



Thinking Schools  
International™

# Growing Thinking Schools

## From the Inside Out

### Transformational Professional Development for Schools

Thinking models, processes, skills, strategies and tools for transforming the whole school environment.

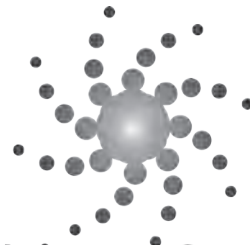


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Certified Facilitators for Thinking Schools™  
Locally and Networked Globally

***More than training... We transform...***





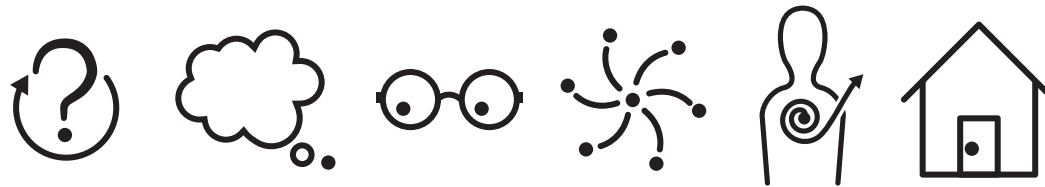
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# Thinking Schools International, LLC

## Our Purpose

Thinking Schools International, LLC is a company focused on facilitating expertise within schools, school systems, and across regions and countries for transforming the practice of education toward the collaborative development of a wide range of thinking processes of all members of learning organizations.

## Our Process

Thinking Schools International, LLC conducts direct training with individual learning organizations, certifies trainers at different levels of expertise, while also welcoming other organizations to engage with us in licensing agreements for using these materials and processes around the world.

## Contact Info

For information about training, training of trainers, and the expansion of the Thinking Schools design in your area, please contact: Richard Cummins, CEO Thinking Schools International, LLC, Swindon, England.

## Website

Please visit our website for information about upcoming training opportunities, research and documentation on different approaches to the facilitation of thinking, and for documentation and research on Thinking Schools around the world. There are links to leaders in the field of the development of thinking and learning. If your learning organization is working with us over time, you will be given access to an online collaborative network of educators from around the world who are sharing their experiences and new strategies, insights, and outcomes.



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## How to Use this Guide

*Growing Thinking Schools* is a *guide*, much like a travel guide that you have closely looked through before visiting a new place, or visiting a website with information about different pathways for investigating a new concept. This guidebook is only used with support of a certified Thinking Schools International trainer who will guide you and your colleagues through a process of:

- envisioning what a “Thinking School” might look like in your culture and environment;
- considering the different possible approaches you may take; and
- beginning the planning stage for the short and long term process of explicitly and systematically integrating “thinking” processes into the existing “learning” processes within your school.

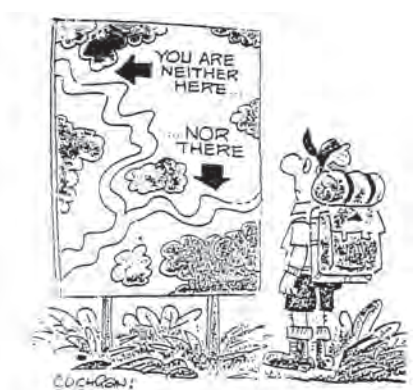
This guide does not provide an answer, but offers starting points for the journey toward becoming a “Thinking School” of the 21st century.

## Using the Working Field Guide

At the back of this guide is a pullout document called the *Working Field Guide*. This is like a journal that you might take along on trip for writing down your ideas. In this case, you will be collaboratively mapping out your ideas and reflecting on uses of thinking tools, techniques and strategies with your colleagues. It is a place for you to be creative, to capture ideas, and for reference as you move forward.

## Creating a Field Guide for your Students

This *Working Field Guide* is also a purposeful model for what we suggest you try out with your students. When students have a place to keep track of new ways of thinking they will engage in a reflective process, as you have, in investigating and improving their ability to use new thinking processes over time. We hope you create your own Field Guide design for students that is unique and appropriate for your environment and that reflects the vision your school has taken on for becoming a community focused on the development of every child’s abilities to think in many different ways... and to improve their abilities to investigate how to integrate these different approaches as they mature.



When you see this symbol, refer to your Working Field Guide.

## Preface

### Growing a Thinking School: The Journey Begins

#### Thinking Ahead

Before starting off on a journey, it is wise to reflect on where you have been, and think ahead to where you want to go. This facilitator's guide, *Growing Thinking Schools*, is a common text through which you and your colleagues may think about your school as a whole, the qualities and resources of your school, and the varied approaches to teaching, learning and leading that inhabit and give character to your school. We also believe that this process will support your own thinking, teaching, and learning over time.

