FRAMEWORKS FOR THINKING: SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL THINKING AND LEARNING

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Abstract: How can we promote successful thinking and learning in learners of diverse abilities? Recent theories about successful thinking and learning take a broad view of cognition and acknowledge the conative, affective, and situational aspects of learning. Research suggests that thinking skills approaches can be effective in embracing these important aspects of learning and can help to create powerful learning environments in which individual learners are supported to reach their full potential.

A range of broad-based taxonomies, models and frameworks exist for understanding the processes involved in thinking and learning. These frameworks can inform the identification of talents in individuals and assist in the planning and evaluation of educational experiences for a diverse range of learners.

In this paper we outline an integrated framework which we suggest can provide course designers, teachers and learners with a ‘language for thinking about learning’ and can be used to deepen understanding and improve the management of the multi-dimensional aspects of successful learning.

Introduction: teaching for successful thinking

How can we promote successful thinking in learners of diverse abilities? In educational discourse, ‘teaching thinking skills’ is often used to refer to specific pedagogic approaches, courses or organised activities which require learners to plan, describe and evaluate their thinking and learning (Moseley et al., 2004; Livingstone et al., 2004; Guest, 2000). A growing body of research suggests that thinking skill interventions can be effective at all levels, and that some aspects of thinking can be developed or strengthened by appropriate teaching practices (McGuinness, 1999; Nisbet and Davies, 1990; Moseley et al., 2004; Livingstone et al., 2004).

McGuinness (1999) recognised the importance of making thinking explicit