

Creating a Culture of **Thinking & Understanding**

Across a School & Region

Jim Reese
Washington International School & Project Zero
12 January 2019



Our Agenda

Project Zero ideas in
practice in Washington, DC

1. Laying a foundation
2. Building a critical mass
3. Establishing a network &
sustaining ideas

Conversation, engagement
& reflection along the way



Guiding

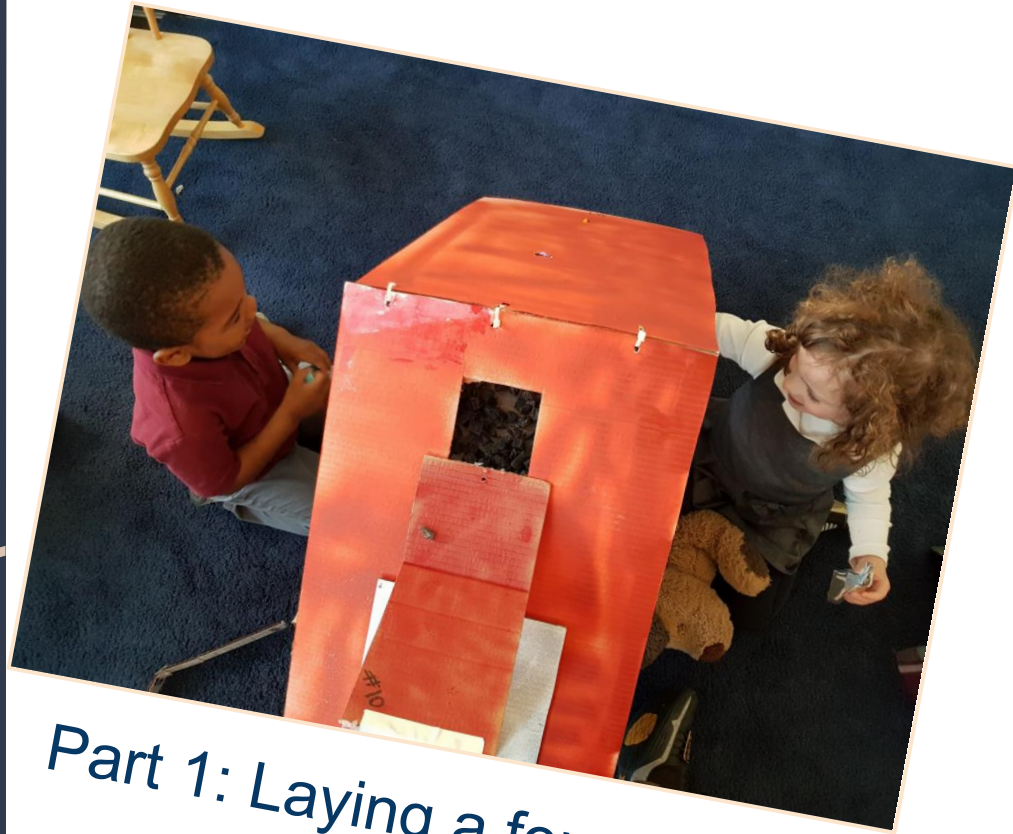
How do we create
a culture of
thinking &
understanding in
the classroom &
across a school?

Questions

How do we
nurture & sustain
that culture of
thinking &
understanding?

*Children grow into
the intellectual life
around them.*

Lev Vygotsky



Part 1: Laying a foundation



PROJECT ZERO



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Our First 50 Years

Five Decades of Insights into Intelligence, Thinking & Learning

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ZERO IN

DECEMBER 2018

PZ News, Resources and Upcoming Events

GENERIC

Zero In - December 2018

Check out the latest news from around PZ: recent publications, new resources, events, scholarships, and more!

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www.pz.harvard.edu



Why Project Zero?

