



Trauma
Care

Newsletter

TraumaCare

Box 1807, Magaliesview, 2067
5a Franshoek Rd, Lonehill
Tel: 0715929690
Website: www.traumacare.co.za
Email: mail@traumacare.co.za

26 April 2015

Thinking out the box

Lateral thinking is solving problems through an indirect and creative approach, using reasoning that is not immediately obvious and involving ideas that may not be obtainable by using only traditional step-by-step logic. The term was coined in 1967 by Edward de Bono.

According to de Bono, lateral thinking deliberately distances itself from standard perceptions of creativity as either "vertical" logic (the classic method for problem solving: working out the solution step-by-step from the given data) or "horizontal" imagination (having many ideas but being unconcerned with the detailed implementation of them).

"When you hear hooves...think horses...not zebras".

The essence of this statement is to decide upon the most obvious or most likely solution first when faced with multiple possibilities. The problem arises when the obvious doesn't work or when a more efficient way is yet to be discovered. The way of science involves taking into account all known variables and calculating probabilities to arrive at a hypothesis and to then test it in all known instances to arrive at a theory.

Lateral thinking is the consideration of unknown variables along with possible new parameters, trying them and if the experiment succeeds...the previously unknown variable becomes a known and new parameters are set...and so a new solution has been found. In the real world, many problems are time dependent. Lateral thinking involves questioning the implied parameters...expanding, altering, or erasing them and trying anew. A quick mental run through usually brings forth possibilities.

To think laterally initially is not usually the best way to go as the obvious would, so often, be missed. Where the obvious has been considered...and fails...lateral thinking is a strength.



Fix it men...whether in business, science, law....etc...the specialists in their fields, utilize lateral thinking to a great extent. They may quickly review the situation to ensure the obvious has been considered...they may then concentrate on what has been missed considering all the possibilities...not just on the standard.

The saying, "Think out of the box" refers to lateral thinking. There are many books available on lateral thinking. It is a valuable way to increase his critical reasoning...to take in all known variables...and to consider possible unknown variables with possible adaptable parameters. Lateral thinking is science so long as it follows a hierarchy of reasoning. Consider the obvious first. Lateral thinking is used to solve the previously unsolvable or to fine tune a solved.



The inherently great lateral thinkers are usually innovators as their thinking goes beyond the bounds of normal thinking processes. Many ask not...why? or...how?...but...why not?...or...how not?. They have a solution in their head already and must then merely reverse engineer it to a viable solution.

Either way...lateral think should be encouraged in the study of critical reasoning. Logic is necessary. The study of formal logic should be considered foundational to every educational curriculum. In the past it was. The roots of logic stretch into every other subject. The construction and programming of computers, for example, is based entirely upon the application of the laws of logic. The proofs of algebra and geometry rely upon the laws of logic. The laws of logic, in one way or another, are fundamental to every academic discipline.

Unfortunately, the study of logic is dispensed with in the modern curriculum. Social skills are considered more important than thinking skills. Children do not learn to think for themselves. The study of formal logic will give your child life-long skill in proper reasoning. The study of logic should be considered indispensable to every Classical Education.

What Exactly Is Lateral Thinking?

Lateral thinking was developed by Edward de Bono in response to the following question:

*Why do some people always seem to be having new ideas while others of equal intelligence never do?
(Edward de Bono, New Think)*

He describes lateral thinking as a special kind of thinking that is distinct from ordinary logic – which he terms 'vertical thinking':

Lateral thinking is concerned with the generation of new ideas... Lateral thinking is also concerned with breaking out of the concept presence of old ideas. This leads to changes in attitude and approach; to looking in a different way at things which have always been looked at in the same way. Liberation from old ideas and the stimulation of new ones are twin aspects of lateral thinking.

Lateral thinking is quite distinct from vertical thinking which is the traditional type of thinking. In vertical thinking one moves forward by sequential steps each of which must be justified... Lateral thinking is not a substitute for vertical thinking. Both are required. They are complementary. Lateral thinking is generative. Vertical thinking is selective.

Today's kids have life-and-death choices to make.

Are you going to wait until schools start to teach thinking directly to your children? That may be too late. Thinking is the most fundamental of human skills but education does very little about it. Where is 'thinking' in the curriculum?

