

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 13, 2003

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Oliver School’s Whole School Implementation of Thinking Maps

ORIGINATOR: K. Linden, Principal, Oliver School

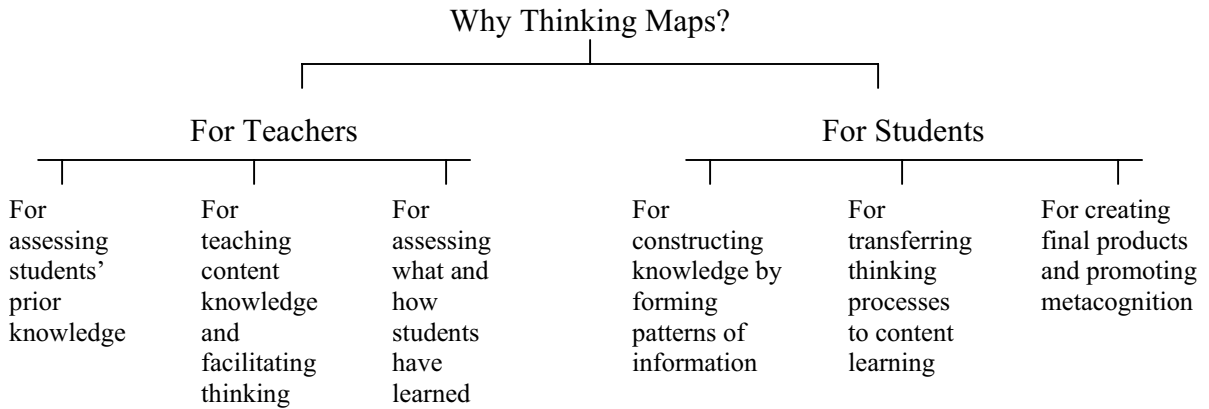
RESOURCE: Auriana Kowalchuk and Sid Shugarman, Consulting Services

STAFF:

INFORMATION

*Oliver School is a “Higher Order Thinking” school. All students will demonstrate growth in their higher order thinking skills across curriculum as measured by the results of monthly school wide HOTS assessments, district HLAT’s, and the Alberta Learning Achievement tests.*

In October 2002, the Oliver School staff implemented *Thinking Maps* as a common visual language to ensure superb results for all students.



Thinking Maps are eight learning tools that combine the flexibility of brainstorm “webs” and the structure of “graphic” organizers with clearly defined, common thinking processes. This enables easy transfer and continuous development of thinking processes across subject areas, grade levels, and programs.

The consistency and flexibility of each of the Thinking Maps promotes student-centred and cooperative learning, concept development, reflective thinking, creativity, clarity of

communication, and continuous cognitive development. The most important difference between Thinking Maps and graphic organizers is that each Thinking Map is based on a fundamental thinking skill:

1. The Circle Map is used for brainstorming ideas and for showing prior knowledge about a topic by providing context information.
2. The Bubble Map is used for describing, and using adjectives (and adjective phrases).
3. The Double Bubble Map is a tool for comparing and contrasting things.
4. The Tree Map is used by students for classifying things and ideas.
5. The Brace Map is used by students to analyze physical objects.
6. The Flow Map is used by students for sequencing and ordering information.
7. The Multi-Flow Map is used by students for showing and analyzing cause and effect relationships.
8. The Bridge Map gives students a tool for applying the process of seeing analogies.

All teaching staff have been working with Edmonton Public consultants, Sid Shugarman and Auriana Kowalchuk, to ensure the success of this first school-wide implementation in the district. The work at Oliver School has enabled the consultants to hone their training skills as other district schools look to implement the same best practice. The consultants will continue to support our professional learning next year. As well, we are exploring the possibility for an interschool teacher-consultant team to develop a Thinking Maps website so that teachers across the district may collaborate and share ideas.

Stakeholders are impressed with the growing evidence that this best practice is helping to improve teaching and learning at Oliver School:

- We have a common *higher order thinking* language kindergarten to grade nine.
- All teachers and students are using Thinking Maps in all subject areas.
- Students and teachers are able to choose a map relative to the cognitive process needed for a learning activity.
- Students' ability to organize and extend their thinking has improved.
- Students have internalized the use of the maps, and often use them without being prompted by teachers.
- Data for our interim measure is collected every six weeks, and teachers collaborate to analyze the students' growth over time. (Highlights of these results will be shared at the May 13<sup>th</sup> presentation.)
- Writing skills have improved. (Preliminary HLAT data will be shared at the May 13<sup>th</sup> presentation.)

KBL:kbl