Teaching for
Understanding

Artful Thinking

AGENCY
BY
DESIGN

**Educating for
Global Competence**

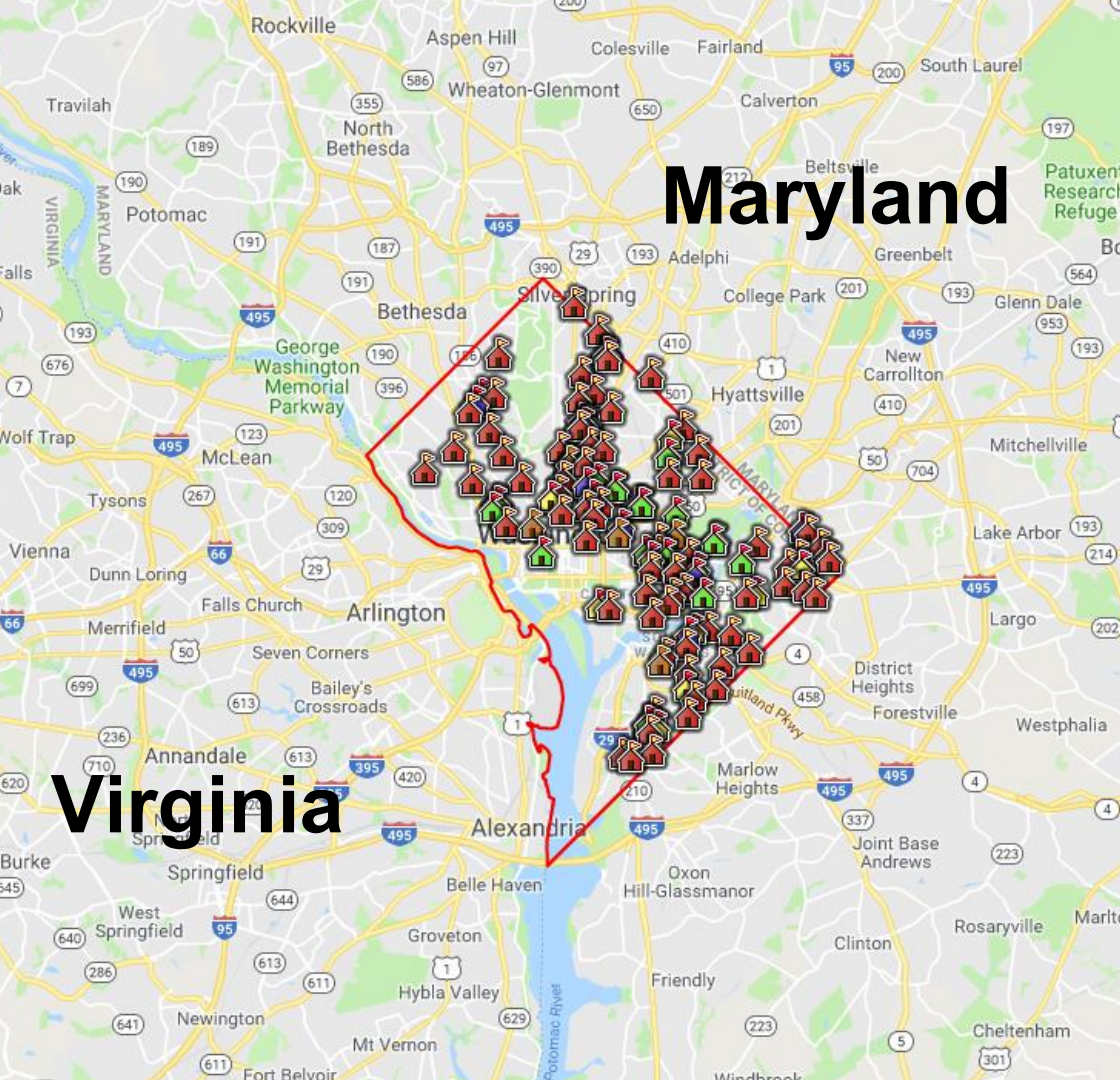
Cultures of Thinking

**Making
Learning
Visible**

Why Washington, DC?

