

Innovations in Thinking and Learning

Chelsey Roche – Free to Learn

CHELSEY: Integrative thinking was the first tool that -- or the first way of thinking that came out, that gave you permission to let go. Let go of the control, let go of the anxiety, let go of this idea that someone is watching every move that you make. And it really set the tone for where we are today.

STUDENT: We started off with the causal model, because that was a little bit easier, and less overwhelming.

STUDENT: It starts off with basic ideas, and then you expand on them and connect some ideas to others. And then it shows what causes things. And if one thing were to happen, it would cause something else to happen, which would cause the final event.

STUDENT: When we first were introduced to the Ladder of Inference, the questions that were put into it were a little trickier to make you think of -- to make you dig deeper into your knowledge and your ideas. But when we did the causal model, it was easier, because it's just kind of, like, nothing's really a bad idea. And you could just let it all go. Just whatever idea you had, you just wrote it down, and just kept expanding and expanding and expanding.

STUDENT: The idea that you can't make a mistake, that every idea is valuable, that every person matters within the process of learning is so refreshing. I mean, you see the relief when you tell them they don't have a bad idea. Well, up until that point, every idea may have been not what someone was looking for in a way that they were expecting it, right? So for sure, integrative thinking gave us the permission to step back, reflect on the practices we were bringing into the classroom and really start thinking about what it would be like in a student's position to learn.

STUDENT: It was really new at the beginning. And it was kind of intimidating and overwhelming, just because I was just introduced to it. But after I got used to it, it was very helpful. And I used the strategies outside of school, and I use some in a lot of different places in my life, like what high school I'll go to, or what I might do in my future. I'm always thinking of what strategies I used, and how I could use that to help me make a decision.

STUDENT: Normally we'd do a pro and con, but instead we did a pro both sides, which show that both sides have good things. It's not that they both have bad things.

STUDENT: I found that it made me think deeper into my topic that we were researching, or in our paragraphs, or whatever. And I feel like it helps me think of more -- it makes me look at it from all perspectives instead of just one perspective. I get angles. I look at it from angles. The Ladder of Inference, I find that I can take stuff from my data pool, bring it up, see what the outcomes are. If I don't like that outcome, I can take something else from my data pool, bring it up, see if I like that. If I like it, then I take it and I do my causal model, or whatever I need to do with that.

CHELSEY: It's funny, because it's just all kind of come together into this very nice package. But integrative thinking, yes, was the first movement where someone said, "What's the worst that can happen?"