Our work with you in *Growing Thinking Schools* is to support and engage you in the process of investigating new possibilities for exploring students' growth as thinkers and learners. The nurturing of each child's thinking, language, content knowledge base, and physical and social-emotional development needs constant care, and each child has his or her own developmental growth pattern. This is exciting to consider and a challenge!

#### A Vision

The first three stages of the journey as presented in this guide are to engage you in reflective questions such as:

- What is the relationship between "learning" and "thinking"?
- What is a "thinking" student?
- How have other schools created Thinking Schools?
- What are a variety of ways, definitions and approaches to thinking?
- How do these beliefs fit within your belief system?

You will also learn some new techniques and see how approaches you are already using may be enhanced with explicitly teaching students FOR, OF, and ABOUT thinking.



**Preface:** Growing a Thinking School: The Journey Begins

## Planning and Leading the Journey

As facilitators certified by *Thinking Schools International*, we are guides and offer our collective background, experiences and knowledge to help you plan *your own path* over time as an ever-evolving Thinking School. Your work and design will be unique. We will have answers to many of your questions and/or be able to seek out our links to experts in the field.

What we don't have is a solution for what your school "should" look like. This does not fit with the purpose of our work: we do not believe that there is one way to becoming a Thinking School. There are unique pathways for each school, within each community, within the diverse countries and continents on this planet. Our time with you will include starting points for considering different pathways.

The last stage as shown in this guide includes resource documents. We might use these documents with you and also your drive and/or leadership team over time to develop a plan for implementing your thinking and evolving vision of a Thinking School.

## A Global Journey

We know that we will learn from you along the way and also that we will be able to connect you with people and schools around the world who are also on a similar journey. We will be your collaborative partner in this journey.

Our website will be a common ground for sharing the insights from your experiences and the journey ahead around the world. Every person (and community) has their own ways of thinking about the purpose of schooling and how to define learning and refine practices to support thinking.

We do not have one definition, but we do have much to share about this new direction in education around the world. There is a growing awareness and with that a global network of like minded educators who want to share in this new journey, this new adventure. You can find them at: [www.thinkingschoolsinternational.com](http://www.thinkingschoolsinternational.com)



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Step 3 What is the vision of *Thinking Schools International*?

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## **89. STAGE 4: Leading the Way**

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**INSERT Participants Working Field Guide  
WFG 01. Working Field Guide**

## **Collaboration, Authorship, and Appreciation**

The process of conceptualizing, writing, and designing the *Growing Thinking Schools* Participants and Facilitators Guides has been a dynamic collaboration reaching back over many years and across many countries.

During a week long working session In 2010, six educators with a wide range of experiences, brought their ideas together to build the contents, processes, and form of these guides. Teresa Williams, Martin Bell, and Richard Cummins from the Kestrel Consulting group in the UK and David Hyerle, Robert Price, and Larry Alper from the Designs for Thinking group in the US focused on creating practical guides linked to a vision of transformational change.

David Hyerle and Robert Price, the primary authors of the two guides, were then offered the challenge to integrate the reflective and refined thinking of this group into a tangible document: the detailed language and graphic design of the 4 Stages and 14 Steps of the journey toward Growing Thinking Schools.

All of us in this process appreciate the constant flow of ideas from our colleagues with whom we have worked over the years. We offer our deepest thanks to Professor Emeritus Dr. Bob Burden of Exeter University who generously offers his lifetime of experiences and research toward the development of thoughtful students and their teachers.

We also thank those educators in schools who have offered us their insights over the years for not simply “reforming” schools for the moment, but engaging educators around the world in “transforming” schools into places where children learn to think for themselves and, thoughtfully, with each other.



## STAGE 1 GETTING STARTED

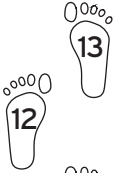
Step 1 Who are We Together?

Step 2 Why a "Thinking" School?

Step 3 What is the vision of Thinking Schools International?

Step 4 How are we going to work together?

Step 5 What does a "Thinking Student" look like?



