

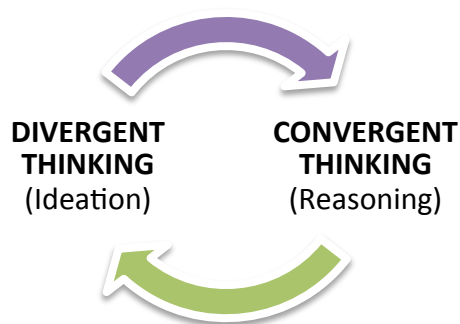
Parent (Teacher) Toolkit: Divergent-Convergent Thinking

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This document is part of the YCISL Parent (Teacher) Toolkit Series which is aimed at empowering parents as teachers to develop youth creativity and leadership skills that support healthy learning.

Divergent-Convergent Thinking is what enables leaders and innovators. It is a simple model where an ideation list is generated in the first step and one (or more) of the objects in the list is selected in the second step through reasoning. This process may cycle to improve or verify the result. Schoolwork focuses on aptitude with the second step and neglects to address the first step. Think of divergent thinking as accumulation. Think of convergent thinking as slimming. Use a cycle of divergent and convergent thinking to elevate your critical and creative thinking.

BASICS: We actually practice divergent-convergent thinking in everyday situations. Asking ourselves what to have for breakfast, we usually make a list of what is available, then choose something from that list. We could also be staring at the clothes in our closet and thinking of what to wear. So for a basic warm-up exercise to understand the two-step process, do some online shopping. Pick an object type (eg, a shirt), then visit an appropriate web site. Put several items of the object type into your cart. After you feel you have enough objects in the cart, view the cart and start applying deductive reasoning to narrow your choice to one. It may feel a little complex because of the factors you choose to apply in loading up and narrowing the cart, but it should also feel empowering.

BEGINNER: Let's choose a game to play. Maybe you have a stack of board games, or a collection of video games. You may also have some outdoor games you could play. Ask your child to look around and make a list of games to play with you. Review the list and see if anything is missing. Include everything as a candidate for consideration. Then go through the list and narrow down to a few. Then select a game from the short list and play it.

INTERMEDIATE: Create a daily schedule. It could be for a weekend, one week, one month, or maybe over a school break. Make a list of everything that you want to put in the schedule. Then build your schedule on paper, on your computer, or on a whiteboard. Each time you wish to add or remove items from the list, start with a new blank schedule. The schedule is complete when you are confident that it will be followed.

ADVANCED: A wide variety of online learning videos are available. Your child may already utilize some for supporting their school studies. Ask your child to choose a topic then make a list of videos that teach about that topic. One aim will be to compile the list from as many sources as possible. Then select a video to watch and learn together. Did watching the video raise the feeling of mastery of the topic?