

Teaching Divergent Thinking: A New, Interactive Method

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I. Introduction

Employers today seek individuals who are able to work in teams, communicate effectively, and most importantly, creatively solve problems. However, formal education systems rely on methodologies that teach students to look for only one answer to a given problem, which inhibits their ability to generate diverse ideas and develop unconventional solutions. In this presentation we introduce a new methodology designed to teach divergent thinking that allows students to break out of uncreative patterns of thought, recognize that there are many solutions to a given problem, critically explore their environment for potential solutions, and apply these skills to real-world problems.

II. Methods

This methodology is currently available in the form of an interactive text, which incorporates written activities, trivia questions, hands-on exercises, quotes, and illustrative cartoons to engage the reader throughout the learning process (as shown below). This text is designed to appeal to readers of all ages. Furthermore, the activities and exercises can be easily adapted to serve as supplements to a classroom curriculum to be used with groups of students or individuals.

III. Results

This interactive methodology has been used with learners of diverse age groups, class sizes, and educational backgrounds. It has also been used among educators to inspire more innovative teaching strategies, with great results.

IV. Conclusions

In the future, this methodology may be disseminated through online teaching platforms such as MOOC and Coursera, which will allow for a greater variety of activities, as well as more in-depth exploration of divergent thinking strategies. Below is a set of examples of some of the interactive additions to the text.

Did You Know...?

Jackson Pollock almost never used a brush to create his artwork; instead, he would lay his canvases on the floor and drip paint from kitchen utensils or other objects while moving quickly around the edges of the paintings.

Number 8, 1949. www.ibiblio.org

Words of the Wise:

Albert Einstein is reputed to have said, "A true sign of intelligence is not knowledge, but imagination."

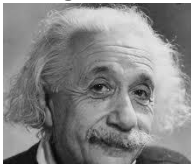


Fig. 1: A sample "Did You Know" addition Fig. 2: A sample "Words of the Wise" addition

Test Your Knowledge:

Blue jeans were first patented by which of these inventors:

a) Jacob Davis and Levi Strauss b) Jean du’Nim, from which the word “denim” was derived c) The pants were popularized by gold miners in California and were not patented.

Fig. 3: A sample "Test Your Knowledge" addition

Try it Out!

Head outside and take a good look at the materials around you. If you were lost, what could you use to help navigate your way home? Don’t stop at just one answer!

Fig. 4: A sample "Try It Out!" addition



Fig. 5: A sample "Moe and Joe" comic addition