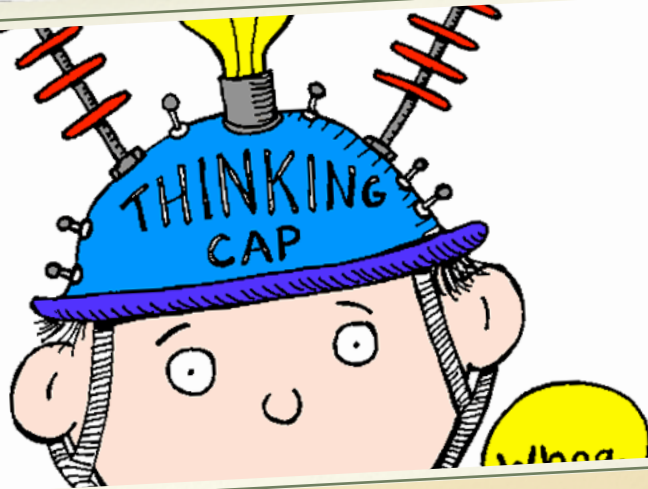


# LIVING ENVIRONMENT

*Instructor: A. Redway*



APPLYING LEARNING TO NEW SITUATIONS  
WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

WORKING TOWARDS SUCCESS

*"Each problem that I solved became the rule which served afterwards to solve other problems."*

Rene Descartes

## THINKING CRITICALLY

**In** this issue of the parents' newsletter, the focus is to share with parents, **critical strategies you can practice with your child to achieve success on class or standardized assessments.**

According to Susan Brookhart, an educational guru, when students are critical thinkers, they can successfully apply knowledge and skills developed during learning to new context. This is what 21st century

assessments ask of our students. Twenty first century assessments often ask students to do the following: *analyze new situations utilizing existing knowledge; solve complex problems and issues using existing knowledge and skills; and recognize patterns and create mental models using existing knowledge.*

For each assessment approach, students must have successful critical thinking skills to *demonstrate mastery of content.* Here are a few strategies to help your child do his or her best.

## Strategies

### Multiple Choice Questions

Look for *patterns in the choices listed.* Are 2 or 3 of the choices saying the same thing? For example, did the test examiner list passive transport, osmosis and diffusion as a possible answer to the same question. Since all these terms are synonyms, they can easily be eliminated as possible choices. The fourth response must be the answer.

For questions where diagrams are not offered, but answers could be clarified with one, *sketch your mental models.* Put in the conditions listed in the description of each question. This works well for questions addressing types of transport and other topics we have not addressed as yet. Most times, the answers will reveal themselves after doing this.

### Short Answers

To solve a problem such as designing an experiment or comparing two processes or concepts, *use a graphic organizer.* Always list the characteristics that you will use to help you trigger the correct responses. They will keep you organized.