



What it looks like when my students are thinking

Active discussion, animated talking
Solving problems
On task, engaged
Kids are taking risks with their learning
Comfortable making mistakes
Use of a vocabulary that demonstrates meaning
Asking questions
They are explaining what they are doing
Self-talking
They are having fun
"Is class over, already?"
Aha moments

What it looks like when my students are not thinking

Students are looking to the teacher for answers
Body language is tense, squirmy
Students are repeating failed strategies
Students are borrowing thoughts and answers from others
Trips to the bathroom, avoidance behavior
Guessing, impulsive responses, "I dunno"
Throwing objects, acting out, disruptive behavior
Too quiet, low energy or anxiety
"Do we have to do this whole page?"
"I don't remember"
Quitting, giving up
Giving answers that don't make sense

Elements of a thinking curriculum

Prepared teacher
A teacher who is able to let go of the lesson when appropriate
Materials that provoke thinking and interaction
Teacher who is knowledgeable on how to use the materials
Materials that can be adapted to the different levels of the students



Elements of a non-thinking curriculum

Too many worksheets
Lack of preparation
Over reliance on rote learning
Teacher talk dominates the lesson
Teaching to the test
Too much structured control from the teacher
Over reliance on text books
Games that have little focus on thinking
Copying information
Level is too high or too low

Strategies to provoke thinking in the classroom

Start with a warm-up activity
Adjust the level of difficulty to their level
Follow the kids, put them in charge
Questioning
Small group exploration
Have student explain their thinking
Can anyone do this another way?
How do you know this is correct, can you prove it?

Areas of concern when promoting thinking in the classroom

Is anyone being made fun of?
Is everyone safe?
Are my students making progress?
Do my students trust each other?
Are a few students dominating the discussion?
Am I promoting thinking AND covering the required materials?
Do my peers, supervisor, parents understand the value of what I am doing?
Do I allow for minority thinking or alternative interpretations?