Autonomy, Purpose and Mastery
Empowering the Child

Power point presentation by
Denise Meyer
Based on ideas contained in the book *The Why and How of Thinking in School*
Empowered to do what?

- Critical thinkers
- Decision-makers
- Problem solvers
- Life-long learner
Extrinsic Motivation in School

• John Gatto: “By stars and red checks, smiles and frowns, prizes, honors and disgraces, I teach children to surrender their will to a predestined chain of command.”

• Alfie Kohn: “When extrinsic rewards are placed on an activity previously done for intrinsic rewards, the level of enthusiasm and enjoyment of an activity is decreased.”

• John Holt: “External motivation – rewards such as grades and gold stars – reinforces children’s fears of failing exams and receiving disapproval from the adults in their lives.”

• Haymen, J; Irlenbusch, B. I.; Pink, D: “rewards have been shown to diminish performance on complex conceptual tasks”
Autonomy, Purpose, Mastery

Words associated with these concepts:

- Freedom
- Self-direction
- Independence
- Control
- Meaning
- Engagement

Do TOC tools enable autonomy, mastery and purpose in a school setting?
How do the tools enable autonomy, purpose and mastery?

Inherent in all the tools are open-ended questions.

• Open-ended questions require thinking.
• Open-ended questions require personal input.
• Open-ended questions value the responder.
Why the tools?
Because the tools ask open-ended questions.

Cloud

B – D Assumptions

A

5

What is the common objective?

B

3

What need am I trying to satisfy?

C

4

What need is the other side trying to satisfy?

D

1

What do I want?

D’

2

What does the other side want?

C – D’ Assumptions

B – D Assumptions
Why the tools?
Because the tools ask open-ended questions.

Branch:
• If this, then what?
• If this, then that because….?
Why the tools?
Because the tools ask open-ended questions.

**Ambitious Target:**
- What’s the goal?
- What are the obstacles?
- How can we overcome the obstacles? What are the intermediate objectives.
- What do we need to do first? Second? Third?
- Etc…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambitious Target</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles</td>
<td>Intermediate Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Devil and Daniel Webster

Assumptions:
1. The devil will give me what I need for a successful farm and life
2. The devil provides good things in return for souls
3. I will have an easy and happy life.
4. There is no other way to solve my problems
5. If I don't do anything, things will get even worse.
6. Right now my wife and children are depending on me.

Assumptions:
1. When you do the wrong thing, you feel empty inside.
2. Your soul is important to you; selling it is like selling yourself out.
3. You might solve the immediate problem but you'll have to pay for it later.

Freedom
Self-direction
Independence
Control
Meaning
Engagement
Kris’s Branch

Freedom
Self-direction
Independence
Control
Meaning
Engagement

Better not to hit or push Jesus.

If I hit my finger, I will cry.

I will feel sad because I won’t get happy.

My mom will hit me.

Then I get in trouble.

I live with my mom.

Hit Push Jesus.

I have to do more work.

My mom will hit me.
## Ambitious Target Tree
The Goal: Science Project is finished

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacles</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I don’t have the materials I need.</td>
<td>1. I have all the materials I need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I haven’t collected the stuff to put in the jar.</td>
<td>2. I have collected all the stuff to put in the jar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I haven’t written the report.</td>
<td>3. I have written my report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rewrite my report neatly.</td>
<td>4. My report is rewritten neatly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I haven’t brought it to school yet.</td>
<td>5. I have brought it to school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I haven’t gotten my board ready.</td>
<td>6. My board is ready.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I don’t have the results.</td>
<td>7. I have my results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I’m not sure if I have enough vinegar.</td>
<td>8. I have enough vinegar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I haven’t done any thinking ahead to figure out my hypothesis.</td>
<td>9. I have figured out what my hypothesis is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I don’t have a timeline for finishing my project.</td>
<td>10. I have a timeline for finishing my project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have enough vinegar.
I have collected the stuff to put in the jar.
I have all my materials.
I have figured out my hypothesis.
I have my results.
I have written out my report.
I have my project neatly rewritten.
I have my board ready.
I have brought it to school.

Freedom
Self-direction
Independence
Control
Meaning
Engagement
How do the tools enable autonomy, purpose and mastery?

**Autonomy** - Give them some say

**Purpose** - Make learning relevant

**Mastery** - provide a problem-solving tools
Motivation

Kathy’s Question:
Can we accomplish something if we are not motivated?

Daniel Goleman said:

Optimism and hope are keys to motivation

“…underlying both is an outlook psychologists call self-efficacy, the belief that one has mastery over the events of one’s life and can meet the challenges as they come up.”

*Emotional Intelligence; Bantam Books; NY (1995, p. 86 - 90)*
Self-Efficacy

Importance of “ability to resolve”

- Anger or withdrawal
  - Frustration
    - Conflict or problem
    - No power or ability to resolve

OR

- Relief and satisfaction
  - Solution
    - Conflict or problem
    - Power and ability to resolve
References:

More information on these topics and specific references can be found in the following publication:

Denise Meyer; *The Why and How of Thinking in School*; 2011

Order on Amazon or…

http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/denise3491

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