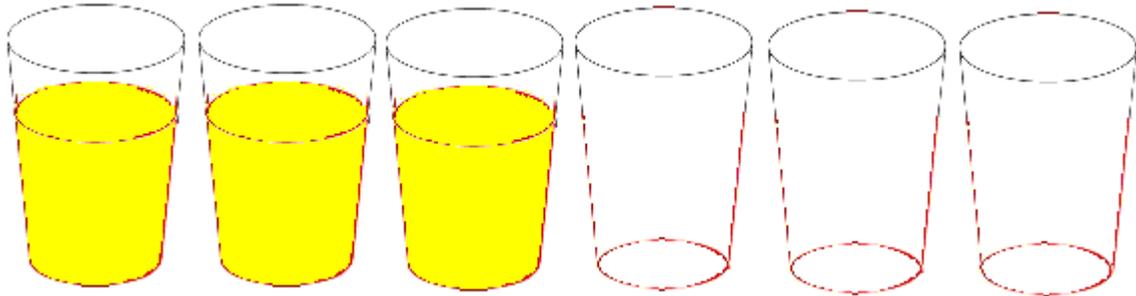
The belief that intelligence and thinking are the same has led to some unfortunate conclusions:

- Students with high intelligence are automatically good thinkers.
- Students with low intelligence can never be good thinkers.
- The more information you have the smarter you are.
- Wisdom can't be taught...it comes with age and experience.

Our increasingly complicated lifestyle demands clear and constructive thinking: making decisions, making choices, taking initiatives, and being creative. Watching television for twenty to thirty hours a week, as many children do, results in a passive mind that can only copy what others are doing (including drugs, sex and violence). Give your child a better chance in life. Thinking is a skill....even a superior brain is wasted without it. You can start to teach your child how to think now.

See how you do with thinking out of the box with these quickies...

1. Three of the glasses below are filled with orange juice and the other three are empty. By moving just one glass, can you arrange the glasses so that the full and empty glasses alternate?



2. You have to choose between three rooms.
The first is full of raging fires
The second is full of tigers that haven't eaten in 3 years.
The third is full of assassins with loaded machine guns.
Which room should you choose?
3. John's mother has 3 children, one is named April, one is named May. What is the third one named?
4. What can you put in a wooden box that would make it lighter? The more of them you put in the lighter it becomes, yet the box stays empty.

Here are some ideas of how to encourage your children to think laterally.

- Start off your summer with this challenge: build a duct tape boat using only cardboard and duct tape -- it can be any size or any shape. Then, test it.
- Ask your child to go outside and find 20 leaves or petals (preferably on the ground). Then give your child a piece of white paper, some glue, and a box of markers and tell them to create a piece of art that represents something real or imagined that lives in nature.
- Using just 10 squares of toilet paper for each person, make a soft family. You may use one other object of your choice such as a marker or string.
- Gather up ten books. Go to page 30 of every book and write down the 30th word on that page. Now, using those ten words, write a story that is only 10 sentences long.
- Go to your trash and/or recycling bin and create an instrument (or two or three) and then play it.
- Another simple challenge: using all of the paperclips in a box of paperclips, create a creature.
- Create a house using only forks.
- Make something using one box of Twinkies.
- Use boxes (or styrofoam filling) any size, any number and use only duct tape and boxes to create a robot. Try to make arms, legs, etc. that move!
- For a twist on the traditional pasta tower challenge, gather up your pasta and make a noodle tower using noodles, paperclips and 12 inches of tape and NOTHING else -- no glue allowed.
- Gather up 10-12 old/preferably used gift cards or postcards or index cards and 3 colored pencils, a hole punch, 3 paperclips, and 3 feet of string. Create a puppet.

How many other amazing ideas can you think of to encourage your children to think out of the box.



ANSWERS

1. Pour the juice from the second glass into the fifth
2. The second room. Tigers that haven't eaten in three years are dead!
3. John
4. Holes

This newsletter has been issued by:
TraumaCare, Box 1807, Magaliesview, Gauteng, 2067
www.traumacare.co.za * mail@traumacare.co.za * Tel: 071 592 9690
Play Therapy * Counselling * Trauma Counselling * Psychology
Please note that this information must not be used for diagnostic purposes. Please visit a medical professional for a correct diagnosis.