

**Understanding, Creating and Using Talking Tubs to Provoke Questions and Thinking**  
**UW-Whitewater Conference**  
**Saturday, April 12, 2014**  
**Carmen Rivers**

*What is a Talking Tub (trade marked by Claire Warden)?*

- a special box containing a collection of materials
  - 3D (sensory stimulation) and 2D (visual cues for visual learners-photos, maps...)
  - provocative – encourages thinking about connections over identifying objects
  - encourages talking and questioning – raises awareness
  - teacher created but responsive to observed child driven interest
  - connects to children's everyday lives in home and/or community
  - meaningful and relevant – materials worth exploring
  - can be used to develop 3D mind map

<http://www.mindstretchers.co.uk/videos.cfm>

*What is a Mind Map (Registered by Tony Buzan)?*

- graphic organizer
  - begin with a central idea (big idea)
  - lines of inquiry or PLODS (Possible Lines of Development)
  - shows connections between ideas
- To learn more about Tony Buzan's approach to Mind Mapping, visit:

<http://www.tonybuzan.com/about/mind-mapping/>

*How are Talking Tubs used as part of 3D Mind Maps?*

- designate a space for building your 3D Mind Map (a large, round, black piece of felt)
  - start with only one object representing central or big idea; in the center
- children generate ideas about what they want to know in relation to central idea
  - ask children to record their ideas/inquiries (Claire uses thought bubbles)
- when their ideas/inquiries match items in box – place items on map with child's recording
  - be open to children's thinking – help decode their messages without altering them (they need to make sense to the child, not be logical to adult mind)
  - ask open ended questions to help children formulate their thinking
  - once all children's ideas are shared, reveal and discuss items from box not previously connected to a child's idea
  - all idea bubbles and objects surround central object
- thinking pathways
  - begin sorting ideas along pathways
  - create lines extending from central idea (strips of paper, streamers, ribbons)
  - read children's ideas – ask where each one should go (great groups based on characteristics children see in common) \*working only with ideas for now
- reflection

- how are ideas connected or related (why do they belong together)?
- accept ideas placed along illogical pathways – reflects current thinking only and will likely be self-corrected later
- be mindful of how children correct each other's thinking (intervene?)
- ask questions to challenge thinking when child is ready for this
- ideas to objects
  - add 2D and 3D objects to Mind Map
  - which ideas does each object connects to?
  - where to objects belong that are not related to an idea?
    - do these objects spark new ideas to add to the map?
  - encourage discussion and collaborative decision making about objects new or unfamiliar to children
- labeling lines of inquiry
  - talk about connections between ideas
  - encourage children to name groups of ideas (based on why they belong together)
  - look carefully at how ideas are connected – should make sense to the creators
- document the process
  - photographing the mapping process to show the development
  - map can be changed as ideas are refined
  - photograph after each revision
- back to the tub
  - keep 2D and 3D objects in tub – near map
  - spark more ideas
  - reveal problems/challenges
  - lead to next exploration (new central idea and tub)

Why?

- connections
- narrows and widens ideas
- consultation between children and adults
- encourages gathering of evidence of learning (assessment)

How?

- central idea
- children's ideas
- 2D and 3D objects
- pathways/connections

Where?

- circular
- floor or large table

What?

- process
- talking and listening
- reflective
- abstract (ideas) and concrete (objects)

Who?

- children & adults take turns driving process

When?

- small or large group gatherings

Warden, C. (2006). *Talking and Thinking Floorbooks*. Auchterarder, Perthshire: Mindstretchers.

To learn more about Claire Warden, Talking Tubs, and all of her other published materials, visit: <http://www.mindstretchers.co.uk/>

To participate in a part or all of a week long learning event with Claire Warden, check out this exciting opportunity: <http://www4.uwm.edu/sce/conference.cfm?id=1081>

To learn more about the Wisconsin Nature Action Collaborative for Children (WiNAC), visit and like us on Facebook.