

Colour, Symbol, Image

Method	Colour Symbol Image
Introduction	
<p>Making thinking (Richhart, Church & Morrison)ⁱ visible is an method that seeks to elaborate different thinking processes in education in order to reach a deeper understanding by making students' thinking visible in the classroom in different ways. At the heart of the approach is making thinking processes visible. In "Colour, Symbol, Image" (CSI) student thinking is explored, elaborated and made visible by metaphorical thinking and visual aspects, which also activate feelings, beliefs, hidden knowledge and understanding as well as the more obvious available knowledge. Metaphors are strong vehicle for elaborating understanding of ideas. Because highly personal explanations are made visible here, students learn how different colours, images and symbols could have very different meanings to other students, indicating different ways of thinking/seeing things</p>	
Aim	To help students reach a deeper understanding of different thinking processes.
Target group	Different disciplines and topics in disciplines.
Learning outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are better able to synthesise and organise ideas and to capture the essence of ideas. • Enhanced ability to make connections and think metaphorically about topics/subject content. • Better understanding of a topic/subject. • Increased knowledge and understanding of different perspectives, beliefs, ideas, feelings and meanings concerning a topic or subject. 	
Description	
<p>Select the specific content for interpretation and discussion, this might be a personal essay, a chapter, a poem, a speaker, a radio interview, a short film, etc ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up: once students have read/heard/seen the input, have them think about the core ideas and make note of things that they find interesting, important, insightful. This can be done individually but in the beginning it helps make a list with the whole class. • Choose a colour: each student selects a colour that he or she feels represents the core ideas he or she has identified in the content that was presented. They should explain their choice in writing. • Choose a symbol: now each student selects a symbol and explains their selection. A symbol stands for something, e.g. a dove for peace, ... think of different symbols in our daily life. • Choose an image: the same for an image. This can be a photograph or a drawing of a scene. Tell students not to worry about their drawing abilities. A simple sketch could capture the idea of what is in the image. Students should again explain their choice in writing. • Now, share the thinking: with a partner or in group, students explain their CSI. (colour/symbol/image) choice. How does it connect to the content being explored? Repeat 	

<p>until everyone in the group has explained their CSI choices. Optionally you could students ask to summarise their observations in this sharing with a few conclusions.</p> <p>Assess students' ability to capture the essence of the content. The explanations could be assessed as insights become observable. You can also rate the quality of the metaphors (going beyond the obvious) on a scale from 1 to 10.</p>	
Preparation	Select a personal essay, short text, radio-interview, poem,...
Resources and equipment	Computers or mobile devices could be helpful for finding symbols and images.
Success factors	<p>Colours, symbols and images are highly personal and need to be understood as an individual explanation.</p> <p>It is important to use a rich piece of content that has a variety of interpretations and meanings. Complexity, ambiguity and nuance can perfectly be integrated in this exercise.</p> <p>Try to encourage students to go beyond the most obvious choices of colours, symbols and images.</p> <p>Make them well explain their choices by asking them to write phrases and not only a few words.</p>
Advantages	This method can help students to describe images in words.
Disadvantages	Student might experience difficulties in visual thinking needed for CSI. They also might feel blocked because they might not be used to handle non-verbal instruments in academic learning.
Additional Information	This method is a way of making thinking visible. On this website you will find a lot of information about the importance of that and how to organise your class. Here is another useful link which covers the same topic.

ⁱ Richhart, R., Church, M., & Morrison K. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible. How to promote Engagement, Understanding and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (p. 119)