Project Zero ideas
in action





Traditional
Public

Public Charter

Formal
Schooling
Sectors in DC

Independent

Religious



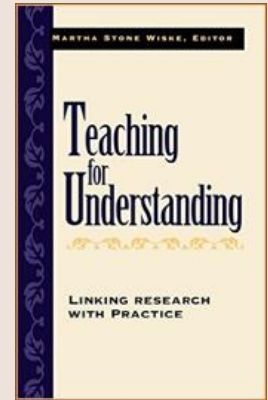
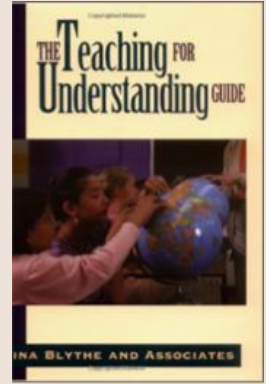
DC-Project Zero

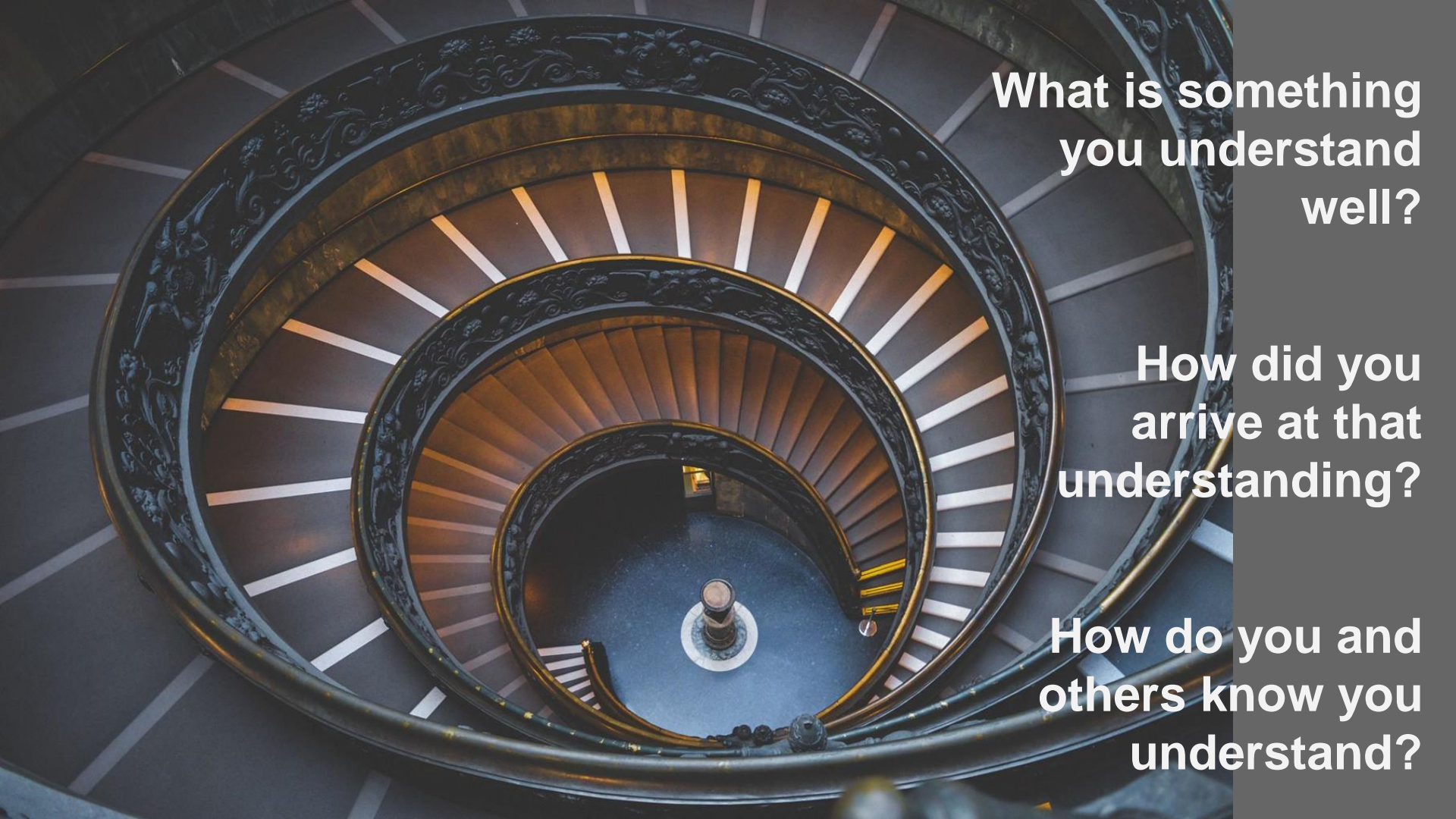
WIS WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL



Getting Started:

The Teaching for Understanding Framework





**What is something
you understand
well?**

**How did you
arrive at that
understanding?**

**How do you and
others know you
understand?**



Understanding Understanding

Working with a coach to improve

Being inspired by
an expert/mentor

Practicing

Improvising

Having to teach it
to others

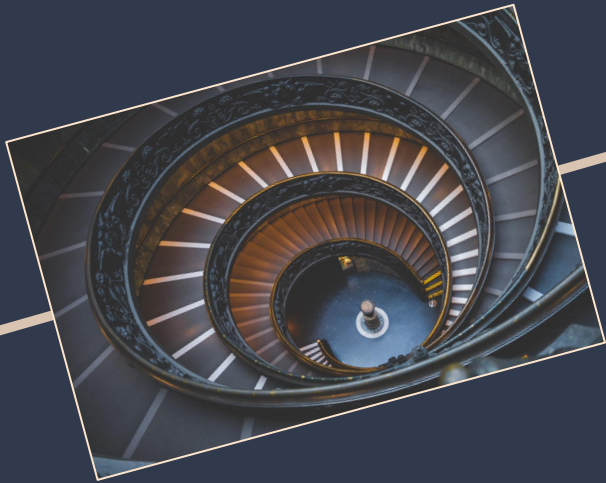
Developing a passion for it

Getting feedback
from others

Trying and failing
(trial and error)

Studying it; reading about it

What is
understanding?



*Understanding is
being able to use
knowledge
flexibly in a novel
context.*



Two-Pronged Approach:

Curriculum Development

Professional Development

Planning for Understanding



Engage

Guide

***Get out
of the way!***



TfU-Based Curriculum Mapping Tool

Generative Topic

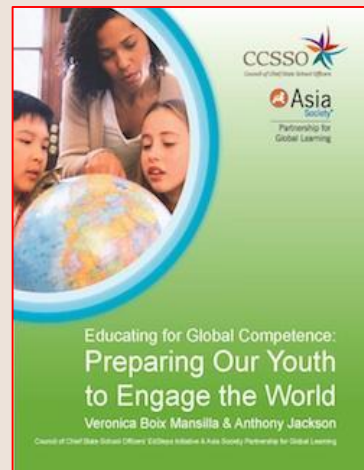
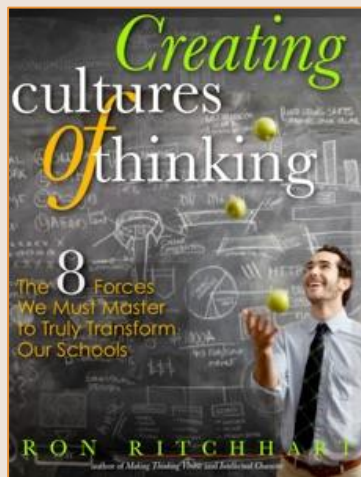
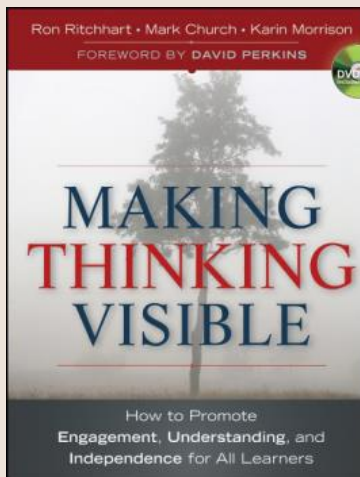
Understanding Goals

