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Picking up any education journal, reading online blogs or attending education conferences one cannot fail to notice that teaching thinking skills in classrooms is very much in vogue. In terms of learner autonomy, what could be more beneficial than equipping students with the tools to develop and improve their own thinking processes? Puchta and Williams' *Teaching Young Learners To Think* is both a timely and hugely practical resource aimed at primary or lower secondary school children learning English as a foreign language. It contains activities, which are designed not only to provide meaningful language practice, but also to help students develop their thinking skills.

The book has easy-to-follow activities for classroom use that require little preparation. It is arranged into thirteen sections, each with a helpful introduction. The sections are based on Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment programme and have been influenced by the Somerset Thinking Skills Course developed by Blagg, Ballinger and Gardner (1993). Feuerstein was a clinical, developmental, and cognitive psychologist, known for his theory of intelligence. Feuerstein, Klein and Tannenbaum (1991) stated that intelligence was not 'fixed', but rather modifiable. Feuerstein's curriculum involved teaching 'metacognition', that is, teaching learners to think about their own thinking, and to act accordingly. The Somerset Thinking Skills Course followed on from an Instrumental Enrichment programme which systematically teaches thinking skills, including problem-solving, analysing and synthesising, predicting and deciding, etc. The foundations mentioned in the course are adapted in *Teaching Young Learners To Think* and cover the thinking skills in order of cognitive difficulty ranging from lower order thinking skills, such as 'comparison' and 'categorisation', to higher order thinking sections, such as 'solving problems' and 'creative thinking'. The book, however, acknowledges that students may need more than one thinking strategy at a time when learning.

Each activity comes with procedure notes, including level of language proficiency, age, language focus, and thinking skills required. Each also comes with a photocopiable worksheet. The book is not supposed to be used sequentially, but rather activities are chosen as they arise in class, either by topic, language, or cognitive challenge. It comes with a handy

reference section at the back of the book designed to help a teacher find an appropriate activity to suit their specific need.

Although the activities can be used immediately, I would recommend reading the informative introduction first, which gives a clear outline of the theoretical aspects of the activities in the book. The authors suggest setting up an environment conducive to developing thinking, an environment that allows for students to be creative without criticism, where mistakes are seen as an opportunity to learn. Also, they stress the importance of giving the learners sufficient time to really think, process and decide on what they believe are the best (notice 'best' rather than 'right') answers. This approach counters much of the 'first past the post' mentality often seen in classrooms, where young learners scramble to finish an activity first. Encouraging them to take their time to think contributes in fostering a good habit of thinking.

Teachers using the book with mixed nationality young learners aged seven to thirteen years old on an Oxford Intensive School of English (OISE) summer school course in the UK this year were encouraged to use *Teaching Young Learners To Think*, incorporating it into their existing course programme when appropriate. The feedback from the teachers who used this resource was positive with comments such as there was “a good variety of activities and task types”, and “students enjoyed the creativity needed to complete tasks”. Interestingly, this resource was seen by some teachers as a tool where, “students were able to work independently to complete many of the activities”, and that it could be used, “with elementary and pre-intermediate students for homework exercises”. Whilst it is true that many of the activities can be done individually, this rather skews the authors' vision of where students will interact in line with Feuerstein's (1980) 'mediation theory', which suggests that students can help each other to progress through their social interactions. The material is much better exploited either in class time with a teacher to coach, mediate and scaffold the thinking, or used as homework in situations where students can work collaboratively with one another (which is possible on a residential summer course).

One great aspect of the book is that the activities can be adapted with a little imagination by the teacher to encompass other language, so that if a task has been successful, it can often be repeated using other lexis, etc. For example, a simple categorisation activity where animals are sorted into those that can fly, move on land, swim or a combination of these can be repeated with a different set of animals, specific to a particular lesson or syllabus. The teacher need not be confined to animals either. They could use food, for example, changing the categories to boil, roast or grill. This kind of extension and adaptation

can be done with many of the activities in the book. Thus, it has the potential to be used as a developmental tool for teachers wanting to create their own lesson materials. Using the activities in the book as a template, teachers can produce materials that go beyond mere language content.

Perhaps a missed opportunity is not having these activities digitalised for the interactive whiteboard, student tablet or self-access centre, so this would be a welcome development in a future edition of the book. A great asset to any EFL young learner staffroom, *Teaching Young Learners To Think* is ideal for classroom use, as it helps develop a 'thinking habit' that is an essential life skill, making students better, more autonomous learners inside and outside of the classroom.

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