

What is Big Little Thinking (BLT)?

Big Little Thinking (BLT) is a powerful framework that facilitates critical, creative, and consilient thinking and teaching about everything and nothing. Contemporary educators face challenges and opportunities in a global milieu that is recognised for the scale and complexity of its social, ecological, and technological problems. BLT facilitates teaching and learning through situated problems with a way of thinking that can recognise and reconcile tensions or 'opposites' and reveal the possibilities between them.

Situation



A situation is any event or occurrence that implies a

problem, generally consists of objects, agents, actions

connected in and across place and time. A situation is

the 'who, what, when, where' of a problem.

Problem

A problem is any situation that requires the coordination and creation of parts for a purpose. A problem is usually framed as a statement that identifies something as dysfunctional or missing.

Solution

A solution is any coordination, configuration or creation of parts that helps to address a problem. A solution is usually framed as a statement that identifies something as helping, fixing or balancing.

Ways of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) encourages critical, creative, and consilient thinking through social, technological and ecological problems.

Critical Thinking

Creative Thinking

Consilient Thinking



Critical thinking tests knowledge through analysis Creative thinking generates knowledge through novel and deconstruction. assemblies and perspectives.

Consilient thinking explores deep connectivity between seemingly separate thoughts.

Units of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) facilitates thinking through problems that involve truth claims (propositions) about things (entities), types of things (properties), and relationships between things (zygos).

Proposition

Entity

Property



Zygo



A proposition is a truth claim about an association (e.g. cause, correlation, attribution) between an entity and a property.

An entity is any thing (object, action, or concept) that is the focus of thinking.

A property is a characteristic or attribute that defines a thing.

Zygos are conceptual pairs, dyads, or poles that frame a graduated spectrum, and may be related as bothand-either-or-neither-nor, in between and beyond.

Examples of Zygos

Absence-Presence Finite-Infinite Nothing-Everything Chaos-Order Open-Closed One-Many Volatile-Stable Repel-Attract Macro-Micro

Freedom-Control

Centralised-Distributed Compete-Collaborate Hierarchical-Egalitarian Individual-Collective Local-Global **Emotion-Cognition** Qualitative-Quantitative A priori-A posteriori Profane-Sacred Conserve-Develop

Meaning

(Positive-Negative)

Space (Near-Far)

Simple-Complex Mythos-Logos **Analytic-Synthetic Empirical-Rational** Inner-Outer Concrete-Abstract Nature-Nurture Inductive-Deductive Attack-Defend Produce-Consume

Nature-Culture Past-Future Religious-Secular Traditional-Progressive **Expand-Compress** Soft-Hard Diverge-Converge Fission-Fusion Isolated-Integrated Masculine-Feminine

Unity-Diversity Add-Subtract Continuous-Discrete Spirit-Matter Mind-Body Self-Other Subjective-Objective Literal-Symbolic Free-Determined Natural-Synthetic

Dimensions of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) requires thinking through matter, meaning, and meta-dimensions to make sense and find purpose.

Meaning relates to value judgements and

interpretations of experiences of matter.

(Left-Right)

8 Matter

This dimension represents neutral zygos (i.e., tensions) that are relevant to a problem.

Time (Past-Future) X

This dimension represents developments and differentiations in time (i.e., chronological and-or structural changes).

entities.

Fact (True-False)

Meta

(Everything-Nothing)

Space represents the position and location of material

This dimension represents the ways of knowing that ascribe truth and falsity to descriptions of matter.

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This meta-dimension represents the origin and

expansion of all other dimensions.

Temporal Dimensions of BLT

BLT encourages explorations of problems through big history and deep time.

Cosmological	Geological	Biological	Anthropological	Historical	Present	Futurological
Related to the origin and development of matter and energy.	Related to the origin and development of the Earth and its elements.	Related to the origin and development of botanical and zoological life.	Related to the origin and development of humans.	Related to the origin and development of cultures and civilisations.	Related to current events relative to the scope and scale of time.	Related to anticipated and speculated futures.

Domains of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) through problems requires contexts with boundaries (scope), means of measurement (scale), degrees of importance (significance), and nature of inquiry (field).

(Big-Little) This aspect refers to the extent, breadth, range or spread of a domain. The big picture expands the domain of a problem. The little picture reduces the

Scope

domain.

Scale

(Micro-Macro) This aspect represents the level of

differentiation, detail, or resolution used

to measure or observe a domain. It

reminds us that thinking is always 'by

Significance (More-Less)

domain. It reminds us that different

This aspect represents the relevance or value of a thing observed within a

Field (Art-Science)

This aspect represents the nature of inquiry that defines the domain. It reminds us that problems and solutions levels of importance may be ascribed to can be viewed differently through disciplinary lenses.

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Development of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) frames the development of thinking as the increasing ability to recognise and relate entities. Each 'way' has a naïve and recapitulated form, such that all 'ways' have value and be understood in transpositions.

Niladic (Zero)

Thinking that is more

absent or negating.

Monadic (One)

singular or holistic.

