, when you and your colleagues refer to the poster in your teaching, you will be working to establish a common language of thinking throughout the school.

The classroom poster also serves as a ready reference tool for teachers, providing useful prompts for designing assessment or classroom questions as well as suggesting a range of Thinking Tools to assist students in formulating their responses. In effect, it is a ready lesson planner.



The Thinking Skills Verbs provide students with further cues on how to act at this 'level' of thinking.



The Sentence Starters specifically address what the teacher requires students to do. These are useful prompts for designing assessment or classroom questions.



The Thinking Tools provide strategies that can be employed by both teachers and students in tackling tasks at the different thinking levels. Further description of, and classroom applications for, these tools can be found in the *innovative teachers' companion* included in the "Teachers' Pack".

Like all skills, good thinking needs to be explicitly taught and time must be set aside to achieve the desired understanding of the cognitive tools associated with each level of thinking. It is here that the Framework becomes vital. If thinking skills are taught without a framework, there is no reference point for students. There must be a clear link between the Thinking Tool used and the Level of Thinking required.

We all recognise that many students underachieve because they do not really understand the task. Empowered with this awareness, students are far better equipped to grasp the implications and intentions of questions or activities posed by teachers.

The more we use a variety of thinking strategies in our teaching, the more we empower our students to become independent learners.

Including the Thinking Skills Framework in all your planning and practice will do much to promote higher order thinking and learning in your classroom.

A note to Principals and school leaders:

The theory and application of the Thinking Skills Framework poster should be explained to all new staff during the school induction program.