

Little Owl's Book of Thinking



Ian Gilbert

"For educators who want to develop their practice and 'break the mould' of our more traditional teaching practices this book would be a great starting point."

Peter Kirby, Life Education Centres

"... an extraordinary book. It is the cleverest, simplest, funniest and most engaging treatise on thinking skills available."

Paul Ginnis, author of *The Teacher's Toolkit*

"... a must for every home and every classroom. Ian Gilbert brings us hope that not only educationalists but also parents will want to share and develop the way we think about thinking. It is also a delightful story in its own right with very loveable characters."

Ron Gandolfo, Headteacher, Lingfield Primary School

"... another gem from the pen of Ian Gilbert! From the opening lines the reader is taken on an exploration—of how, what, why and where we think and learn but also an exploration of oneself, one's relationship with people, places and the mysteries of the natural and created world."

**Kathy Alcock, Principal Lecturer in Education,
Canterbury Christ Church University College**

"... amusing, witty, thought provoking and an original way of introducing thinking skills"

**Dr David George, Educational Consultant,
Gifted Education**

"Many recent books have begun to acknowledge the great importance of thinking skills in education, but Ian Gilbert takes this theme further by actively exploring how these thinking skills can relate to the development and potential of both the individual and society. Making this profound area accessible to young people, in particular, is no easy task, but *Little Owl* achieves it admirably. Whether you are a teacher, parent, pupil, or just plain curious, *Little Owl's Book of Thinking* will provide some invaluable food for thought, learning and life."

**Will Ord, Chair of SAPERE
(Society for the Advancement of Philosophical
Enquiry and Reflection in Education)**

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To William
If only he would read it

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Why?



It's amazing what you can do on a train bound for Exeter. (I wasn't bound for Exeter, the train was. I was going to Reading. Which is ironic given that I wrote a book. A bit like going to Barking to buy a dog. Or Brent for a goose.)

What came out on my journey were the bare bones of the book you are about to read—years of research, teaching and experience about how young people can use their brains more effectively squeezed into seven chapters, two owls, a whole forest of woodland creatures but no very small sheep.

What was in the back of my mind—wherever that is—was the thought of a father reading the book to his child and getting as much from it as his son or daughter. Maybe even more.

There are many good books on the shelves about thinking and learning. Some of them are very good. Indeed some of them are so good they have been written many, many times.

But given the fact that I am trying to encourage a more creative way of thinking in my readers the only way this book could be written is in a way that no-one else has.

As a very wise Roman owl called Horace once said with some irony, “Bis repetita placent”.*

Or as we say where I’m from: “Do things no-one does or do things everyone does in a way no-one does.”

Like a stereo in a lift, this book works on many different levels. There’s no need to worry if not

* Literally translated ‘the more you like it, the more you’ll get it’. And then we’re only one small step away from focus groups.

Why?

everyone gets them all. (Although be slightly worried if no-one gets any.) Above all the book is designed to make you laugh and make you think. But not necessarily always in that order.

Any one of the areas covered can be built on in a conversation with your child or your class. Ask them how they feel about taking responsibility or breaking the rules. What does it mean to them to have such a powerful brain? What do they think about when they think about thinking?

See if they can identify if their preferred way of learning is through their eyes, through their ears or just getting to grips with what it is to be learned.

And what about their different intelligence strengths? For those of you new to education (or who have been in education for a very, very long time) multiple intelligences theory was developed by a wise American owl called Howard. He suggests that we all have strengths and weaknesses across at least eight different sorts of intelligence. Which means there's so much more to intelligence than the you're-


either-clever-or-you're-not IQ approach to things.

Which means that you can ask your child not how smart they are but how are they smart?

Then see what happens.

So, sit back, snuggle up or do whatever it is that you need to do to prepare for a woodland walk that may change the way you think about thinking.

And remember to be careful where a simple train journey may take you. Especially if you are heading north to Ramsbottom.



Seven chapters, two owls, a whole forest of woodland creatures, but no very small sheep.

Following the lessons Benny the Owlet receives from his wise old father, this classic book encourages a more creative way of thinking in young readers.

Ideal for teachers, parents and older children, it is an excellent introduction to the concept of thinking skills and why they are so important.

So, sit back, snuggle up or do whatever it is that you need to do to prepare for a woodland walk that may change the way you think about thinking.

“A fantastic book with plenty of interesting thoughts. It had big questions about ideas that I had never really thought about before. I liked the way it made me think about things in different ways. I liked the twisty conversations between Father Owl and his young owlet which were quite funny.”

Sammy, age 13



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