Year 8 Thinking and learning Skills - 8 - 0 - introduction

The Question is not "How smart are you?"….but "In what ways are you smart?"

"Lesson 0" might sound funny, but I just want to try to lay the foundations for the Y8 course. so you can quickly establish constructive working patterns.
This is close to the standard format of the 2nd version of the Y7 lessons, starting Sep '04.
This is the basic shape of the Lesson Plan.....it will be on 1 side of A4.

Resources... • ...will be listed here	**Key Words...** *put these up on the Aims Board....think about putting them up on posters blutacked to the wall for something more long-lasting*	**Thinking Skills** • in the Thinking Skills Record
Learning outcomes : **I will be able to….** (IWILBAT) **Homework….**	• I've tried to word these from the learner's viewpoint	
Entry – while students are coming in and settling **1.Starter** **(mins)** **2.Main part** **a.** **b. etc...** **...Brain Break...** **c.** **3. Plenary**	• **copy**.... lesson title.....aims.....key words.....Homework • **Homework**...from last lesson... ready to hand in • **3 things** from last lesson...noted in Ex. book • **Brain Gym**....mental warm-up....vary the exercises • What did we **learn** last lesson? Brief **Brain Break** activity to refresh and re-focus...or change activity/pace • what have we **learned** in this lesson? • what **can we do now** that we couldn't before? • **3 things** from the lesson • add to the **"Big Picture"** in students' Ex. books	
Homework **And next lesson…**	Reminder …	

This **generic lesson plan** just lays out the main features on one page for you to refer to in the lesson.
The **Mind Map** will help you and students progress through the Big Picture.
Guidance on the Lesson
Each lesson will have further notes explaining the ideas, and suggesting procedures.

Key features of the Y8 Thinking Skills course

This quite closely follows the Teacher's Guide I did for the Y7 Thinking Skills course – version 2 – for the course starting in September '04.

You may find some of the ideas useful, some you will do already, and you will bring ideas and expertise of your own.

This Y8 Course benefits from the experience of the first Y7 Course, and it's subsequent re-write. The Y8 Course is organised in 2 Units….

Unit 1 : "Myself as a Learner and a Teacher"

Unit 2 : "My Thinking and Learning Skills"

Aims of the Course

- to continue to build up a **Learning Community**, where students value and support each other, as teachers and learners
- to continue to equip students with **Tools for Thinking and Learning** – VAK, Multiple Intelligence (MI), and Reviewing activities.
- to give students the experience of being **Teachers**, and evaluating their own Teaching.
- to link students' Learning across their Subjects

Errors

There will be mistakes, oversights...hopefully not too many....tell me some of the less embarrassing ones.

Room layout

This is a bit tricky, since the Course comprises a range of lesson formats...

- "Normal" lessons - with students in rows facing the board
- presentation lessons - with groups addressing the whole class
- Circle Time - needing the class to be in a big unbroken circle….I use a Circle Time format where there needs to be an open discussion and sharing of ideas and experience.

I don't have any answer to this. The science labs are big, and allow tables to be moved about. I hope that you can find a suitable room. You might work with a couple of rooms – one for "normal" lessons, and another for Circle Time.

Music

Some schools use music effectively to set or change the mood in a lesson. But it takes time for a teacher to change their way of working, and for students to get used to it, And it's not easy finding the right music – maybe reflective without being dulling, or energising without being intrusive or inducing over-activity. I haven't established music in my lessons yet! But you might like to try things out for yourself.

Seating

You will have your ideas of seating plans, and you'll know what works for you, and students have already had a year in classes together. But you might think about starting the new year with a boy-girl seating plan. After that you can change seating to suit your self. You might think about these different groupings....

- single sex groups of 2-3
- 6 groups of about 4
- 4 groups of about 6 – where you want not too many group presentations

you could name groups after seasons, or colours, or months

Students could have these groupings in their planners.

I think it will help in the thinking Skill lessons for classes not to be set by ability, and for friends often not to be sat together....we want to bring together different thinking styles.

