

## **Innovations in Thinking and Learning**

### **Roger Martin – Integrative Thinking Methodology**

ROGER: I've always believed that you have to be logically rigorous in life. And what I find is that people associate rigor with numbers. And that's a really -- so do you have all the numbers, do you have all sorts of data? And I don't think that's where the rigor in life is lacking. The rigor in life that's lacking is the rigor of your logic, saying why you believe something to be the case. What do you think is operating? And this is one of the things that attracted me to my beloved late mentor, Chris Argyris, who sort of taught me a methodology for reflecting on my own logic, which is the Ladder of Inference. And that, I think I welcomed it in part, because I always cared about making very kind of tight, logical arguments, and being always willing to say what was -- why I thought something was the case, not just you ought to believe it because I said so. I'd rather -- because my parents never said that to me. I guess I always believed that you should be able to explain your reasoning, and Chris Argyris gave me a tool for helping me reflect on my own logic, and being able to describe it to others in a rigorous way.

I think we've been positively surprised by a lot of things. And that would be one positive surprise, the degree to which this has helped teachers do their job in a more fulfilling way to them. I mean, they have important jobs, they all know they have important jobs. I know they are already fulfilling. But it feels to us as though they feel more fulfilled in their jobs when they use this tool. And I think part of it is it creates a different dynamic with the students in a different relationship with the students. I think students, they're young, and they can be intimidated by just the very presence of a teacher. And if they don't have a method for having a discussion with the teacher, they may just demure, and to say, well, I'm a kid, she or he is a teacher. I think with the "I think" methodology, it is so evident how to have a conversation. And teachers are asking, essentially, to have more of a thorough conversation. I think that changes the dynamics and makes it easier for teachers to invite the conversation, and easier for the students to respond in kind.

It is so clear, all the economic indicators are getting more and more clear, that people succeed through their social skills more so than as it did historically, their physical skills. Can you lift heavy things, or the like? And even analytical skills, most people think that the lynchpin asset in the modern economy is your ability to crunch big data. Not true. It's your ability to work with others, lead others, get things done together. So a methodology that makes collaboration seem like the only intelligent thing to do, as opposed to a best thing to do is for me to go into the corner and figure this out by myself. I think that is the best thing we can do for students. And I'd like to believe that I think students come away from it just saying essentially, you'd be kind of nuts to try and do this yourself, rather than get a bunch of people working together to do it. And once they get good at that,

they will just be more capable to succeed in the modern world. Way more capable than, I think, anything else we can teach them.