



AT A GLANCE

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Possibility-Thinking

August 2012 Newsletter

With a new school year here there are fabulous opportunities for not only incorporating what worked last year, but to also gather new insights and envision new possibilities! Lessons from *The Physics of Business Growth* by Ed Hess and Jeanne Liedtka, professors at University of Virginia's Darden School of Business can be applied to the education setting. Hess and Liedtka have identified eight ways of creating possibilities: challenging, connecting, visualizing, collaborating, harmonizing, improvising, reorienting, and playing. Here are some ideas to get you started with possibility-thinking for the education world.

Challenging: Families, students, and educators can challenge widely held assumptions about the potential of students with disability labels. To create new possibilities for students it will often involve questioning what has always been done. Everyone can set a challenge for themselves to use a student's strengths/preferences/interests to teach new skills and introduce new concepts.

Connecting: Many times when a student's significant support needs are described an immediate association is made that the student will need to be placed in a separate special education classroom. When these common associations are made continually, it decreases the ability to see new possibilities. Practice making new connections between seemingly unrelated questions, problems, or ideas to jumpstart creative thinking.

Visualizing: The thoughts and beliefs of adults and students can limit or expand the number of opportunities available. Create a poster (s) of images and quotations that are inspirational and represent goals to accomplish. Share the posters at the next IEP meeting to encourage creative thinking. Visualize each part of the IEP meeting going well, imagine a positive outcome, and the mental barriers that have been roadblocks in the past will be eliminated.

Collaborating: Honoring all team members' input will allow the visions to be realized. Dissolve turf boundaries and service provider specific goals. Instead write goals for the student that all team members can support and help the student achieve. Encourage interaction between groups that don't often attend IEP meetings. Chances are the specialty (Art, P.E., Music) and elective teachers have terrific ideas that could be tried.

Harmonizing: Think of new ideas that have an emotional appeal. Ask what is worth doing and what can the student get excited about. Have the student write down his goals and dreams and how they make him feel. The feelings attached to his goals will be his greatest source of motivation.

Improvising: When a technique isn't working, improvise, and try something new. Give permission for everyone to experiment. Make daily deposits in idea banks and on a regular basis, pick a new idea to try.

Reorienting: Change your assumptions into, "How can we?" Reframe problems and different solutions will emerge. Get input and a different perspective from the student and her peers.

Playing: Have more fun, be sillier than usual. Laugh more, worry less. Play with your child,/student, have fun learning from, and about, your child.

There can be frustrating events, roadblocks, and conflicts at school. However, by taking a few minutes every day to practice these eight possibility-thinking strategies, new creative solutions can be born!

- Identify your vision: Look outside the boundaries.
- Use your voice: Ask what is really worth doing?
- Work together: Use your combined talents and capabilities to create new possibilities.
- Take an action step now and email this newsletter to others!

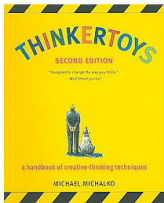


Resources



How can six different colored hats be a tool that facilitate creativity and collaboration? Find the answer in Edward de Bono’s [Six Thinking Hats](#). Learn how to see all sides of a situation and achieve meaningful results from your meetings.

Websites



Want to add some terrific creative thinking tools to your toolbox? You will learn specific techniques that can so useful in all aspects of your life! [Click here](#) for [Michael Michalko’s Creative Thinking website](#).

Please let me know if you’re interested in one of my presentations and/or customized consulting and coaching.

Remember, what we anticipate, determines what we find!

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As a parent and an educator, I bring 35+ years of experience and enthusiasm to create positive change for students, families, and educators!

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