

Synectics Checklist

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

INSERT H FOR STEP 1

Introduction

Begin the Synectics lesson with exercises that stimulate thinking such as “free flow” writing or exercises designed to initiate thinking about familiar things in new and different ways. Examples: Which is funnier—3 or 4? Which is rounder—honey or jam? Which is angrier—kitchen or front room? What could this be? Behaviors to look for:

- ☐ Teacher sets the guidelines to include no right or wrong answer, all are acceptable for exploration.
- ☐ Teacher models or demonstrates possible responses.

Teach/Practice

Once students are able to break old mind-sets and exhibit flexibility in thought, they are guided through three steps of the “metaphoric process” -- Direct Analogy, Personal Analogy and Symbolic Analogy. Behaviors to look for:

- ☐ Teacher or students select a topic or word (e.g., earthquake) and look up a definition, preferably in an unabridged dictionary for detail.
- ☐ Students free-write for 3-5 minutes about the topic or word.
- ☐ In response to a question/statement such as “An earthquake is like a _____,” students brainstorm vivid images individually or as a group while teacher records these **direct analogies**.
- ☐ Students select a word from the list and create a **personal analogy**. Become the object and describe what it feels like to be it (e.g., an earthquake) as it embodies the quality you chose (e.g., like music).
- ☐ Students select two qualities that seem “to fight each other” (e.g., bloodthirsty as a hunter and choreographed as music). Students explain why they chose the two, and then answer the question, “How can an earthquake be bloodthirsty and choreographed?”
- ☐ Students take the **compressed conflict** they created and look for other things described by it—e.g., “Bloodthirsty choreography.”
- ☐ Students return to the original word or topic and reflect or produce a product that describes it, using the ideas they’ve played with.

Conclusion

Teacher and students discuss outcomes of the Synectic Process. Behaviors to look for:

- ☐ Teacher assists students in analyzing their own thinking by asking questions such as “When did you experience new ideas? What did it feel like to notice it being new? Which activities helped generate new ideas? Which ones do you want to do more of?”

Personal Family includes:

Synectics

Brainstorming

- GOAL: Creativity

Focuses on development of personal self through creative expression by promoting fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration

- TEACHER BEHAVIORS: Facilitator and Stimulator
- LEARNER BEHAVIORS: Exploring, creating, inventing

Synectics includes:

Introduction

- Stimulate release of creative thinking.

Teach/Practice

- Student makes simple comparisons.
- Student becomes “the thing”.
- Student makes comparisons in varied opposing ways.

Conclusion

- Assist students in analyzing their thinking.
- Lead a discussion on outcomes.

Used with permission from Alice Terry and the Region XVII Association of California School Administrators.