Ten Behaviors of Ineffective Thinking

1. **Ineffective thinkers are impulsive, often jumping to conclusions. Everything** is speed and speed is what we want! You get a headache, take a Tylenol, within seconds the headache is gone.

2. **Ineffective thinkers give up quickly, if they are unsuccessful in solving a problem on the first or second try**.

3. **Ineffective thinkers are inflexible in approaching thinking tasks.**

4. **Ineffective thinkers use imprecise language:** They said … who said? Everybody did … who exactly is everybody? Cheerios are more nutritious … more than what? It is better … better than what? Things go better with Coke … what things, better than what? Which kind of Coke are we talking about … diet, caffeine free, regular, cherry, classic?

5. **Ineffective thinkers often plunge into a thinking task without planning what to do**. They generally do not have any organizational strategies.

6. **Ineffective thinkers fail to check their work for accuracy.** We don't always have to be 100% accurate, but there are times when it is critical. If a surgeon was not sure where he or she should cut, what would happen? The disaster of the Challenger is a classic example of inaccuracy.

7. **Ineffective thinkers are reluctant to secure as much data as possible**. Many students are happy with one example instead of trying to find others to enhance their projects.

8. **Ineffective thinkers skip steps in executing a thinking** task and then are unable to backtrack to see where they have made mistakes.

9. **Ineffective thinkers are unable to engage in a line of reasoning**. "Because" is a big word in their vocabularies but beyond that they cannot continue to explain their thinking.

10. **Ineffective thinkers are often incapable of launching a thinking task**. Often our students haven't the slightest idea where to begin or there is a fear of failure. It is important to point out the main objective is to get started. If it isn't the right direction, we can change courses.

Adapted from the following:

Costa, A. (1991). Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking. Arlington, VA: Association for Supervision

and Curriculum Development