Getting Started -----

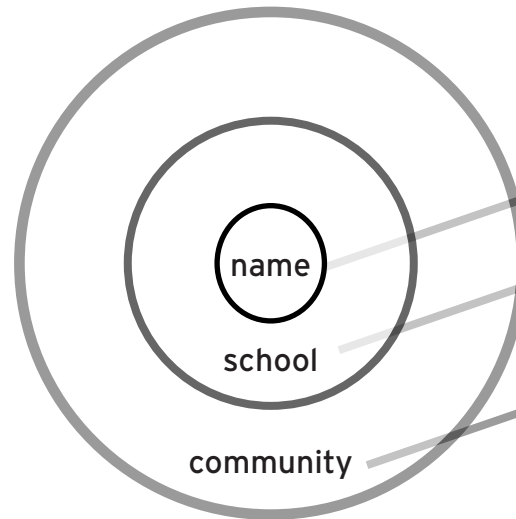
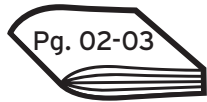


# Who Are We Together?

- *Context Circles*
- *Learning Cycles*

## Visual Mapping - Context Circles

To get started, here is a visual mapping process called Context Circles. This process will support us in getting a view of the school and the environment around the school. Take out your Working Field Guide for your mapping process.



What is your name and what are the things that you do in the school?

Identify as many important things that you would say about your school to someone who has never been there.

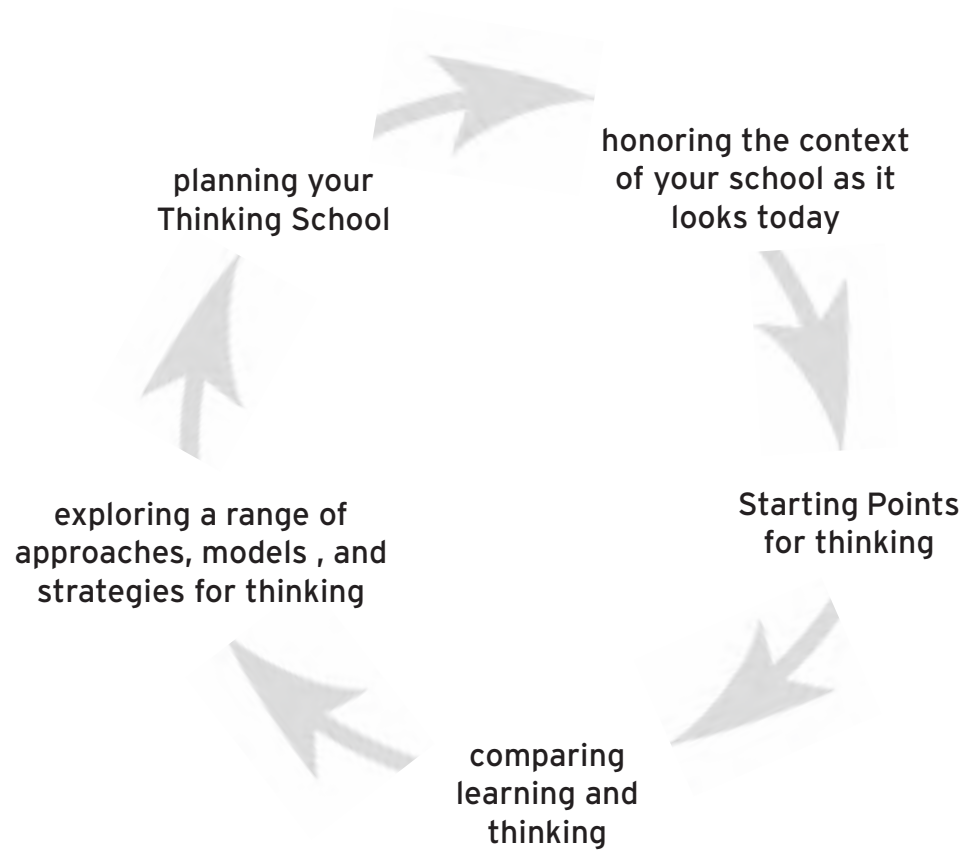
Every community has its own character. Write down the most important things about the wider neighborhood and community that surrounds your school.

After you and a partner have completed your visual mapping, pair up together and share your ideas by asking:

What are some of the similar and different bits of information in the maps?

We will then share the most important information in a group map.

## Learning Cycles



### Learning Intentions for the day:

By the end of our initial session we will have come full circle from considering the context of your present school to planning your vision for a Thinking School.



## Stage 1: Getting Started

# Six Starting Points for Thinking

Here are the six Starting Points for Thinking we are going to use and practice throughout this guide together to share and understand our ideas.



