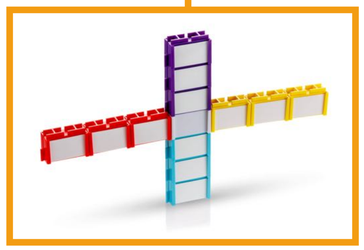
‘Big Picture’ Thinking

The construction of mental models helps learners to create lasting conceptual understanding across all subject domains. The models help students make sense of the world around them. This happens as the learner ‘uncomplicates’ abstract ideas and begins visualising the ‘connectedness’ that exists in all bodies of knowledge. These examples of knowledge structures can be used to engage learners in the creative construction of critical concepts.

1 What is it like?

Describing and Categorising
The ability to identify, describe and categorise is fundamental to human learning, it’s a constructive way to start thinking about any new topic.

Mind Maps

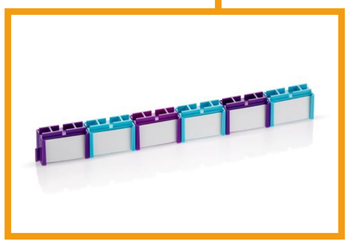


Sorting Tasks

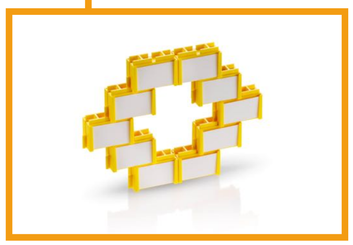
Purpose
- Start thinking about a topic
- Organise content
- Identify themes
- See the relationship between the parts
- Stimulate the generation of ideas
- Reveal the hierarchy of ideas in a topic

2 What happens and why?

Connecting: Sequencing and Causation
Helping learners to recognise that actions and events have reasons and consequences. The analysis of causal relationships can be seen as the backbone of deeper knowledge creation.



Timelines and Causal Relationships



Cycles

Purpose
- Represent the sequence of events
- Plot historical episodes
- Explain cycles in the natural world
- Storyboarding
- Identlify the causes and effects of events
- Examine multi-causal relationships

3 How is it similar or different?

Comparing: Similarities and Differences
An essential aspect of understanding is how we draw boundaries between different ideas. Distinctions are used to challenge definitions and labels.
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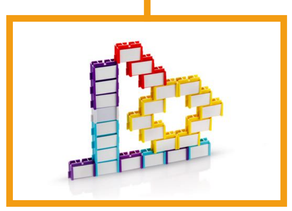
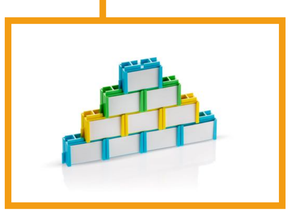
Comparing Two Things



‘Bridge’ two ideas together



Ranking Exercises

Purpose
- Identify the similarities between two topics
- Rank items to create new meaning
- Develop New perspectives
- Make evaluations against a criteria
- Encourage learners to justify their judgements