Subject Area: Your Subject Area	Course: Course Title			
Unit Title: Sample	Teacher: Teacher	Grades(s): grade	Start: Cycle 1	End: Cycle 2

Stage 1	
What is the purpose of this unit?	What are the big unit-long questions?
<p>Try to answer some or all of these questions in writing a short narrative of the purpose of the unit:</p> <p>How is the content of this unit relevant to this course overall?</p> <p>How is this unit connected to learning outside the classroom?</p> <p>What slant or angle are you taking with the main topic of the unit?</p> <p>What connections are there with other subject areas?</p>	<p>These questions serve as understanding goals for the unit. Develop a few open-ended, unit-long questions that connect to the main topic of the unit. "How", "Why", and "To what extent..." questions tend to be more open-ended. There's no magic number for the questions. One could suffice, but try to have no more than five.</p>
What is the context for learning?	What are available resources?
<p>In your first unit of the course, you might describe your students. For subsequent units, answer these questions:</p> <p>What background knowledge do you expect your students to have on the main topic?</p> <p>What came before this unit, and what will follow it?</p>	<p>Consider texts, people, websites, apps, sites to visit in the DC area.</p>

Part 2: Building a Critical Mass

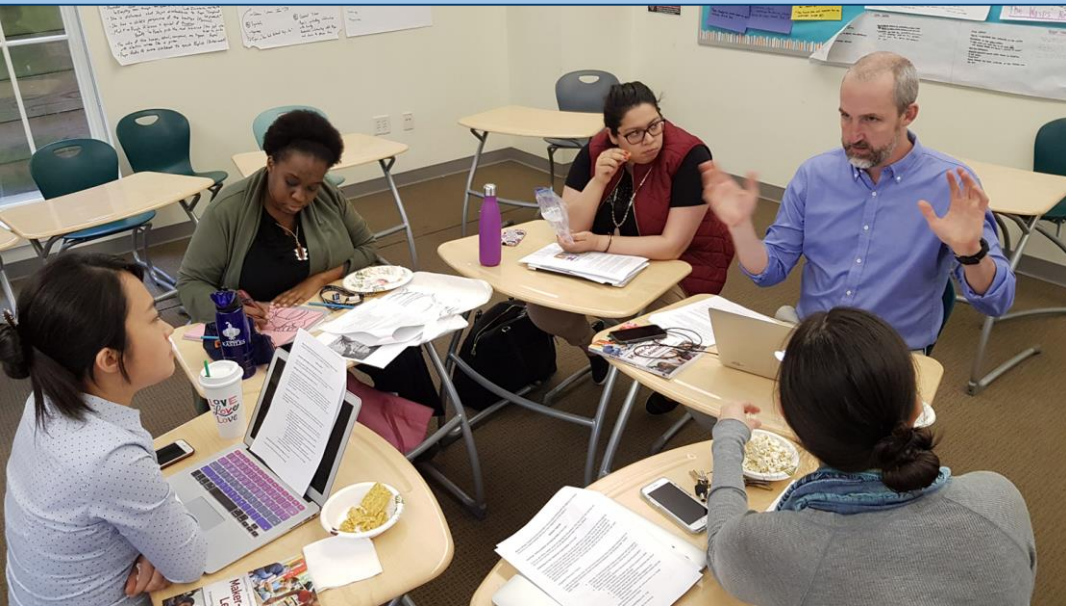
Cultures of Thinking & Educating for Global Competence



Learning is a
consequence of thinking.
The mission...is not only
learning to think but
thinking to learn.

David Perkins





How does this person understand this system + their role within it?

Feel:

What is this person's emotional response to the system + their position within it?