### **Reflective Questioning**

high quality questioning and listening skills



### **Thinking Skills**

explicit use of cognitive processes



### **Visual Mapping**

the use of visual tools to map out ideas



### **Collaborative Networking**

between us in pairs, groups, schools, and global networks



### **Developing Dispositions**

characteristics, dispositions, and habits of mind are engaged



### **Structuring Environment**

considering how the physical space is organized and resources used



When you see a Starting Point Symbol, look for emphasis of this point in the content.

The six Starting Points for Thinking are a synthesis of what we consider to be some of the essential starting points for developing thinking students and thinking schools. You may already use some of these strategies. While there are programs and resources for each of these areas, in this guide we are modeling the use of some of these strategies and how they work together. We also hope you will try out some of these ideas in your school.

## Reflective Questioning

Reflective questioning is the use of prompts and questions to engage students in both thinking about “what” they know (factual memory) but also “how” they know (critical reflection). High quality questions guide students to think about their thinking (metacognition), dispositions that they are drawing on, and how they are collaborating with others as they are learning.

## Thinking Skills

Psychologists, cognitive scientists, and educators have developed many different models and theories for defining and organizing a range of thinking skills. Often these models differentiate between “lower” and “higher” order skills. In general terms, there are fundamental cognitive processes for generating and organizing information, skills of analysis and synthesis, and processes of creativity and evaluation.

## Visual Mapping

There are many different kinds of visual mapping techniques such as brainstorming webs, graphic organizers and conceptual and “systems” mapping. Usually visual mapping approaches mirror specific kinds of thinking skills or theories of learning. Some of these tools are used in isolated ways for certain tasks, some are open ended. There are also visual “languages” for school wide use.

## Collaborative Networking

The techniques for cooperative learning are many and there are models for establishing collaborative groups, classrooms and schools. The research on cooperative learning in school and the need for high quality collaborative groups in the work place connect to the recent evolution of social networking through new technologies as learners engage other learners around the globe.

## Developing Dispositions

Educators interested in the area of developing thinking often start by differentiating thinking “skills” such as cause-effect reasoning and the ability to make inferences from thinking “dispositions” such as persistence, remaining open-minded, and metacognition. Dispositions are often related to the new field of emotional intelligences and the developing empathy in relationship to others.

## Structuring Environment

How the classroom, school, and surrounding area is physically structured has a great affect on teaching and learning. Positioning of students on the floor, seating arrangements in the classroom, and the accessibility of learning materials are all dimensions of the environment. The use of all the resources available within and around the school and wider community is key to engaging students.



Step 1: Who Are We Together?

Getting Started



# Why a Thinking School?

- *Thinking Schools?*
- *Mapping Ideas*
- *Collaborative*
- *Brain Matters*

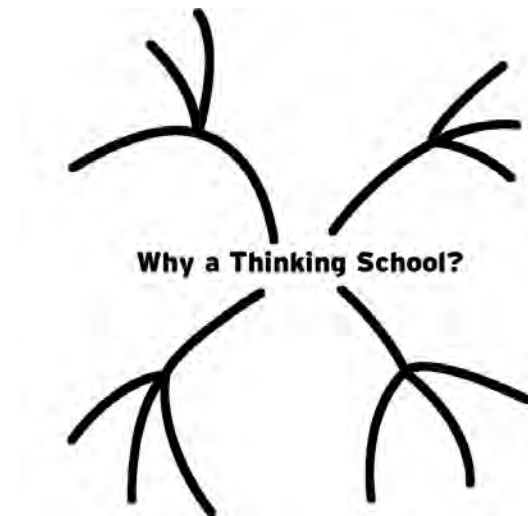
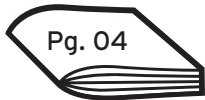
## Visual Mapping - Why a Thinking School?

Our next step on the journey is to ask an open ended question:

Why would we want to begin to transform our school toward becoming a “thinking” school?

Create a Mind Map of your ideas in your Working Field Guide.

Create a center as shown. Then add major ideas and then details for each major idea.



NOTES: Tony Buzan created the Mindmapping® techniques in the 1950's, initially for helping business people involved in advertizing to create new concepts for products.



## Collaborative Networking of Ideas

### First

Pair with a person and show each other your maps. Look for common ideas and add new ideas from your colleague.

If you want to know more from your colleague about an idea in the Mind Maps, try this question:

“How are you thinking about this idea? Please tell me more.”