1. Initiate: Choose a topic and select a problem

Thinking that is more

degree'.

Dyadic Two)

Thinking that is more

binary or dualising.

Triadic (Three)

middling or synthesising.

the 'same' thing.

Thinking that is more

Polyadic ∞ (Multiplicity) Thinking that is more

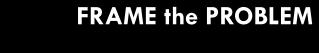
Enigmatic (Mystery)

Thinking that is more random or differentiated. absurd or paradoxical.

Transpositional $(0, 1, 2, 3 \ldots \infty, ?)$

BLT provides an adaptable process that can be used in simple or complex ways to apply the framework to real-world problems.

NAME the PROBLEM





3.1. Circle the Problem

3.2. Square the Problem

solutions

4. Ideate: Imagine possible



SOLVE the PROBLEM

8. Iterate or Disrupt: Repeat the process, change the process, or reconceptualise the problem

Dynamics of Big Little Thinking (BLT)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) identifies many different dynamics that help to explain actions and beliefs that are central to a problem. Dynamics describe actions and relationships within and between the dimensions of BLT.

General

Stability: A period of consistent identification with one position.

Enantiodromia: The paradoxical tendency for the pursuit of a position to reinforce or take on the form of its opposite position. Heterodyning: The combination of developmental stages without transition between

stages or differentiation between stages. Relativistic Disorientation: The experience of an absurd and debilitating relativism

and onto-epistemological immobilisation.

Zygotic Reflexivity: Awareness of zygoic relationships that influences those

Consolidation: The reinforcement of an existing position.

Combining (Convergent)

relational and contextual.

Depolarisation: Movement from exclusive commitment to a particular dyadic constituent (i.e. pole).

Formative Experiences: Experiences that influence individual or group identity.

Positively Reinforcement: Rewarding experiences that strengthen a position.

Contextualising: Locating the most immediate and salient aspects of a problem.

Development: Transition from one stage or way of relating positions, to another.

Transpositioning: Fluid but deliberate movement between positions that are

Negatively Reinforcement: Punitive experiences that weaken a position.

Negation: The mutual extinction of equally opposing parts.

Ubiquitisation: The sense of profound inter-connectedness with other dyads or dynamics across domains of knowledge.

Immirroration: The recognition of aspects of a position in an opposing position.

Entanglement (Interdependence): Realisation that one dyadic constituent cannot be changed without a related change in the other dyadic constituent.

Synthesising: Generating new or intermediary concepts from the combination of

Unifying: Expressing the full integration of parts.

Relational: Pertaining to the interdependence of parts.

Interpenetration: The sophisticated expansion of one zygoic constituent to accommodate most of the reality of its 'opposite'.

Consilience: The convergence of perspectives, disciplines, or fields through the

realisation of a common or shared reality.

Separating (Divergent)

Revolution: A relatively rapid and violent change of position.

Volatility: A state of extreme tension that precedes position change or conflict. **Polarisation:** Increasing oppositional separation between zygotic elements.

Similflict: Conflict between similar entities competing for the same space.

Recapitulation: Development towards a new form of a prior position.

contextuality or interdependence with poles (Middle Extremism).

Retributive Attraction: Movement to a new position to reject a past position.

Retreat: Return to a position after a negative experience with a different position.

Binary Middling: Adoption of a middle position without recognition of contiguity,

Inversion: A shift of polarity that moves from the opposed to the accepted.

Repulsion: Leaving a position with little attraction from without.

Expulsion: Forcing out of a position by fellow adherents of a position.

Reclusion: Avoidance of a different position without experience of that position.

Transitioning: A gradual movement from one position to another.

Masking: A negative position disguised as positive position, or a positive position disguised as a negative position. **Counterbalancing:** Identification with an equally valent counter-position to rectify a

perceived imbalance. **Binary Opposition:** Representation of conflict as two mutually exclusive positions without contiguity or relationality, where one is privileged over another.

Types of Zygos

Zygo A conceptual pair with a contiguous and interdependent relationship (e.g. Active-Passive) Proto Zygos that originate or permeate most other zygos (e.g. One-Many; Everything-Nothing; More-Less) Primary A pair that is unable to be divided into further zygos (e.g. Order-Chaos, Open-Closed) Secondary A pair that consists of more than one zygo (e.g. Science-Art, Masculine-Feminine) Isomorphic A pair whose elements are directly related (e.g. Hot-Cold, Hard-Soft, Low-High) Orthomorphic A pair whose elements are indirectly related (e.g. Quality-Quantity, Rational-Emotional) Triadic A zygo with a specific connecting element (e.g. Black-Grey-

Domain General Form

Form

Neutral

Biased

Symbolic

A form of zygo that is easily recognisable across domains (e.g. Bitter-Sweet, Discrete-Continuous)

Domain Specific A form of zygo that tends to be used in a specific domain (e.g. Acidic-Alkaline, Digital-Analogue) A zygo that is worded in a way that tends not to privilege

Proto Evaluative The zygo that expresses ultimate valency (Good-Evil)

either element (e.g. Open-Closed) A zygo that is worded in a way that distorts or values one element over another (e.g. Open-Closeted)

Proto Descriptive The zygo that expresses ultimate neutral forms (e.g. Left-Right)

A contextualised pair that is used to express deeper structural zygos (e.g. Cats-Dogs, Fire-Ice, Sugar-Spice).

