conclusion. An interesting detail to note about the pictures is that Wanda Gag has signed most of them. Children enjoy searching for her signature.

After examining the book, one knows that Wanda Gag understood cats. Like Beatrix Potter, she liked to use animals as models and in fact did use two kittens for these illustrations. The reader can virtually see millions of cats in her illustrations, yet feels that each cat is a bit different. The image of the quarreling cats is especially powerful. When the cats fight, one feels the anxiety of the old man and woman. They run up toward their secure home and peek out the window. Their anxiety is shown by their posture, and by the way he holds her arm and clutches the curtain.

The hero of the tale, the old man, is shown at his biggest when he decides to choose all the cats to bring home to his wife. He has made a decision that he feels will make his wife the happiest. He is depicted the smallest when the couple run to the safety of their home during the cats' fight. Here he feels the most helpless and defeated. He is of average size when they are secure in the home with their cat at the end. There are many symbols of security in this illustration the wedding pictures in the background, the warm light, the food, the rocking chairs, her knitting and the cat playing with the ball of yarn, his relaxed posture with his feet on the stool, and his smoking the pipe. *Millions of Cats* shows the author to be a master artist and storyteller. Wanda Gag stated:

I aim to make the illustrations for children’s books as much a work of art as anything I would send to an art exhibition. I strive to make them completely accurate in relation to the text. I try to make them warmly human, imaginative, or humorous ... (Yesterday’s Authors 1:142).

This devotion to her art is exemplified in this classic which will continue to be enjoyed as a timeless tale by generations of children everywhere.

**Works Cited**


**ERIC/RCS Update:**

**Teaching Thinking Skills in English/Language Arts**

by

Fran Lehr

A number of commentaries on public education, including that of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, have expressed concern that students lack the ability necessary to think clearly. A survey of documents recently entered into the ERIC data base shows that educators are beginning to address this problem in a variety of ways. Annotations of a few of those documents, which describe methods of teaching thinking skills in the English/language arts classroom, are presented below.

**ANNOTATIONS**


Intended for middle-elementary through college level writing teachers, this booklet describes a teaching method that lets students write their own way into ideas, merging personal experience with intellectual thought in expository writing. The booklet first describes in greater detail the concept of writing-to-think as focused free writing—required but not graded or revised—that allows students to bring vague perceptions to a verbal level explicit enough for them to reconsider or extend. Griffith then presents and discusses four writing samples (two from students who write with ease and two who have difficulty) to illustrate different kinds of mindwork made possible by this kind of thinking on paper. (ED 251 842; MF01, plus postage; PC available from publisher.)


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This guide presents units of instruction that emphasize the higher level thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. An introductory section explains each of the three higher level skills and presents tasks illustrating each. It then offers complete units in English, math, science, and social studies. The English unit deals with characterization, focusing on description through analysis of elements, ordering cause and effect relationships in character actions, contrasting relationships, and examining character credibility. (ED 216 473; MF01, PC05 plus postage.)

Intended for use with gifted and talented students, this guide contains lesson plans that focus on logical thinking enrichment activities. Each plan contains objectives, necessary entry skills, teaching approaches, student activities, resources, and follow-up and evaluation suggestions. Plans are presented for a number of areas, including (1) completing analogies and determining analogous relationships, (2) identifying similarities, (3) learning to be concise, (4) noting inconsistencies, (5) building a case by logically sequencing material, (6) understanding and verifying inferences, (7) identifying and completing syllogisms, and (8) computing probability. (ED 228 816, MF01, PC05 plus postage.)


Johnson describes curriculum and resources that foster and expand the philosophical thinking of elementary and middle school students. Following a discussion of Matthew Lipman's illustrative "novel" Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery, (which helps students explore both formal and informal rules of thought), Johnson describes the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, founded by Lipman at Montclair State College, New Jersey. The remainder of the booklet describes various aspects of the Institute's program, specifically its efforts to develop curriculum designed to expand reasoning skills, beginning in early childhood education with reasoning in language comprehension and followed by skills in ethics, language arts, and social studies. (ED 242 629; MF $0.97, PC $3.90, plus postage)


Looking at elements of classic rhetoric, Fritz and Weaver review the literature to discover the thinking skills involved in invention, organization, composition, memory, and delivery. They conclude that students need critical thinking skills that will help them expand perspectives, draw themes together, draw conclusions, present organized data consistent with audience expectations, and write in oral style. Labelling these as framing, scenario, prescription, and imagining skills, the authors present exercises designed to assist students to develop each skill within a public speaking course. They also offer suggestions for testing critical thinking. (ED 249 556; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)


Sternberg describes his "componential" theory of intelligence, which explains intelligence in terms of three types of component processes that make intelligent performance: (1) metacomponents, the higher order or executive processes that individuals use to plan what they are going to do, monitor what they are doing, and evaluate what they have done; (2) performance components, which carry out what the metacomponents have planned: and (3) knowledge-acquisition components, which are used in learning new material. Sternberg argues that if intelligence can be broken down into this set of underlying processes and strategies for combining the processes, it is possible to intervene at the level of the mental process, teach individuals what processes to use, and with and how to use them, and how to combine them into workable strategies for task solution. He describes three programs that train aspects of the theory—Feurstein's "Instrumental Enrichment," Lipman's "Philosophy for Children," and "Chicago Mastery Learning: Reading"—and offers guidelines for use in choosing a thinking skills training program. (ED 242 700; MF01, PC02 plus postage.)

The ERIC/RCS Clearinghouse has several publications related to the topic. These include three ERIC Digests: Thinking Skills in English and across the Curriculum, Metacomprehension, and Language across the Curriculum, all ERIC Digests, and Questioning: a Path to Critical Thinking, a TRIP (Theory and Research into Practice) booklet prepared by Leila Christenbury and Patricia P. Kelly.

PLEASE NOTE: The documents listed above are available in either microfiche (MF) or paper copy (PC) from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS), 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304. The price per document is based on the number of pages. For information on postal rates and translating the price codes into current prices, call the EDRS toll-free telephone number (800-227-3742) or write to ERIC/RCS, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801.