

Teaching for Thinking

UQ Thinking Schools Network

Two Day Foundation Workshop with Dr. Peter Ellerton, ACARA consultant and Curriculum Director UQ Critical Thinking Project (**April 3rd and 4th hosted by Newington College**)

The University of Queensland Thinking Schools Network (TSN) is a professional development network designed for teachers and leaders to support a pedagogical approach to Teaching for Thinking.

The Thinking Schools Network (TSN) draws on the deep professional experience and pedagogical leadership of the University of Queensland Critical Thinking Project (**UQCTP**). The TSN has grown to comprise more than **2000 members from over 380 educational institutions** across Australia, the USA, Singapore and Canada.



Dr Peter Ellerton is a former teacher and was instrumental in developing the **Critical and Creative Thinking** General Capability of V9.0 of the Australian Curriculum.

Teacher experiences:

“Teachers are starved with regard to professional development. It is so rare to have an experience like this one. **This is the best PD I have ever attended.**”
Classroom Teacher, United States

“As a beginning teacher, **this has been the biggest possible gift I could ask for.** The content, all of it, will be invaluable to me for the duration of my career. I would recommend that if ever any person (no matter how long they have been teaching) was starting to feel flat or disengaged in their role as a teacher, then they should sign up to this program.” *Beginning Teacher, Brisbane*

“Excellent delivery. **Thoroughly engaging through use of practical examples** that made me question my current practice. Well-paced, plenty of information, lots to think about. Content and delivery were excellent. Left me wanting more.” *Queensland State School Curriculum Leader*



“What’s special about the UQ Critical Thinking project is the focus on building aspiration by building academic capacity. We help teachers and schools deliver training in critical and creative thinking to their students, and students then come on to campus to see how those skills are applied in cutting-edge research”.

Professor Deborah Brown
Director UQ Critical Thinking Project.

Outline of the Workshop

Section	Overview
Challenges of Teaching for Thinking and Understanding Teacher Expertise	This section challenges the dichotomy of teaching for thinking and teaching for content knowledge. Here we show that developing deep and complex content knowledge demands attention to how students think, both as they are learning and in how they are using and creating new knowledge. The extent to which we value explicit teaching must carry into the explicit teaching of thinking, and the language and concepts of how this is best done are critical for effective pedagogical discussions.
Beyond Bloom's Taxonomy: understanding cognitive skills	For a long time, Bloom's taxonomy helped to foreground thinking skills and provided a language and conceptual framework for curriculum and assessment design. But I suggest that this taxonomy is now doing more harm than good, since the hierarchical nature of cognitions assumed by Bloom is wrong. Research has shown that the relationship of the cognitions to one another is far more organic and contextualised. This section presents a new way of focusing on student cognition using a critical thinking lens. Participants will be introduced to a more actionable cognitive framework and provided with resources that can assist in learning experience and assessment design.
Values of Inquiry: providing feedback on the quality of student thinking	Determining what we value about something allows us to construct criteria for evaluation. But what do we value in good thinking? One way of approaching this is to understand what we value in good inquiry. By articulating these values of inquiry, we can derive a language and a conceptual structure to help us evaluate thinking. In this section, we will outline some key values of inquiry and show how they can be used to provide feedback on the quality of Student thinking.
Questioning and curiosity	Questioning in the classroom is often poorly theorised. Simple taxonomies such as using question stems (why, where, when, etc.) have limited utility in directing and stimulating student thinking. In this section we explore how we can link the quality of questions with explicit intent on the part of the teacher. We also explore means of improving the quality and quantity of student questioning by identifying the deep connect connections between creativity and criticality in question generation.
Mechanisms of collaboration	Collaboration is a key 21st century skill and an essential part of how we develop better thinking. Collaboration as a concept is not well theorised, however and, as a result, developing practical ways of optimising student outcomes through collaborative inquiry remains a challenge. In this section, we will focus on the latest research that makes explicit the mechanisms of collaboration and use this to construct criteria for learning experiences and assessment that focus on the constituent skills of collaboration.
Planning and Assessing for Thinking	A key challenge for teachers is how to plan and assess student thinking with the same precision and intentionality that is usually applied in planning for and assessing content knowledge. In this section, we explore how the cognitive content of questions can be made explicit and targeted in both planning and assessment. Range of resources is provided showing how planning and assessing thinking can be made transparent, actionable and shareable across all subject area context and age levels.

All sections include resources and practical advice for implementing a Teaching for Thinking focus across all subject areas and age levels.



2025 Foundational Workshop Dates

Location	Date	Registration
Brisbane The Pavilions at Albion	Thursday 13 - Friday 14 March	Click here to register
Sydney Newington College	Thursday 3 - Friday 4 April	Click here to register
Brisbane The Pavilions at Albion	Thursday 5 – Friday 6 June	Click here to register
Brisbane The Pavilions at Albion	Thursday 21 – Friday 22 August	Click here to register
Brisbane The Pavilions at Albion	Thursday 20 – Friday 21 November	Click here to register

Membership fees

- The membership fee of \$1 100 per person includes the two-day foundational workshop and access to UQ Thinking Schools network activities and resources.
- School principals attend free of charge.
- For more information, please find us at <https://critical-thinking.project.uq.edu.au>

Before registering

- Please ensure you have school permission/ approval before registering for a workshop.
- Payment can be made online via credit card or invoice.

