

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR THE THINKING CLASSROOM

After years of sharing interactive teaching methods with teachers—now over 50,000 educators in 32 countries-- OSI announces a new initiative to promote active learning and critical thinking in classrooms around the world. **Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom** project shows teachers how to:

- *Teach students to read and listen with comprehension;*
- *Conduct engaging and insightful discussions;*
- *Teach with cooperative learning;*
- *Use writing to learn;*
- *Conduct community-based inquiry;*
- *Plan active lessons, including thematic units; and*
- *Use authentic assessment that evaluates learning processes as well as mastery of content.*

WHY THINKING CLASSROOM NEEDS TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES?

When active learning methods are used:

Students learn more deeply, retain ideas longer, and are better able to use the content of their courses. They are more highly motivated and enjoy school more.

They can relate what they learn to life, and use their learning to solve real problems.

When cooperative learning techniques are used:

Students learn to take initiative in the learning process.

They develop better relations with others, and enhance their social skills.

They learn skills of cooperation-- useful in society and in the workplace.

When critical thinking methods are added:

Students become more insightful, and are better able to think for themselves.

They learn to form their own opinions, and support them with facts.

They learn to listen and read respectfully but critically.

Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom project is intended for the upper primary through secondary levels. Other programs are available for teachers at the primary school and university levels.

HOW IT WORKS

Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom project is directed at experienced teachers, selected in teams from the same schools. They attend workshops and participate in lessons that demonstrate new teaching methods. They practice teaching with those methods under the guidance of experienced trainers, and later use the methods in lessons in their classrooms. In their home schools, teachers participate in school improvement groups in which they help each other try new methods, and plan together to help their students learn. Teachers match their performance against detailed teaching standards, which were developed by other master teachers.

The teaching methods in the program are intended to be learned at a useable level over the course of one school year. With further practice during a second year, most teachers reach a high level of competence, as they integrate methods for planning and teaching active lessons into their regular teaching repertoire.

Teachers who excel in using the methods may become trainers of other teachers.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

The initial workshops are offered by experienced international trainers. From the beginning, local educational leaders— often, these are master teachers--are identified for additional training, to prepare them to be workshop presenters and learning facilitators for the participating teachers. These local experts will offer workshops and support teachers as they make progress through the program.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom project is supported by a **guidebook** of 300 pages, laid out with pleasing graphics for easy reading and later referral. There is also a **leader's guide** that gives the workshop leaders detailed ideas for conducting workshops and supervising the progress of the participants as they try out new methods in their classrooms. CD ROMs and a web-site are available to give followup support to participants and trainers.

INTERNATIONAL TRAINERS

The workshops in **Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom** are led by a core of internationally renowned trainers, midcareer professionals who offer their services on a volunteer or near-volunteer basis. They are joined by teachers from many countries in Europe, Central Asia, Latina America, and Africa who have extensive experience in the project's teaching methods. Between them, the trainers have experience working in dozens of countries for many internationally agencies, including the Open Society Institute, USAID, Canadian CIDA, the World Bank, UNESCO, and the European Union. Most are university professors with experience as classroom teachers and school administrators, and most have extensive publishing records.

Indeed, a side benefit of **Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom** is the variety of ancillary projects that may be engendered, including research projects, conference presentations, publications, and further grants.

The International trainers normally present their workshops in English, Russian, or Spanish. For workshops in other languages, translators must be provided.

NEXT STEPS

Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom project is adaptable to local needs and budgets. The proportion of face-to-face training to other kinds of support (CRD-ROMs, Internet, e-mail, written guides) may vary from project to project. The staff of the project can provide assistance and documentation to help those seeking financial support from third parties.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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BRINGING CHANGE TO CLASSROOMS WORLDWIDE