Rewards

Alastair Smith, the Accelerated Learning expert, says that the best reward for a student is the teacher's value and esteem. But we also want to give Merits, or whatever system the school follows. The students will value a system where they evaluate their own efforts, and help to decide who is rewarded. This Peer Esteem carries perhaps more weight than Teacher Esteem. You can guide this, or add to what they decide. I've tried to build this into the lesson plans.

I've put this in the Y7 Teacher's Guide....I have the impression that Y8 students don't value Merits as much, so it's not so straight forward.

Starters

I've tried to put in starters that engage attention, and link with what's been learned – important, since it will be two weeks since the last lesson.

I've suggested activitites that will help students to settle down as they come in, and be ready to learn. It may take a few lessons for them to get used to the routine. Again feel free to amend and improve as you see fit.

Plenaries

I've tried to provide a general structure for Plenaries, and also more specific suggestions where I can. Plenaries are important – they draw together the key points of learning, and make students aware they have just learned something – they very often don't realise! But it's very easy to run out of time, and skip them. (I know from experience). It may take a while for students to get into the habit of reviewing.

"What have we learned?"....link to the Learning Aims...it's useful for students to put these in their own words.

"1 thing from the lesson"....nothing new here....I've tried a simple format to enable a crisp review of the lesson. I suggest each table chooses 2 things, so they have a reserve if another table uses their first choice. Be flexible...students will remember the odd, unexpected, and humorous things....and will link their learning to them.

Timings

I've suggested timings in the plans, but I know you'll treat these with caution – the lessons are still untried, and you will have your own style and pace. But, our students do seem to like to settle to a leisurely pace, and will benefit from "pushing" with short demanding deadlines. Try going for things like "7 minutes for this", rather than a round number, which can often drift.

Key words

I encourage you to put key words up on the walls. It always helps learning, and in this course students have 2 weeks between lessons – plenty of time for the memories to fade. I suggest you make up your own key words – building on the list in each lesson plan. They will be more effective if they are hand-written , with different colours, shapes, materials, VAK clues. Student will comment, and remember better than with a standard set of posters provided by me – and I'm sure you can do a better job than I can!

A display of key words will stimulate interest from other students and staff who use the room. Encourage students to make their own Key word posters for display, using novel, eye-catching colours and materials...which will make them memorable.

Progress Displays

You might like to put up good work to set a standard, and charts showing students progress in acquiring the Thinking Skills...and anything else that you think will encourage and stimulate!...though we don't want to "show up"` less able students by comparing them with more able.

Puzzles – open-ended thinking

You might like to build up a display of open-ended word games and puzzles like these....

365 D_ _ _ in a Y _ _ _ .

18 H _ _ _ _ on a G _ _ _ C _ _ _ _ _ .

these are sometimes called "Wordles"

...and these...

ARREST

YOU'RE

R
R O A D
I
L

these are sometimes called "Dingbats" – there are books full of these in Charity shops

The powerful thing about these is they have no simple "right" answer. They are open to a range of creative "solutions" that can be better than the "right" answer. And if students ask/beg for the answer, don't tell 'em - because.....

"The way to stop someone thinking is to tell them the answer"

You can start student off with these puzzles, but fairly soon get them to come up with their own – first for anything, but then ask them to devise puzzles linked to their school subject learning.

These don't link to the Thinkig Skills directly, but they may help to create a more lively active Thinking environment.

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Comfort Zones – the 3-Carpet Model.

I think it's valuable for students to understand and use the Model of Comfort zone, Learning Zone, and Failure Zone, and begin to use it in Learning contexts. I've linked the fairly well-known idea of the Comfort Zone with Lev Vygotskii's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). I've renamed the ZPD the "Learning Zone", and made a simple 3-carpet model for you to explore with students. The cyclic 4-step Model of "Unconscious Incompetence, Conscious Incompetence, Conscious Competence, and Unconscious Competence" is probably in here somewhere as well.

