

From Learning to Talk to Talking to Learn: Supporting Critical Thinking with Powerful conversations

Janice Greenberg, B.Sc., D.S.P. • The Hanen Centre

NAEYC PDI Conference • June 7, 2016

Mission Statement

The Hanen Centre provides the important people in a young child's life with the knowledge and training they need to help the child develop the best possible language, social and literacy skills.



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From Learning to Talk to Talking to Learn: Supporting Critical Thinking with Powerful Conversations

Learning Language & Loving It™

– The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators/Teachers

ABC and Beyond™

– The Hanen Program® for Building Emergent Literacy in Early Childhood Settings

Hanen I'm Ready!™

– Building Early Literacy in the Home



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From Learning to Talk to Talking to Learn: Supporting Critical Thinking with Powerful Conversations

What critical thinking is and why it's important

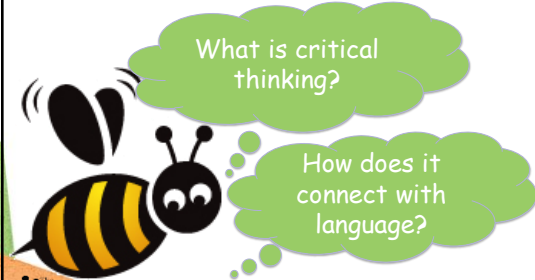
Connections with language and literacy

How educators can support the development of critical thinking



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Compare these two comments that Sean might make about his bean plant.

Look, it's getting leaves!



Our plant at home died because my mother gave it too much water. The water made the plant sick just like when I ate too much ice cream.



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Two kinds of comments

"Look, it's getting leaves" "Our plant at home died..."

Thinking	
Thinking about here and now	Thinking beyond here and now
Making a concrete observation	Using abstract thinking Draws upon previous knowledge to analyze, relate, compare, predict, etc.
Language	
Non-verbal and verbal	Verbal only
Short, simple sentences	More complex sentences
Not as specific	More specific



