

3-2-1 Bridge

BEFORE LEARNING

3 Words/Ideas
2 Questions
1 Metaphor or Simile

AFTER LEARNING

3 Words/Ideas
2 Questions
1 Metaphor or Simile



BRIDGE

Explain how your new responses connect to or changed from your initial responses.

PURPOSE

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students understand their own process of learning by considering their conceptions of a topic before and after a learning experience and how their conceptions changed.

APPLICATION

When and where can I use it?

This routine works well when the topic of the learning experience is one in which students have some prior knowledge. If the topic is something that students would not recognize, it would not be a good choice to use with this routine. Use the “Before Learning” part when you want students to remember their prior ideas, questions, and understandings about the topic. Then, near or at the end of the learning experience, invite students to complete the “After Learning” and “Bridge” parts of the routine.

LAUNCH

What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

When you introduce the topic or concept in the learning experience, share just a few details, remembering that the goal is to use the “Before Learning” part of the routine to activate students’ prior knowledge. This will give you (and them) a chance to see their initial thinking.

Have the students write down 3 words or thoughts, 2 questions, and 1 metaphor or simile about the topic. Encourage them to capture their thoughts quickly, using words and questions that they think of first. Next, engage students in the learning experience. This might be reading an article, watching a video, examining an artifact, observing artwork, or engaging in an activity having to do with the topic. The learning experience should introduce new information or perspectives about the topic that will extend students’ thinking in new directions.

After the learning experience, students complete the “After Learning” part of the routine. Then, students will do the “Bridge” part where they make connections between their initial and new thinking, explaining how and why their thinking shifted. Explain to students that their initial thinking is not right or wrong; it is just a starting point. New experiences take our thinking in new directions.

This thinking routine was developed as part of the Cultures of Thinking project at Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Explore the full PZ Thinking Routine Toolbox at pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines.

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