The table gives the key ideas…..

Green Carpet	**Yellow Carpet**	**Red Carpet**
• "Comfort Zone"	• "Learning Zone"	• "Failure Zone"
• things are familiar, you know what you're doing	• things are different, you're not quite sure what you're doing, but you think you can cope	• things are very different, you don't know what's happening at all
• Low / no stress	• Moderate stress	• High stress
• You learn little or nothing, boring but safe	• This is where you learn well • you feel confident to take risks again	• this is where you probably fail, and don't want to take any more risks…. you end up further back.
• your Comfort Zone doesn't change	• you enlarge the Comfort Zone	• your confidence and Comfort Zone shrink

You'll need to provide examples to help students grasp the ideas. Emphasise that these are only examples; they won't apply to all.

Examples…	**Examples**…	**Examples**…
(1) (for a Teacher) talking to a class	(1) (for a Teacher) talking to a Year Assembly	(1) (for a Teacher) talking to a big Conference of Teachers
(2) singing along with the radio	(2) singing unaccompanied in front of the family	(2) singing at an assembly
(3) adding numbers up to 100	(3) adding decimal numbers like 3.2	(3) adding fractions like 3/5
(4) an Art lesson	(4) a Maths lesson	(4) a Language lesson

Emphasise the key features of the Learning experience (1) it requires you to make a small **effort**, (2) it involves a small amount of **stress**, (3) it **extends** the Comfort Zone, (4) it improves your **confidence**.

I think it's very important for students to see, however dimly, that they can play an active part in lessons, and they can take risks….and that these improve their Learning.

The basic 3-Zone model is introduced in lesson 1, and will appear later in the Y8 course.

The notes to **lesson 1** explain how I see this going.

Brain Gym

I'm incorporating "Brain Gym" into the Y7 course from lesson 1. I will call it **"Brain Breaks"** or **"Brain Boosters"**, because we are not following the precise exercises as laid down by the commercial Educational Kinesiology Foundation, that run the "Brain Gym" ® programme.

Do one of the Brain Booster exercises at the start of each lesson, and at some suitable point mid-way, to refresh and re-focus. Teach students the **rhyme** that goes with each exercise. If we do this from the very start, the students will accept it readily. Just say that these exercises are known to help people think and learn. Students will learn how the exercises work in a future lesson. This should stimulate their interest!

Lazy 8s	**Double Doodle**	**Arm Activation**	**Hook Ups**	**Balance Buttons**
"To read and write, and do well in a test, Lazy 8s is the very best."	"Links hand and eye, helps writing too, Double Doodle is the one for you."	"At any time, to relax and feel great, All you do is Arm Activate."	"It's easily done, there's no hocus pocus, Hook Ups help me to listen and focus."	"To think and remember, and do well in PE, Balance Buttons is the one for me."

Worksheets – cut'n'stick

I've tried to summarise learning in simple and active ways, often in Cut & Stick worksheets, that students can handle and move about. This adds a useful Kinaesthetic element to their learning. But it is complex to administer....scissors, paste, waste paper. I feel it's important that student are more active than just copying down – you may find simpler ways to achieve this.

In some lessons I have followed a different aproach, where students have the cards to discuss and arrange, but then the final version is given them. They should then get the benefit of discussion, but avoid the "business" of scissors paste etc. The remaining small problem is to get them to "connect" with the given worksheet – I ask them to colour code and decorate the boxes.

Homeworks

I've tried to devise meaningful and interesting homeworks, that extend the learning out of the clasroom, in a practical way. I've also tried to link them to Skills in the Thinking Skills Record; this should give them more value in the students' perceptions, and give you chance of useful feedback.

It will be important to get into the habit of setting and taking homework in every lesson, and of marking it. I don't think it is important whether you use a mark out of 10, or a letter (say A – E), or nothing at all. Research has shown that what students really value is the interest from their teacher, shown by appreciative comments and further questions, and of course a note to say if they've got the Thinking Skill. I tend to the view that hard-pressed teachers have more valuable things to do than to chase up missing homework. What will encourage students to do homework will be a regular routine, supportive marking, seeing the Skills build up, and publicising all this, maybe with a display in the teaching room.