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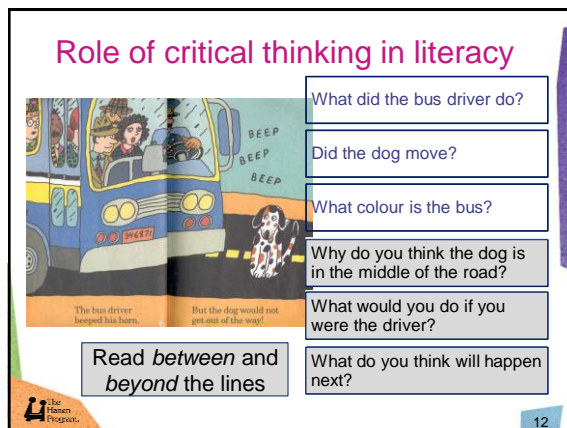
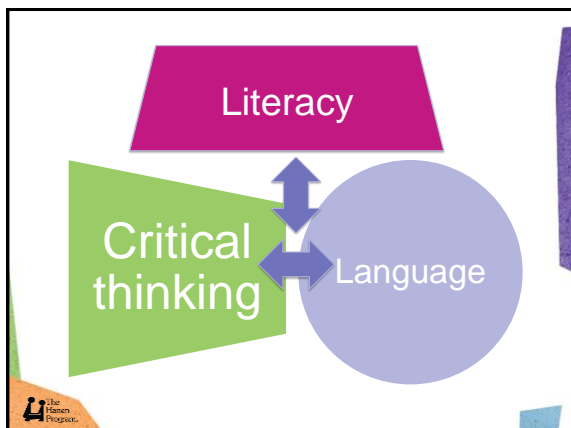
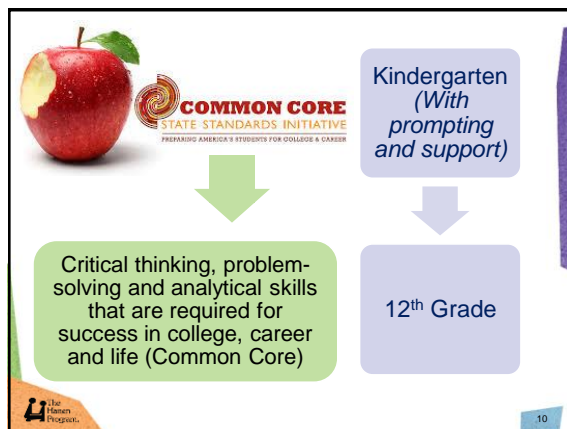
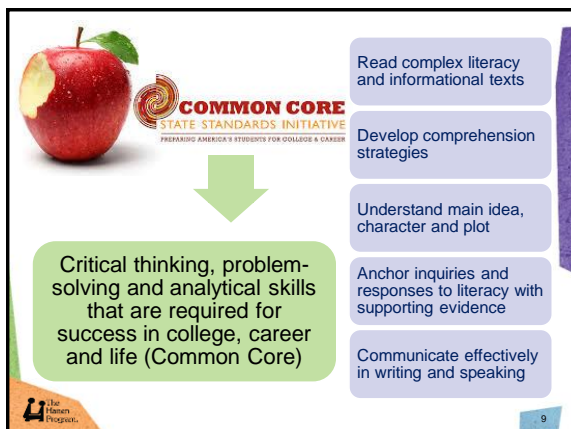
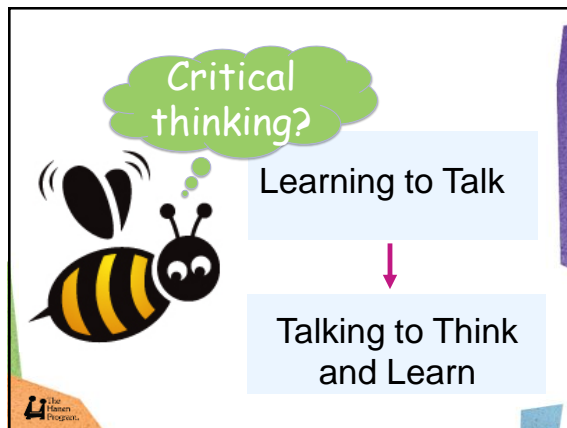
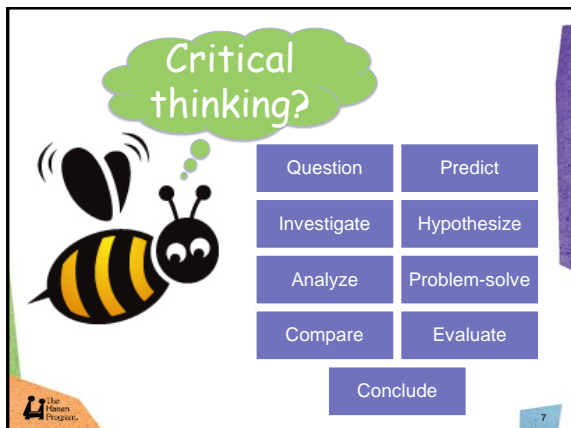
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The key to understanding what we read

Read what's *in* the lines

- Ensures understanding of basic story or text
- Does not draw upon language for thinking and learning
- Less challenging so children feel successful

Read *between* and *beyond* the lines

- Beyond information in the text
- Draws on existing knowledge, problem-solving, reasoning
- More challenging but key to reading comprehension



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The key to understanding what we read



Read *between* and *beyond* the lines

- Beyond information in the text
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Reading between and beyond the lines

The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman stood up in a corner and kept quiet all night, although of course they could not sleep. - L. Frank Baum

Because he was so small, Stuart was often hard to find around the house. - E.B. White

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. - Henry David Thoreau



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Building blocks of literacy

Decoding

- Print knowledge
- Alphabet knowledge
- Phonological awareness
- Letter-sound correspondence

Meaning

- Thinking
- Language



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Literacy is not just about decoding!

High teach,
High read

- Performed well across time
- Decoding, alphabet knowledge, reading comprehension

High teach,
Low read

- Did well initially
- Reading comprehension declined in gr. 3

Low teach,
High read

- Start off lower
- Early disadvantage disappeared by gr. 3

Low teach,
Low read

- Performed poorly on most measure across time



Senéchal & Lefevre, 2001

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How do children develop critical thinking?