The Big Little Window (BLW)

White; Past-Present-Future)

Big Little Thinking (BLT) uses artefacts and models to apply the framework and facilitate thinking through problems and solutions. There are numerous

ways to represent the framework, however, BLT's main artefact is known as the Big Little Window (BLW). The BLW consists of a circle, square, and centre to represent the three core dimensions of the framework, and facilitate application of BLT's units,

domains, dynamics, developments, and process. These spatial metaphors can be framed as actions to apply the BLT framework to a problem.

Circle the Problem



(Matter Dimension – Left-Right)

To Circle the Problem is to identify and investigate the most

significant tensions (i.e. dyads, poles, or zygos) that are

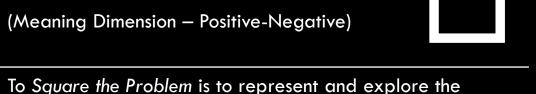
Measurement (0^0 to 360^0): Zygos are represented by complementary degrees (e.g. 0-180) on the outer circle, where there is general affinity between constituents to the left (90-0-270) and the right (90-180-270).

Square the Problem

(Meaning Dimension – Positive-Negative)

values of the matter that give it meaning.

relevant to the content of a problem.



Measurement (3L to 3R; +3 to -3): A single zygo is represented in its most neutral form along the horizontal axis (left-right), with its value-laden forms represented along the vertical axis (positive-negative).

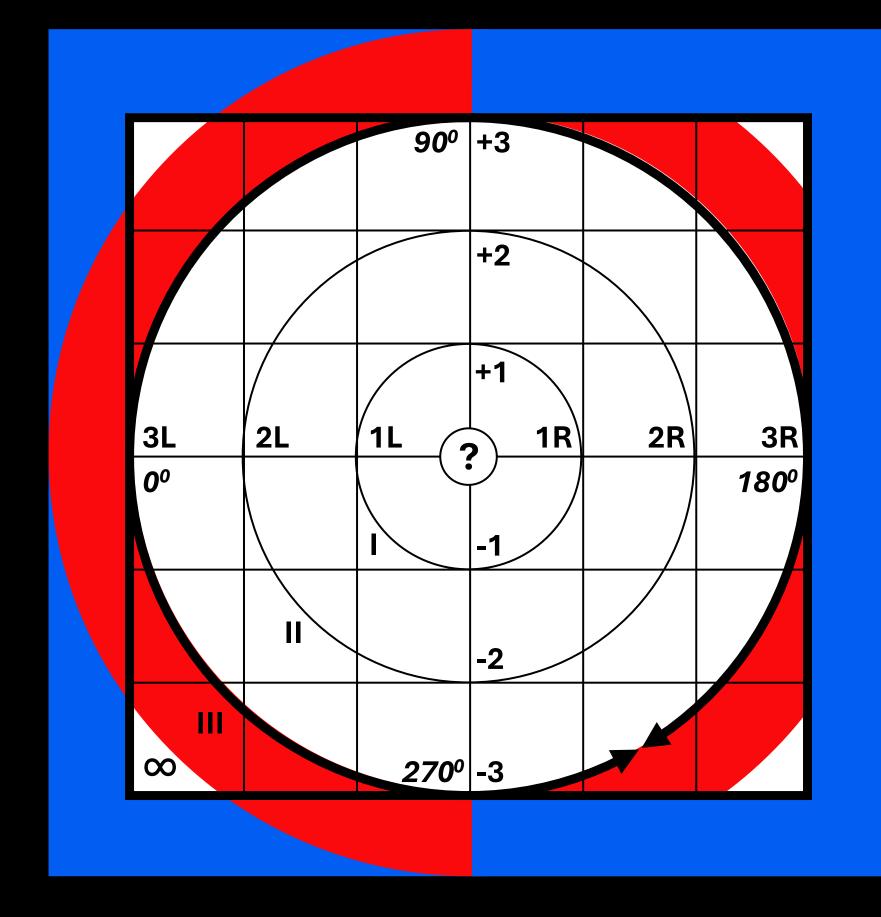
Centre the Problem

on matter and meaning.

(Meta Dimension - Everything-Nothing)

To Centre the Problem is to explore ultimate questions (i.e. Cosmological, Epistemological, Ontological, Axiological Teleological) that make sense of more contextual positions

Measurement (? to ∞): The concentric circles and squares represent movement back to questions of origins and more foundational forms, and forward to questions of ends and more differentiated forms.



Process for BLT

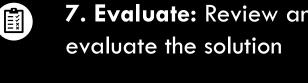
2. Populate: Share knowledge, experiences and opinions of the problem



Investigate: Use the BLW to explore the units, dimensions, domains, dynamics, and developments of the problem.







6. Actuate: Implement a