There is a problem maintaining continuity on a course with 1 lesson/fortnight, and you **may** decide you want to mark the last homework quickly, and return books via the Form Tutor, for students to do the current homework.

There are two kinds of homeworks...(1) a specific task that links to the lesson, and (2) the **"Thinking Diary"**.....this needs some explanation. Some of the Thinking Skills guides speak of the importance of students doing a "Thinking Diary", but they say very little about how to do it! After one year of the Thinking course, this is my attempt at a Guide to a "Thinking Diary".

The **Homework Guide** summarises the **Programme of Tasks** for the Y8 course. Each Unit's homeworks will be on a sheet of paper that students will stick in their exercise book. It lists homeworks that link to specific lessons, but also gives more general guidance for those students that wish to go further and build up an ongoing diary. What will encourage students to write a Thinking Diary is regular marking, with interest, and questions to stimulate further thought and development.

For this Y8 Course I'm combining the **Homework programme** with the **Thinking Skills Record** – they overlap a lot anyway – so you can use this to record each student's progress.

Links to other Subjects

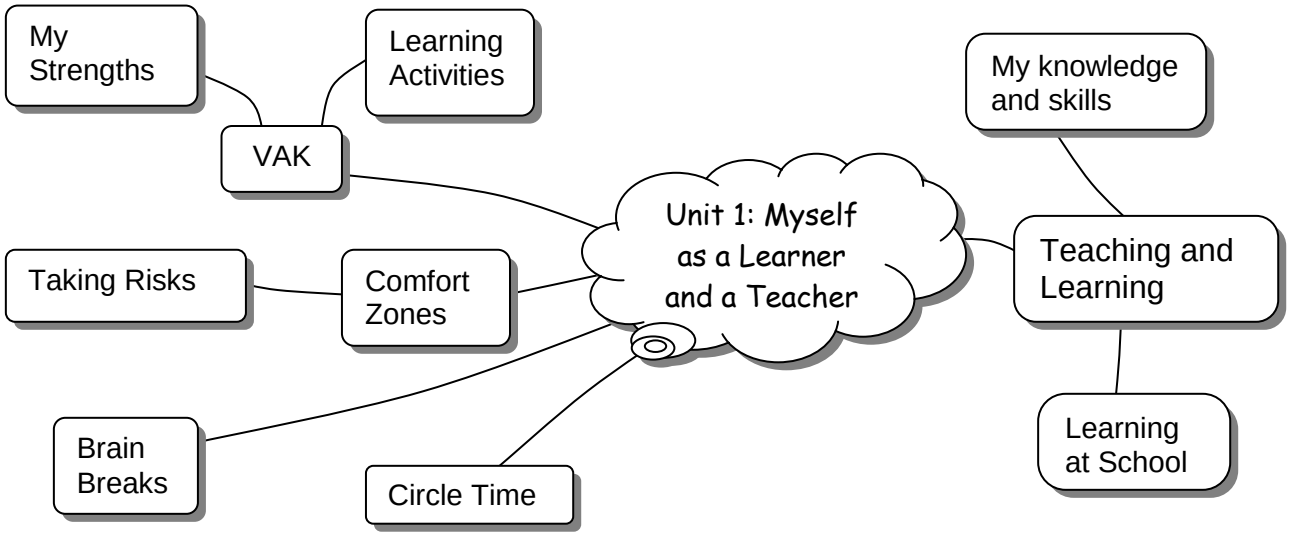
One of the very important aims of the Thinking course is to get students "bridging" from one subject to another, and seeing Learning connections. Everyone is agreed this is important, but they don't say how to do it.

I'm having a go at this in the Y8 Course. Y7 students will do this in the revised Y7 Course.