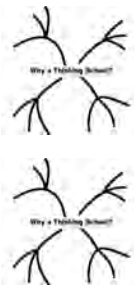
### Second

Now find another pair and share your Mind Maps. As you look at the four Mind Maps ask each other this question:

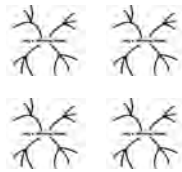
We needed to prioritize the most common and important ideas from all of our maps. What are the 3 or 4 most important ideas? How would these 3 or 4 ideas be prioritized, from most important at the top to the bottom? Create a flow chart in your Working Field Guide.

### Third

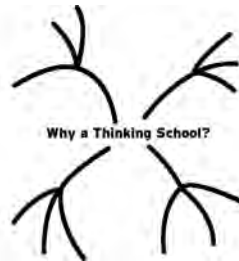
Our last step is to bring together the highest priority ideas together into a group Mind Map. This process of effectively and efficiently bringing our ideas together forms a very good starting point for your journey toward becoming a “thinking” school.



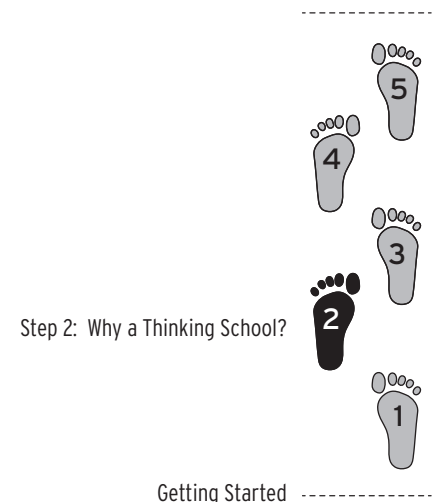
*pair share*



*two pairs share*



*group share*



Step 2: Why a Thinking School?

Getting Started

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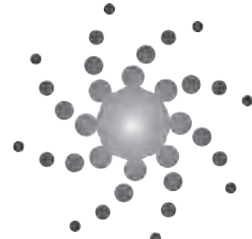
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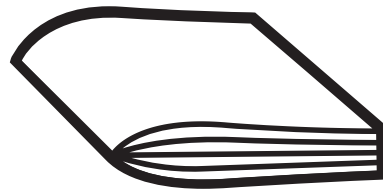
Working Field Guide i



Thinking Schools  
International™

# Working Field Guide

**a reflective journal for  
personal and collaborative thinking**



*for all thinkers young and old*

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# Working Field Guide

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# How to use the Working Field Guide

## Using the Working Field Guide

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## Expanding the Working Field Guide

The provided *Working Field Guide* is a foundation to expanding the field guide with pages that reflects your school visions, needs and culture for depth of understanding. Further development of the *Working Field Guide* for and by the staff strengthens the understanding of the potential with personal and collaborative reflections.

## Creating a Field Guide for your Students

This *Working Field Guide* is also a purposeful model for what we suggest you try out with your students. When students have a place to keep track of new ways of thinking they will engage in a reflective process, as you have, in investigating and improving their ability to use new thinking processes over time. We hope you create your own Field Guide design for students that is unique and appropriate for your environment and that reflects the vision your school has taken on for becoming a community focused on the development of every child's abilities to think in many different ways... and to improve their abilities to investigate how to integrate these different approaches as they mature.

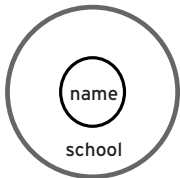


## Context Circles

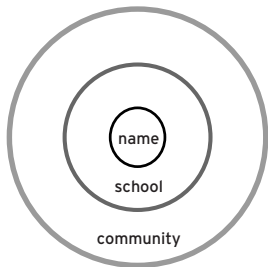
Understanding your school and community



**1** What is your name?



**2** Identify as many important things that you would say about your school to someone who has never been there?



**3** Every community has its own character. Write down the most important things about the wider neighborhood and community that surrounds your school.

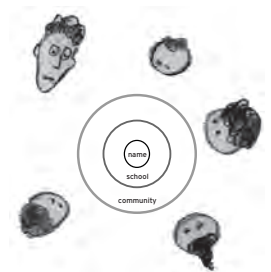
## Context Circles • Understanding your School and Community

After you and a partner have completed your visual mapping, first pair up together and share your ideas with a Think-Pair-Share, then second get together in a small group and share your ideas with a collaborative Context Circle. Use the questions below:

What are some of the similar and different types of information in the maps?



We will then share the most important information in a group map.



### Think-Pair-Share in the classroom



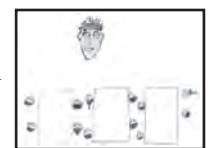
teacher models with a student



two students model



pair up students



whole group sharing