marvelous MINDS
Thinking is the foundation of all learning!

Dr. Cas Olivier
COO
+27 83 259 2857

DARE2THINK differently DARE2TEACH differently DARE2LEARN differently

Your school's next breakthrough starts with this question.

Who is doing the thinking?

More revision, more intervention and more extra classes are more of the same. If the teaching does not change, why should the learning?

From teaching-centered to thinking-centered

This is not about abandoning curriculum content. It is about progressively shifting responsibility for thinking towards the learner.

THE ESTABLISHED MODEL	THE PROPOSED DIRECTION
Teacher delivers and explains content.	Teacher architects purposeful opportunities for thinking.
Learners follow worked examples and practise.	Learners actively construct understanding with appropriate guidance.
Difficulty prompts further explanation.	Support increasingly develops independence and strategic next moves.
Success is often judged by reproducing familiar answers.	Learning is also tested through unfamiliar problems and independent decisions.

That is where the Thinking Tools approach makes a fundamental difference.
Thinking Tools is a brain-based approach to developing learners' capacity to think independently, construct understanding, manage their own learning and find a way forward when familiar methods no longer work.

Rather than making learners increasingly dependent on explanations, demonstrations and additional lessons, we progressively develop their ability to figure out and take responsibility for their own thinking.

What changes in the classroom?

1. Learners become active constructors of understanding.
Instead of waiting for the teacher to explain everything, learners use their natural thinking abilities to analyse, compare, connect, question, evaluate and construct meaning.

2. Learning begins with Step Zero.
Before attempting a task, learners learn to orientate themselves: What is this about? What do I already know? What is being asked? What might matter? How should I approach it?

This creates a purposeful starting point that keeps the problem in suspension rather than immediate dependence on someone else's instructions.

3. Thinking becomes visible and manageable.
Learners use Thinking Tools, including thinking maps, purposeful questioning and structured thinking strategies, to organise information, recognise relationships, develop explanations and evaluate their understanding.

4. Teachers become architects of thinking.
Teachers remain essential, but their role expands from primarily delivering and explaining content to designing learning experiences that activate and develop learners' own thinking.

The teacher progressively transfers cognitive responsibility to learners while providing appropriate guidance and support.

5. Learners develop metacognition and self-regulation.
They learn to plan, monitor and evaluate their thinking, recognise when understanding breaks down, and decide whether to persist, adjust their strategy or change direction.

6. Learners develop Cognitive Mobility — The Power of NEXT.
When familiar approaches no longer work, learners develop the ability to regain direction, identify possibilities and determine a productive next move.

This is especially important when encountering unfamiliar examination questions, complex problems and situations for which no ready-made solution exists.

What does this mean for your school?
The ambition is not only more engaging lessons. It is a coherent, thinking-centred learning culture in which:

- Learners become more independent and less reliant on constant explanation.
- Teachers spend more time facilitating meaningful thinking rather than carrying the cognitive load.
- Learning support develops independence instead of perpetuating dependency.
- Learners become better equipped to tackle unfamiliar assessment questions.

- Thinking, metacognition and self-regulation become part of the language and practice of the entire school.
- Academic improvement becomes an intended outcome of stronger, more independent learning.

The ultimate measure of success is not how well learners reproduce what teachers have explained, but how effectively they can think, learn and find their own way forward when nobody tells them what to do NEXT.

Seven commitments for a thinking-centred school

01 Build shared understanding

Develop a common language for cognition, metacognition and self-regulated learning.

02 Establish Step Zero

Help learners orientate, set a purpose and plan before acting.

03 Make thinking visible

Model thinking processes and progressively transfer responsibility.

04 Make thinking the school's language

Use purposeful questioning, discussion, explanation and reflection.

05 Make learners figure things out

Design appropriately challenging tasks that require analysis, connections, evaluation and decisions.

06 Develop Cognitive Mobility

Help learners recover direction when a familiar route no longer works.

07 Lead together

Align the principal, management team, teachers, SGB, parents and learning-support partners.

How can your school begin?

Contact Dr Cas Olivier

0832592857

learningdesigns.co.za | cas@learningdesigns.co.za

Programme scope and implementation arrangements are discussed with each school.