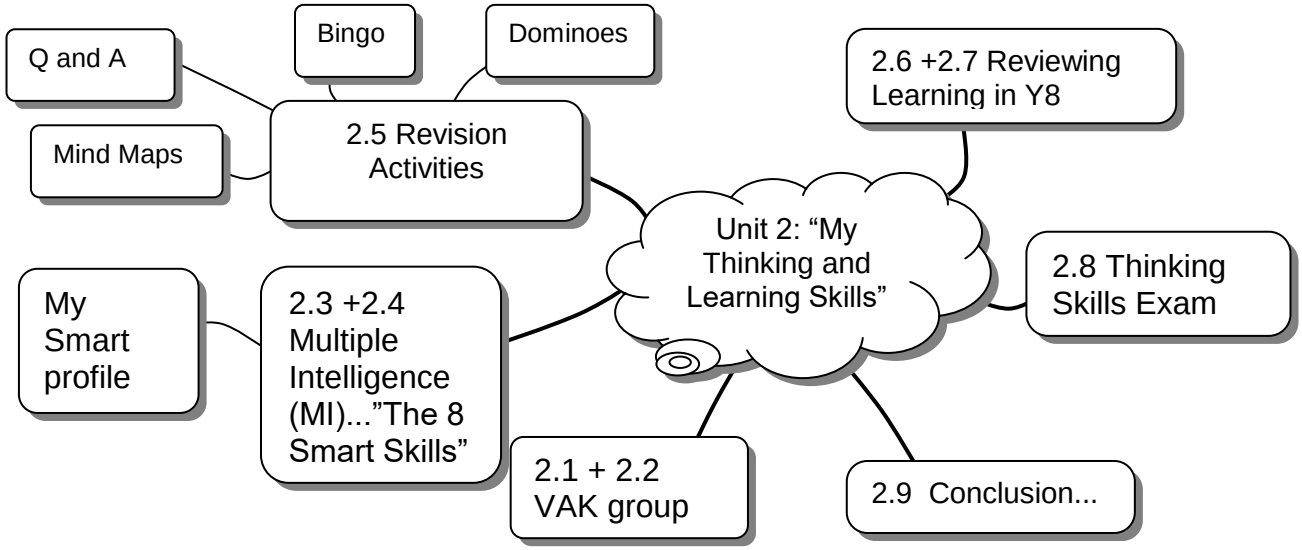
Cluster Maps...or Mind Maps

I've used this name, though they could also be called Spider Diagrams. Students will probably be more familiar with the term "Mind Maps", and it's not really important what they're called. In the end, what's important is to be able to use a 2-dimensional arangement effectively. Students seem quite at ease with this format, and many of them organise it in their own way. In Y8 I aim for students to build on their Y7 experience of Mind Maps.

Here are the 2 Units.....



...and here's Unit 2.



Circle Time

This is a long section on Circle Time – sorry! But while it's not a big component of the Y8 Thinking Course, it can still bring about positive effects, and I believe would be useful across the school. This is an edited version of what was in the original Thinking Skills Handbook.
Circle Time is a quite powerful activity supporting Teaching and Learning.
There was a big block of Circle Time in the first Y7 Course. The Y8 Course has shorter Circle Time sessions appearing in many lessons – whenever there is a need for open discussion, and sharing of viewpoints. It's a shift of emphasis, towards using Circle Time as simply another tool in the Thinking Skills Course.

What can Circle Time do?

Circle Time is a key element in the Wilsthorpe Thinking and Learning (TLS) programme. It provides the social and emotional foundations, upon which to build higher order Thinking and learning.
A colleague experienced in Circle Time has said….
"Circle Time encourages the involvement of all, building confidence, trust and self-esteem, promoting a cohesive group and a sense of belonging and togetherness…it allows the exploration of personal issues and social skills."
"In terms of the whole school…Circle Time fosters a caring group feeling, encourages co-operation in the class-room, examines strategies for resolving conflict, and provides a useful tool for shaping desired behaviour."
"In the class-room…pupils are more used to working with a range of peers, sharing thoughts and ideas, speaking in front of others, formulating opinions, actively listening to each other making teaching and learning easier and more effective across the curriculum."
Aware that this may sound too good to be true, Sue says…
"Of course this all sounds ideal in theory, but the reality is that there is a marked difference in the behaviour of the year group across the school….the severity and number of concerns and problems I have to deal with are dramatically reduced."
Circle Time is thus an extremely powerful initiative. As I see it, the benefits can be summed up as helping students to improve….

