

Thinking Skills Newsletter

April 2014

This month:

This month Karen went to Boscombe Down to visit the Empire Test Pilot School and talk to them about thinking skills and accelerated learning. We also visited FOST in Devonport to discuss thinking skills and how we can help the Royal Navy to supplement the developments they already have in hand. This was a very positive meeting and we will be continuing to work with them, for example on aspects of group decision making in pressured environments.

We have started observing civil service office activities as an additional thinking skills case study to the Estimate process at CAST. We observed a team meeting with Training, Education and Comms at Greenhill House, and plan to return to observe other activities. The aim is to identify habits and behaviours that can help or hinder effective thinking in specific contexts.

We are in the process of writing booklets to explain certain topics in thinking skills. These include decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking, systems thinking, empirical thinking and resilient thinking. If you think you could contribute to these or other similar topics within thinking skills then please get in touch.

July 4th has been confirmed as the date for our Thinking Skills Congress at Beckett House. There are 50 spaces available, and if you would like to attend or want anymore information please let us know if you have not already.

Current Issues:

Sleep is hugely important for the health of our bodies and our brains, and lack of sleep can have negative effects on our cognitive abilities. Our body clock stems from our evolutionary past where we would be active in the light and sleep in the dark, but now we have a '24-hr society' we are living against our body clocks and not getting enough sleep. Studies have shown that lack of sleep affects our thinking, especially divergent/creative thinking, which is useful in decision making and problem solving. It is important that we get enough sleep to help our bodies and brains regenerate. The amount of sleep we need varies across age and lifestyle, but the general 'rule of thumb' for adults is 7-9 hours of good quality sleep, which includes cycles of REM-sleep (where you dream) and the deeper non-REM sleep. You can find an analysis of multiple studies into sleep deprivation here: Pilcher, J. J., & Huffcutt, A. J. (1996). Effects of sleep deprivation on performance: a meta-analysis. *Sleep: Journal of Sleep Research & Sleep Medicine*.

Book corner

Smarter—The New Science of Building Brain Power by Dan Hurley

This book investigates the field of intelligence training, with the author using himself as a 'human guinea-pig' to test the theories on. He concludes that there is limited success with reference to increasing intelligence, but reports feeling more focused, alert and invigorated through the training.

If you have any questions about the programme, please contact:

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Brain Teaser

What comes next in this pattern?

A30—M31—J30

Answer to March's brain teaser:

Silence