

A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEYS PROGRAM

for gifted Year 5 and 6 children with

a love of thinking and exploring ideas

It's Mind Blowing!! – the Power of Visible Thinking'

..an adventure to develop your thinking skills



G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organization offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four mornings.

Pablo stood in front of the brightly lit building as he prepared to enter and register for the 2015 *International Conference of Thinking*, in the wonderful Spanish city of Barcelona. He glanced up at a neon light which was flashing the question 'Is thinking visible?' 'What an interesting concept' he thought. 'I wonder what it means'. He walked through a side entrance into the building and found himself in an empty room with a painting on the far-side wall. There were chairs in a semi-circle before the painting but not another person in sight. He took a seat and suddenly a soft chant surrounded him. 'Make thinking visible! Make thinking visible!' He was feeling puzzled when a single voice echoed around the space: 'Thinking is a solitary activity and unless shared with others, your thinking is invisible.'

Constructing and exploring ideas with others helps us to develop critical and reflective thinking. It permits ideas to be tested and allows us to hear how others think. In this Journey you will learn how to make your thinking visible. To help you dig deeper into ideas you will learn different thinking techniques or routines such as 'think, puzzle and explore', 'circle of viewpoints' or 'what makes you say that?' which will help to make your thinking 'richer'. Join Pablo and the other conference delegates, and together we will explore some wonderful ideas, and make your thinking visible.

Session 1: The Persistence of Memory

Pablo was excited as he entered the first conference session: 'Are art, stories and our thoughts invisible?' and 'How can we make art, stories and our thoughts more visible?' 'I wonder what this means? Surely if you can see art and hear stories they can't be invisible?' pondered Pablo. Come and join Pablo and the other delegates as they participate in a community of inquiry around the famous surrealist artist, Salvador Dali's painting, 'Persistence of Memory'. Together we will use the thinking routine 'think, puzzle and explore' to help us examine what we can see and what hides in this amazing painting. Can we discover the meaning of the painting by exploring the symbolism that Dali used? Can we justify our statements by using the thinking routine 'what do you see that makes you say that?', and by giving evidence to back up our explanations? To sum up we will create a metaphor, symbol, or our own version of 'Persistence of Memory.'

Session 2: The Deliverance of Dancing Bears

'That was so 'cool'', thought Pablo, 'I can't wait for the second session.' This time when Pablo walked into the conference room he saw numerous questions, 'What is freedom?' and 'How can we relate freedom to dreaming?' projected on a huge screen. Have fun with Pablo and the delegates as they utilise the thinking routine 'Bridge' to activate their prior knowledge of, and make connections to, the concept of freedom. Listen to the keynote speaker Miro as she relates the story of a dancing bear who dreams of forests, mountain streams, fishing with her partner and of having cubs to rear. Her reality is living in a small cage with bars and a cruel master who abuses her daily, forcing her to dance in the marketplace to amuse shoppers. We pose and answer questions such as 'what's going on here?', 'what is surprising?' and 'what is freedom?' To enhance your abilities to justify, reflect, and disagree, we will play games such as 'yes, but' and use the routine 'I used to think and now I think', when we revisit our initial thinking to see if our ideas about freedom have changed. To sum up the session we will write our own creative piece about the dancing bears.

Session 3: Quetta

In the third conference session, we find Pablo and the delegates travelling back in time to 1890 to witness the custody case of a young girl who was orphaned in the wreck of the British East India Company vessel, Quetta. We will listen as the magistrate deliberates on the two prospective applicants for her custody. One is a young 19 year old man of no permanent residence, who saved the young girl from drowning, and the other is sea captain Edmund Brown, who is a resident of Thursday Island. We will justify our own opinions about the magistrate's choice in our exploration of the book 'Quetta' by Gary Crew. We will be introduced to the thinking routine 'think, puzzle and explore' to promote evidence-based reasoning in our own conclusions; in the thinking routine 'circle of viewpoints' we pose questions and revisit the story from the different perspectives of the characters. Reflecting upon the session, we will use the thinking routine 'newspaper headlines' to sum up the visible aspects of our thinking.

Session 4: The Lotus Eaters

Although Pablo and the other delegates are tired by the fourth session, they are mentally stimulated and inspired. There is a buzz in the room as the very famous story from Greek mythology of Odysseus's journey to the island of the Lotus Eaters is introduced. Join in and use the thinking routine 'think, pair and share' to answer questions such as 'Can listening to stories make thinking visible?' or 'do we have to interact with the story to make our thinking visible?' Odysseus's story explores the theme of happiness and we will ask 'what is happiness?' and 'is happiness the most important thing?' Based on the thinking routine a 'tug of war', we will argue our

different points of view. Afterwards we will choose three ideas that stand out for us based on the 'colour, symbol, image' thinking routine and create a final response to demonstrate our view on whether thinking is visible or not.

That night as Pablo left the 2015 International Conference of Thinking, in the wonderful Spanish city of Barcelona he glanced up at the neon light still flashing the question 'Is thinking visible?' and mused to himself, 'Yes, now I know what that means!'

About the presenter:

Sharon Leibowitz is an experienced teacher and philosopher working in the field of Gifted Education. Working in children's education, Sharon has developed creative and critical thinking skills through a challenging program of Socratic questioning and communities of enquiry. She loves participating in discussions around ideas and using thinking treasure such as art, science and children's literature to enhance her programs. Designing engaging philosophical discussions for students is a particular passion of hers and she always marvels at the quality of discussion that students can engage in.

Requirements:

Bring writing paper (an exercise book would be ideal); a well-stocked pencil case including coloured pencils/textas, scissors and a glue stick; Come along with a snack each week (no nuts please).