- listening to and following instructions - sometimes complex ones
- esteem for themselves and others, and articulating these
- positive self-image as successful learners
- social skills - resolving conflict, and working with a range of peers
- speaking in public, and offering constructive personal views on issues
- a sense of community, and mutual support
- discussion and learning skills

In one school, the Y7 Circle Time programme led to a Peer Mediation programme in Y8.

Ground Rules to make circle Time "Safe"

Jenny Mosley considers the single most important factor contributing to the success of Circle Time is the establishment of emotional "safety". Once the group knows and agrees the basic Rules, it becomes safe to talk about sensitive issues. Secondary students are often keen to have a forum to discuss the issues that face them at home and school.
So, everyone must be safe from….

- overt criticism

- mockery from others
- teacher's control techniques that show students up

Teachers and students need to agree…

- not to interrupt each other
- to signal if you wish to speak (teachers included!)
- not to put down anyone else
- you can "Pass" if you don't wish to speak….
- …..but you can speak when your turn comes round again
- not to name anyone in a negative way….instead you say something like "Someone keeps taking my equipment"
- if a student want to tell you something personal, then you use one-to-one time….and you may need to take the matter further.

The Teacher's role is as facilitator, encouraging students to feel that they have the authority and self-control to attempt to solve the behaviour, learning and relationship problems that concern them.

These guidelines have been summarised for display in the Form Room as follows….

Circle Time Rules

- the Circle is a place where we are all equal
- nothing said **inside** the Circle goes **outside** it
- no "put downs" or unkind words
- no interrupting
- you can only speak when you hold the Soft Toy
- it's OK to say "Pass", or repeat what someone else has said

Outline of the Circle Time sessions

Circle Time has three phases. Here they are characterised, with examples.

1. **Introductory** - Warm Ups and Rounds

Warm Ups are designed to…

- generate a sense of group identity by provoking laughter, fun and relaxation
- get students to work with many members of the group
- encourage students to value each others' individual contributions
- encourage emotionally "safe" self-disclosure
- improve social and relating skills, because they are linked to enjoyable experiences
- engender positive eye contact between students

Once a group is confident with each other and the Teacher, then there is virtually no activity they will not take on, no matter how "childish" it may seem.

It will help to spend up to half the lesson on Warm Ups with new groups, to establish Rules, build trust and a sense of safety and belonging.

Here are some Warm Ups to give you the idea…

a. **"Fruit Salad"** - a mixing up activity

Name the students as one of 3-4 fruits/vegetables - eg "lettuce, tomato, cucumber", or "apple, orange, pear, banana". When you call out, say "tomato", all the tomatoes change places. On "Fruit Salad" everyone changes places.

