

# Teaching Thinking

## CURRICULUM



### How Do We Teach Thinking?

Teaching thinking is largely an experiential and time-consuming activity. Because of this, the curriculum is spread over three years with many individual, group, and organizational assignments.

### The Design

The design of the curriculum provides a learning path that ensures learning has immediate and real-world application, as well as long-term impact. (See topics and capabilities on reverse.) Rather than a linear process, the Teaching Thinking approach is multi-faceted with development in numerous areas simultaneously. For instance, Decision-Making is a major topic on its own but also explored in Self-Management, Strategy, and Finance.

### The Process

Participants are grouped together in multi-disciplinary cohorts of 12 – 18 people. As learning and capabilities progress, the curriculum becomes more rigorous and participants must manage themselves as well as their group dynamics.

The curriculum is intended to immediately develop independent contributors while simultaneously building future leaders. In year one, participants focus on your business, their personal development, and group dynamics.

In years two and three, participants develop a broader perspective of business including ethics, strategy, finance, social responsibility, and coaching.

Throughout the three years, learning is accomplished in many ways including individual and group work, projects, and guest speakers.

The Training Doctor's Teaching Thinking curriculum is for those companies that strive for excellence and understand that people are key to continued success in the 21st century. As individuals complete the curriculum they will develop business judgement and the confidence needed to make the best decisions for your organization.

### Why teach thinking skills?

Research shows that the average business leader has 30 years of job experience before rising to a leadership position. But Millennials will have 15 years *or less* before they must fill the positions left vacant by Baby Boomers and the smaller GenX generation. A thinking curriculum is necessary to accelerate the time-consuming and scattered nature of traditional development on-the-job. Teaching Thinking will ensure your organization will have the right people ready at the right time.

### Why develop a customized curriculum?

You could send a few people to an off-the-shelf, existing program. These programs are short, cost \$10,000-\$50,000+, are typically focused on leadership development, and, ultimately, generic. Your employees *still* must “translate” what they've learned to your business or work environment.

When an organization designs its *own* curriculum it raises the quality of thinking of *all* individuals. You'll choose topics and activities specific to your industry and reflective of your values, culture, and priorities. Best of all, with a customized curriculum your employees constantly apply what they learn. The activities and assignments have immediate impact on your bottom line.

### What is the value?

Your participating employees will develop a broad network of professional relationships both inside and outside the organization while they gain critical skills and experience in:

- Decision-making
- Planning
- Communication
- Leadership...and more

The benefits to both employee and employer are innumerable, including:

- A clearer, more actionable self-development plan
- The willingness and ability to move laterally
- A mutually beneficial perspective (rather than win/lose)
- The assurance to seek opinions and perspectives from others to gain a greater understanding of situations and events
- Partnering with people from other disciplines to better meet challenges and solve problems
- The ability to make sound, ethical decisions
- Communicating with greater competence and confidence
- The ability to successfully lead your company into the future

## Customized Curriculum

Teaching Thinking does not have a *prescribed* curriculum. The 3-year curriculum is custom -- designed specifically with your organization's priorities, culture, and values as its foundation. Teaching Thinking utilizes activities and experiences that embed "deep thinking" resulting in new, successful work behaviors. The multi-faceted learning process is designed to increase the capabilities of all employees and begin the development of leadership skills.

A list of topical areas and higher-order outcomes appears below. We draw from this list to develop the specific curriculum that will best meet your organization's needs. Your employees experience the topics in a variety of ways including reading and discussing business / industry-relevant books, analyzing case studies, planning and completing projects, making presentations, giving and receiving coaching, and more.

## Results

Upon completion, your employees will have expanded their knowledge and capabilities beyond their particular functional area or specialty; will have developed a network of peers within your organization that they can rely on as they rise through the organization (not only fellow learners, but mentors and managers within the company), and will develop crucial leadership skills such as communication, decision making, problem solving, and strategic vision.

**Deep thinking** encourages one to think beyond one's own ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

### Continuous Improvement

- Identifying / probing inconsistencies or contradictions
- Discovering opportunities for value
- Creative solutions to real-world problems
- Creating new approaches

### Competitive Analysis

- Competitors' strengths and weaknesses
- Benchmarking against best practices
- Opportunities and threats
- Competitive advantage
- The effects of competition

### Risk / Risk Management

- Risk assessment
- Taking risks
- Mitigating risks
- Leveraging dilemmas to enhance organizational strategy

### Coaching / Mentoring

- Near-peer coaching
- Managerial coaching
- External coaching
- Feedback-giving and receiving
- Leader as coach

### Collaboration and Leadership

- Group process dynamics
- Teaming
- Consensus and collaboration
- Influencing others
- Identifying and understanding stakeholders

### Decision-Making

- Thought process / decision-making
- Creative and flexible problem solving
- Negotiation / negotiation strategy
- Identifying bias
- Ramifications and consequences

### Personal Development

- Skill, ability, and interest assessments
- Personal development plans
- Volunteering
- Being a mentee
- Being a mentor

### Finance

- Understanding company financials / financial statements
- Understanding how the company makes money
- The company's value proposition
- Shareholder interests and values
- Revenue growth strategies
- Financial information in decision-making / setting priorities

### Ethics

- Personal responsibility / accountability / integrity
- Social rights and responsibility
- Regulations / whistle blowing

### Self-Management

- Emotional intelligence
- Agility and flexibility
- Mental resilience
- Decision-making
- Conflict resolution
- Stress management/coping skills

### Communication

- Crafting compelling messages
- Clearly communicating through writing
- Stakeholder communication
- Visual messaging
- Saying no productively
- Social connectivity - lateral thinking
- Understanding via questions

### Strategy

- Corporate strategy creation and evolution
- The organization's current strategy
- Relationship(s) between corporate strategy and business unit strategy
- Forecasting and strategic insight
- Strategic decision-making skills and models
- Stakeholder management

### Project Management

- Time management
- Work process / work flow
- Priority setting and meeting deadlines

### Deep Thinking

- Personal thought process analysis
- Changing perspective
- Polarity thinking
- Exploring analogous fields
- Case study analyses
- Sharpening perception
- Learning how to learn