Through POWERFUL conversations

- Follow the children's lead and build on their interests
- Introduce new ideas
- Inspire their imaginations
- Get them thinking



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Conversation counts!



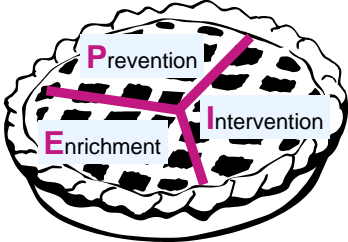
The most important aspect to evaluate in early childhood settings for very young children is the amount of talk actually going on, moment by moment, between children and their caregivers. (Hart & Risley, 2002)

Read *with* not *to* children



It is the talk that surrounds the storybook reading that gives it power, helping children to bridge what is in the story and their own lives. (NAEYC & IRA, 1998)

Make conversations count



Important for all;
Essential for some!

RECIPE Powerful Conversations that Build Critical Thinking

INGREDIENTS:

Interaction	Children are actively engaged in the conversation (initiating and responding)
Information	Teacher adds ideas to promote thinking and use of higher level language

RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

Interaction

- OWL
Observe, Wait & Listen
- Follow the child's lead
- Keep the conversation going




RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

Information

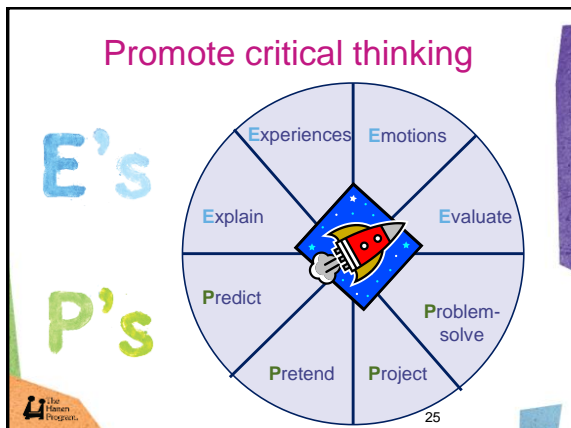
- Add new ideas
- Inspire the children's imaginations
- Get the children thinking



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RECIPE

INTERACTIONS:
Interaction Information

Ingredients:

- Explain
- Experiences
- Emotions
- Evaluate
- Predict
- Pretend
- Project
- Problem-solve

Turn 1
Look, I made a giant car with the blocks.

Turn 2
What an amazing car! Where are you going in your car?

Turn 3
I am driving to Africa to see the elephants.

Turn 4
All the way to Africa! I think Africa is too far away to drive there in a car.

Turn 5
My car is special. It can fly and go really fast!

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Promote critical thinking

E's
P's

Make "thinking-out-loud" comments

- Add ideas
- Model how to think

Ask questions

- Add ideas
- Stimulate thinking

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Make "thinking-out-loud" comments

Promote critical thinking

"I'm thinking that..."

"I am wondering about..."

"I'm trying to understand why..."

This reminds me of ..."

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Ask questions

Promote critical thinking

Who? What? Where?
When? Why? What if?

Why are you thinking that?
Why do you think...?
What does this make you think of?
What can we do?
What do you think will happen if...?
What would you do if...?

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Ask questions

NOT...

- What colour is this?
- Where is the dog?
- Are you a girl?
- Are your shoes blue?
- What's that?
- Are you eating pizza?

Who? What? Where?
When? Why? What if?

Why are you thinking that?
Why do you think...?
What does this make you think of?
What can we do?
What do you think will happen if...?
What would you do if...?

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PROBE for elaboration of children's comments, questions, responses

Promote critical thinking

Who? What? Where?
When? Why? What if?
"Tell me more."
"What do you mean by...?"
"Why do you think that?"
"If he does that, what do you think will happen next?"
"Why are you wondering that?"





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Project

- "How do you think he feels?"
- "What do you think he's thinking?"
- "What do you think it would be like?"
- "I'm thinking that he must be feeling..."