b. **"Name Clap"** - learning names

Clap together, and say the student's names going round the circle. So it could go…."Clap knees twice, clap hands twice, "Gemma", Clap knees twice, clap hands twice, "Michael"….and so on.
You can bring in variations where you clap once for a boy, twice for a girl – or some such. It will keep the thing fresh, and require alertness.
c…."Pass the Snake" – everyone mimes passing on some sort of tricky object….the teacher decides what, and changes it as things proceed.
Possibilities are: the Eponymous sleepy snake, a bowl full of hot soup, a bag of "Dog Poo" (still warm), a pile of £20 notes, a smelly experiment, an unexploded bomb, a pile of Maltesers, a cuddly kitten, a sticky bun, a heavy box, a handful of marbles, and so on…..
d…."Sarah Sausages" – students give their name followed by a food starting with the same letter……eg: "Andrew Avocado", "Vincent Vindaloo"….variations: countries, sports, performers.
e… ."Positive names" – students give their name preceded by a positive adjective/adverb…..eg "Athletic Andrew", "Happy Harriet".
f…."Zoom Eek"….Start a car going round the circle by saying "Zoom" and turning your head to the right. Each student in turn dies this to keep the car going round to the right…until someone says "Eeek!", and this reverses the car's direction.
g…."Spot the Leader"….one student chosen to go out, and whilst out, the rest decide who will be the leader they will copy. Student returns, and has to spot the leader that all others are copying. The copying has to be discreet; if people are looking at the leader then it's obvious! What works well is to continually look round the circle, and observe the leader as part of that. The leader does actions like swinging legs, folding arms, coughing, staring at the ceiling, etc.
h…."Ring on a String"…..this is similar to the one above. The group sit close together, all with both hands holding a piece of string long enough to go right round the circle. The string has a ring threaded on it. One person (the finder) leaves the room, or turns away, and the remainder pass the ring around the circle. The finder returns and must try to spot who has the ring. People in the Circle can pretend to pass the ring and confuse the finder. It's an idea to limit the number of guesses, to move the game along.
i…."Name Mixer"….a mixing activity…..if the last letter of your name is a vowel, then move 1 place to the right…if the first letter is a vowel, move 1 place to the left. Other variations are…odd or even numbers of letters in your name….odd/even numbers of syllables.
e…..Rounds
…follow on with a verbal activity that requires the students to work with and listen to each other. Some key features are…

- use a "Speaking Object" such as a soft toy as a signal of the right to speak and be heard
- use groupings and pairings that constantly change
- students can say "Pass" if they don't know what to say - though it's helpful if the Teacher responds with something like "OK - but I'll come back to you again" - after a while students want to have their own say.

Rounds are usually scripted with a sentence stem, such as….
"I don't like it when….."
"The world would be a better place if……" *
"A good friend is someone who….."
The Teacher/Facilitator takes part with the students and is an important role model.
A helpful strategy is to pair students to discuss an issue, then each one can speak for their partner. This is less threatening than speaking up for yourself - you also have to listen and remember!

** hmmm....Teachers are maybe not the best role models in this - staff at the Training session were coming up with ideas like…"…if Jack Daniels came out of the tap", and "….if the more you ate, the thinner you got" , and "…if chocolate was good for you."*

Middle Phase - "Open Forum"
This is at the heart of circle Time. It is the phase that *"most powerfully encourages pupils to develop less anxiety about their ability to learn, become more confident in social and learning situations, have more self control, be more willing to ask questions of others, and retain information more effectively."*
Open Forum is vulnerable to misuse by teachers and students, and it's important to keep everyone emotionally "safe". It need not be highly structured - you can use role-play, scripted drama, discussion and brain-storming. It helps to use strategies to encourage all students to participate - and thus reduce risk of a passive audience.
Individuals and the whole class devise an action plan of possible ways forward, promoting personal and group responsibility for behaviour and actions.
Here are some Middle Phase options….
Activity - eg "People Bingo" - go round and get students to sign your People Bingo card where they fit the category.
Conference - uses prepared questions to discuss and reflect learning…
"Did you find out anything about someone that you didn't know?"
"What did you have in common with someone else?"
"Was it easy/hard to share information?"
Special Person - affirming the positive in individuals
The "Special Person" goes out of the room, and each student - including the Teacher - says something positive about the student. They return, and stood in the middle of the circle, have the list read out to him/her. Some teachers arrange for these students to walk out of the room under an arch of outstretched arms of the other students……or, the other students make a car wash, and wash the student through. In either case, students whisper some of the positive affirmations into the chosen student's ear as they leave. Powerful stuff.

