

Leading a Culture of Thinking at My School: Self-Assessment

Imagine someone were to shadow you in your role on a random day. How likely would this visitor be to notice each of the following actions described below. For each statement assign a rating between 5 and 1 using the following scale:

- 5 = Hard to miss it
- 4 = Highly likely to notice
- 3 = Hit or miss depending on the circumstances
- 2 = Not very likely to notice
- 1= I doubt anyone would notice.

EXPECTATIONS	Rating
1. I make a conscious effort to communicate to the people I interact with (parents, teaches, students) that our school is a place in which thinking is valued not as an extra or aside, but as a foundation of learning.	
2. I establish a set of expectations for ongoing professional learning and risk taking with the people I supervise in order to communicate that their job entails more than just getting the work done and getting good test results.	
3. In making decisions in my role, whether done individually or in a group setting, I consistently frame the issue in terms of how any particular decision, outcome, or practice will affect and impact student learning. When decisions and issues don't have a direct impact on the core mission of the school to enhance students' learning and development, I do my best to minimize my own and others' time on such issues.	
4. I reward, praise, and comment on the development of our students as thinkers and learners rather than effective test takers. I recognize teachers efforts that support this development, and I let it be known that while scores matter; tests are not the chief measure of our effectiveness as educators.	

LANGUAGE	Rating
1. I seldom use generic praise comments (good job, great, brilliant, well done) with others and instead give specific, targeted, action-oriented feedback that focuses on guiding future efforts and actions.	
2. I invite others into the conversation by using "conditional" phrases such as 'could be', 'might be', 'one possibility is', 'some people think' or 'usually it is that way but not always'.	
3. When discussing or commenting on classroom observations, I try to notice and name the thinking occurring in the classroom and not just the activity, saying things like, "I noticed the students really supporting their ideas with evidence", or "I noticed you got students to evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies."	
4. I use inclusive, community-building language, talking about what "we" are learning or "our" inquiry.	

MODELING	Rating
1. While I may not be able to attend everything that is going on at the school, I know my presence (even briefly) can send a message to people that I value and care about what they are doing. Consequently I make sure I am present at and participate in events, meetings, and groups in order to show others that I value their efforts and learning.	
2. I demonstrate my own curiosity, passion, and willingness to consider alternative perspectives. I show that I am interested in the core mission of the school to develop students as learners and thinkers and demonstrate to others that I look beyond just my specific responsibilities.	
3. I know that teachers at the school are watching my every move to understand what I value, deem worthwhile, and consider important. Consequently, I model the behaviours and interactions I want to reinforce in others.	
4. I make sure that I am present and available so that people don't associate me only with being in my office.	

TIME	Rating
1. In the meetings and conversations I lead, I make time for people to think through ideas, ensuring that both others and I come prepared to do so.	
2. I respect that everyone's time is valuable and consequently plan meetings to have a clear focus and purpose while ensuring that they start and end on time.	
3. I avoid disseminating an abundance of ideas without the time to process them.	
4. I monitor the amount of time I talk so as not to dominate the conversation.	

OPPORTUNITIES	Rating
1. In meetings, I focus people's attention on big issues, important ideas, and meaningful connections between the task at hand and our core mission as a school.	
2. I try to create opportunities for the individuals with whom I work to direct their own learning and become independent rather than being dependent on me.	
3. I create avenues for us to collect data and evidence that will inform our work and better understand how our collective efforts are contributing to the fulfilment of the school's mission.	
4. I provide opportunities to reflect on our progress and how our efforts are affecting the learning that is happening at the school.	

ROUTINES	Rating
1. I use protocols, thinking routines, or other specific structures to help organise the thinking of the people and groups with which I work and to help us discuss, reflect, and problem solve.	
2. I've looked at my own working patterns and the way I lead groups to see if I have developed patterns or work or structures that are NOT effective. I actively work to change these ineffective patterns or structures.	
3. I am good at matching a routine, structure, systems, or protocol with appropriate issues so that my group and the people I work with are collectively able to achieve a deeper level of understanding and process information more effectively.	
4. In my area I am constantly looking at the systems and processes we use so that I can help streamline some of the things we need to do. This means having efficient systems to accomplish some needed tasks so that teachers aren't overly burdened with "work" and can keep their energies on student learning.	

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	Rating
1. Displays in my working space communicate to people who come into my space positive messages about learning and thinking. A visitor would be able to discern what the school cares about and value when it comes to learning.	
2. I arrange my workspace and the various spaces I make use of to facilitate thoughtful interactions, collaborations, & discussion. I make sure the spaces work for people and don't stand in the way of good thinking and learning, wether for adults or students.	
3. My wall displays have an ongoing, inchoate, and/or dialogic nature to them versus only static displays.	
4. I use a variety of ways to document and capture the thinking and decision-making processes of the groups with whom I work, including technology.	

INTERACTIONS	Rating
1. I ensure that all individuals show respect for each other's thinking in groups I lead. Ideas may be critiqued or challenged but people are not.	
2. I strive to be a collaborator and problem solver, not a blocker, when people come to me with their concerns, needs, or issues. They see me as someone working with them to ensure the best education for students at the school.	
3. Individuals are pushed to elaborate their responses, to reason, and to think beyond a simple answer or statement? For example, by using the "What makes you say that?" routine.	
4. I listen to others and show a genuine curiosity and interest in their thinking. It is clear I value their thinking.	