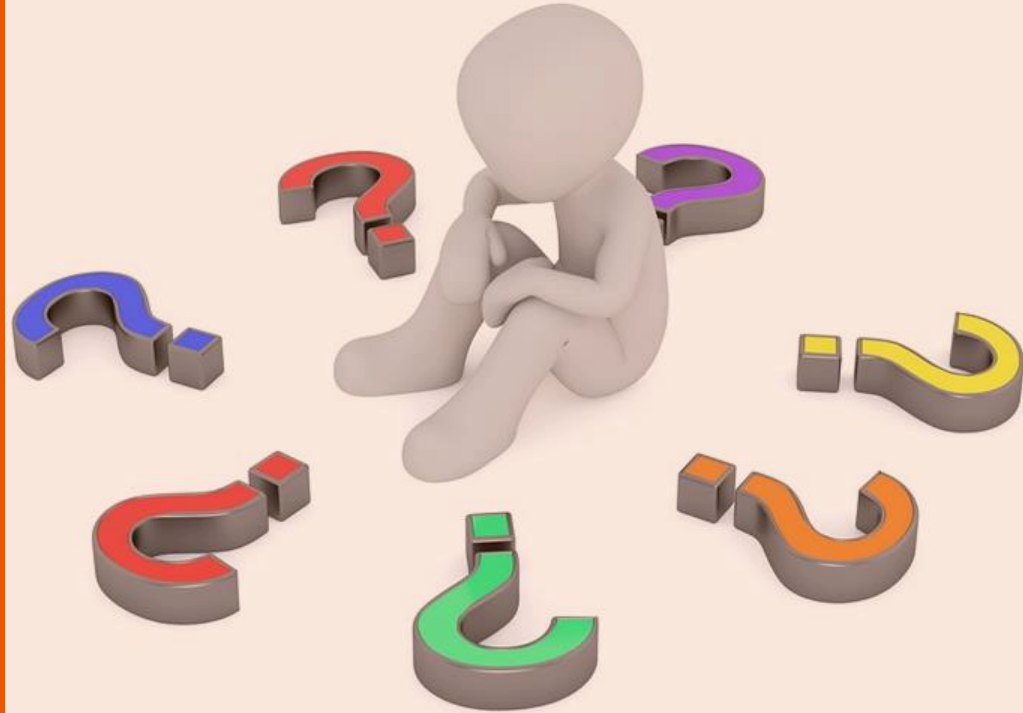
Care:

What are this person's values, priorities or motivations w/ regard to this system? What is important to this person?



Ask yourself:

What kind of
thinking will
learners need to
do in order to
develop deep
understanding?



Consider Different Perspectives

What's another angle on this?

Make Connections

How does this fit with what you already know?

Reason with Evidence

What makes you say that?

Uncover Complexity

What lies beneath the surface?

Wonder

What am I curious about here?

UNDERSTANDING

Describe What's There

What do you see and notice?

Capture the Heart & Form Conclusions

What's at the core or center of this?

Build Explanations

What's really going on here?

Understanding Map

The ways in which students make meaning and understanding concepts

Sourced from The Cultures of Thinking Project at Project Zero, Harvard
Graduate School of Education





What do
you see?

What do
you wonder?

What
connections
are you
making?

***The Numbering
(or Census)
at Bethlehem***

***Le dénombre-
ment de
Bethléem***

**Pieter
Bruegel the Elder**

1566







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Part 3: Establishing a network & sustaining ideas

DC-Project Zero





Our mission is to be an exemplary learning community—enriched by differences, informed through inquiry, global in reach.

WISSIT

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Connecting D.C. Educators with Project Zero Ideas



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About

For a number of years, Washington International School has been recognized for fostering groundbreaking collaborations across the region and for being a model school in implementing Project Zero ideas and practices. As a logical extension of these efforts, WIS launched the Professional Development Collaborative.

The Collaborative recognizes that, while education begins with learning skills and knowledge, in today's world schools have a responsibility to do much more. Educators must strive to build students' character and to teach for understanding—of meaningful content, of connections across subject areas, of complex global issues. Putting skills and knowledge to use in attempting to solve significant problems is the hallmark of a learner who demonstrates global competence.

pdcollaborative.org



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