Closing Phase
It's important to move away from the possibly serious issues that have been raised in the Middle Phase. You need an ending ritual - to include some form of reflection or a game to induce laughter and good cheer.
Celebration of Success
This can be done by members of the group thanking others for their contributions, maybe with something like….
"I thought it was good when …NAME.. did/said….."
" NAME helped me to understand….."
"I didn't know about….SOMETHING….until…NAME….."
"When….NAME….said….SOMETHING….it really made me laugh"
The teacher can try to create situations where quiet/less popular students get thanked for something.

Closing Games - reunites the group - should be fun and calming
An excellent example is "Rainforest", where the group re-creates the sound of a tropical rain storm. The sequence goes….
rub hands….snap fingers….slap knee….stamp feet...slap knees...snap fingers...rub hands...silence

The leader starts each new stage, and the action is passed round the circle to the left - so each person copies the person on their **right**. At the end everyone holds their hands out, as peace and stillness descend. It works.

How to make Circle Time work

Circle time demands time and energy in classroom organisation - so train and use the students to do this. they will be quite happy to re-arrange the room - especially if they have a plan - maybe up on the wall. Music - some cheerful, upbeat stuff, may help here.

Apparently, a lot of schools start up Circle Time, only for it to fade away after a short while, under the pressure of Curriculum, and teachers losing sight of the original purposes.

Keeping Discipline during Circle Time

Jenny Mosley says that questions teachers frequently ask are: "How can I keep discipline? What do I do when a pupil will not keep to the Ground rules?" This reflects the way Circle Time takes each group out of its shared comfort zone, into new unexpected areas of experience. Teachers are usually concerned with particular characters that the teacher has found difficult in other lessons. The temptation is to use familiar "Classroom" methods of discipline and control. This can lock teacher and student into unhelpful cycles of behaviour and response. However, Circle Time can break the usual pattern and allow a different and more productive relationship to develop.

The primary "control" technique used in Circle Time is motivation by Praise. This is how Jenny Mosley puts it…

- the emphasis is on positive strategies alongside genuine respect and interest
- pupils learn that the way to get noticed is to keep to the ground rules
- the teacher acts as facilitator, and does not get "hooked" into negative exchanges
- it helps to have a system of recognising pupils who have followed the Rules, by issuing merits

For some students, this is not enough. They are so skilled at "getting attention without entering positive relationships" that teachers need a system of sanctions. If a student consistently breaks a Ground Rule the teacher puts a warning card at his/her feet in the circle. With minor disruption the student can be asked to sit out the next game/activity. With more serious disruption the student can be put to work elsewhere. Students who cannot cope with whole class Circle Time can be given extra support in smaller Circle Time activities.

For all students, where sensitive issues will arise, warn students to say only as much as they feel is safe - They are in charge of the information they share with the group. Although students are enjoined to confidentiality it is not guaranteed. If there's anything they want to discuss further, they should see you another time.

Keeping the discussion going - some ideas

Here are some of Jenny Mosley's guidelines…..

- vary the Circle approach - use the variety of activities available
- accept any contribution, however "offbeat" with respect…don't betray yourself with irritated body language!
- thank students for their contributions whenever possible - BUT take care! Thanking is fine, and value-free. If you get into the habit of praising contributions, a seemingly worthy response, then when you don't give praise, it seems like implied criticism.
- use a Speaking object for Rounds and discussions - a soft toy ("Bruce") does fine

- you as the teacher must conform to the Circle Time Rules - so you can't interrupt a student who is speaking. In general, the teacher will help things along if they don't overtly "run things", but behave as one of the students - put their hand up to speak and so on. It may well help if students sometimes act as the Leader in some of the activities, deciding who will talk and so on - very useful for students, and maybe especially for badly behaved ones, to experience.
- don't think that you as teacher have the best answers, put your hand up like the others!
- but….follow up any injustices or things that are going wrong for students (so you have to play a subtly dual role)
- try to set up some support for you from colleagues….evaluating issues raised
- you obviously take a serious approach to this, but try to include fun wherever possible, and end on a light-hearted, cheerful note.