How do you think Jason is feeling?

Would you be happy being alone?

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We need to work together not against each other


What are the ingredients for an effective partnership?




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Partnering with educators in ABC and Beyond

Seek to understand	Look for coherence
Be collaborative	Be supportive



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Seek to understand



What they know and have experienced

What they believe and value

What they want



- Self-directed
- Goal seeking and problem-centred

What they decide and what they do

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A wise old owl sat in an oak
The more he saw, the less he spoke
The less he spoke, the more he heard
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?


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Seek to understand



What was your goal?

What do you wish was different?

How do you feel about how the children responded?

Did this go as you had expected?

Why or why not?

Are the children progressing the way you would like?

Is there anything you wish had gone differently?

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Reflect and Probe

It sounds like you're feeling...

Tell me more..

So, you're telling me that...

It seems that...

Why?

How?

If I understand you...

Where?

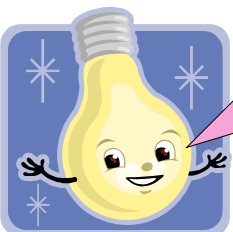
So, in your opinion...

The way you see it is....

When?

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How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?



Only one, but the light bulb has to want to change!

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Look for coherence

Connect with

- An overall improvement strategy
- Existing standards
- Organizational goals
- Larger initiatives

Common Core

Curriculum

Inquiry-based learning

Literacy development

Developmentally appropriate practice

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Make it collaborative

Just tell people what to do → Doesn't work

Omits person's perspective

- Can undermine confidence
- Can encourage defensiveness
- Doesn't guarantee application
- Doesn't guarantee maintenance

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People don't resist change.
They resist being changed.
We only support what we create.

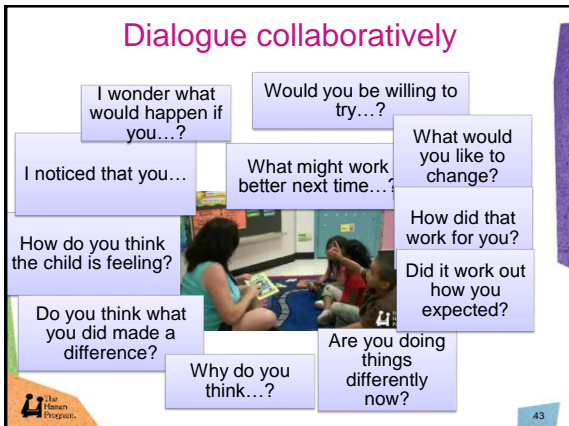
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Dialogue collaboratively



I wonder what would happen if you...?

Would you be willing to try...?

I noticed that you...

What might work better next time...?

What would you like to change?

How do you think the child is feeling?


How did that work for you?

Did it work out how you expected?

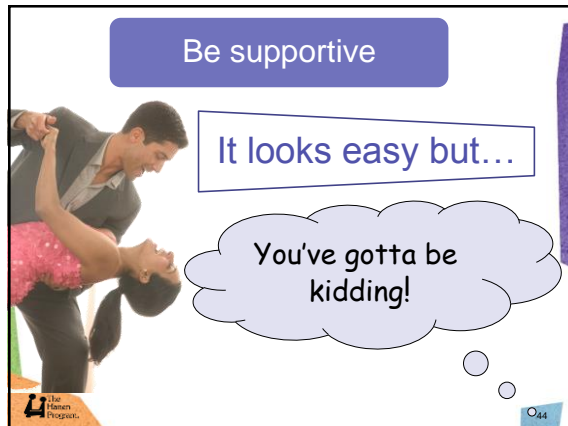
Do you think what you did made a difference?

Are you doing things differently now?

Why do you think...?


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Be supportive



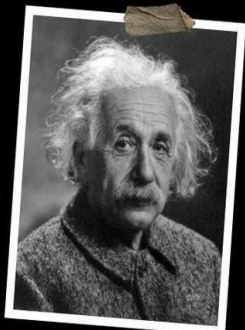
It looks easy but...


You've gotta be kidding!

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"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."

-Albert Einstein





For more information...

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