

# Software Review - Thinking with Pictures

Eryl Connolly

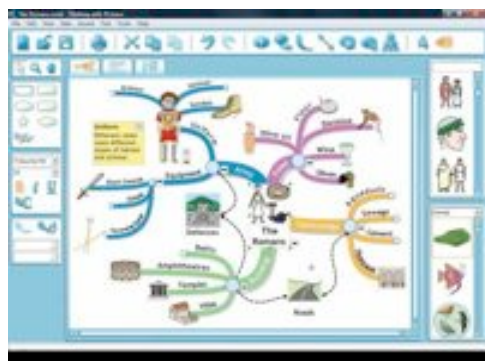


Thinking with Pictures, a model visual mapping software package for teaching and learning from Logotron, has the potential to be a powerful tool for mapping ideas in the classroom for the teacher and the pupil. It capitalises on current research on how the brain works and how model mapping can be used by all types of learners. It offers both a visual and an aural way of organising ideas to allow anyone to explain how and what they are thinking.

The disc is supported by a very useful clear activity guide, which in conjunction with the Logotron website, explains all the features of the program and offers some ideas for its use, as well as explaining some of the background research. I found that it took me some time to familiarise myself with the program and all its features, as there are some which can be accessed in different ways which was confusing at first. However, it is time well spent as it is essential to be confident in using all the features of the program before presenting it to the pupils.



Templates are available some of which are blank while others are already loaded with words which can be edited. One example is the template for making a weekly diary - this would aid those pupils that need help in organising themselves or who need to know the structure of their week. This could be adapted to make a daily outline. The templates support anyone who is getting to grips with the program.



There are many different options for presenting the ideas e.g. in thought bubbles, rectangles, stars etc which can then be joined as you go along or afterwards when all the ideas have been collected. In addition, you can draw your own images and add colour and backgrounds of your choice. Clipart can be inserted and suggestions are automatically selected as you type in words, although there is also a search category. Some of the pictures are a bit cartoony for my liking but the children liked them and the colourful bright presentations. There is also a facility to hear the words that have been typed which is particularly helpful for younger children or the poorer reader and as you can change the voice most children would enjoy using it.

Another attractive feature is that the maps can be easily printed. You can select a section or print the entire map either on A4 paper or by using tiling, print the map out for a larger display that would make an easy and quick impact.

## Author Notes

Eryl Connolly is Y3/4 teacher at Middle Barton School, Oxfordshire.

Thinking with Pictures could enhance teaching and learning in all curriculum areas. It teaches the children to identify the keywords and ideas in any given area and to organise their ideas clearly. For example, it could be used at the start of a topic to brainstorm, after which the teacher could model how to categorise the ideas. Later the map could be edited as children's thoughts are modified and extended through their work. Reluctant writers will be motivated by the colourful way their ideas can be shown with a minimal amount of writing. Keener writers can use the outline mode to add research information or ideas for further investigation, thus making differentiation and personalisation of the learning easier.

Thinking with Pictures is a valuable framework for all types of topics and concepts for teachers and pupils in primary schools and beyond. If pupils were taught to use it in KS1 they would become familiar with it and be able to use it easily and frequently as needed throughout their time at the school. The website explains how for £1 schools with a site licence can purchase access at home which would seem an attractive option. The text to speech tool and symbols make the program accessible to a wider range of ages and abilities increasing its value for money. A demo version can be downloaded from the Logotron website for evaluation.

Thinking with Pictures  
Logotron  
<http://www.logo.com/>  
Price from £51.00 exc. VAT

5/7/2008



Sharing Good Practice is the intellectual property of the authors but may be freely copied for educational purposes.

SGP37 page 5

