**Synectics**

Synectics (Gordon, 1961) provides an approach to creative thinking that depends on looking at, what appears on the surface as, unrelated phenomenon and drawing relevant connections. Its main tools: analogies or metaphors. The approach, often used in group work, can help students develop creative responses to problem solving, to retain new information, to assist in generating writing, and to explore social and disciplinary problems. It helps users break existing minds sets and internalize abstract concepts. Synectics works well with all ages as well as those who withdraw from traditional methods (Couch, 1993)

**Process**: Teacher-facilitators use synectics in the classroom by leading students through a process which results in a three dimensional view of the "problem" in order to create solutions.

**Define the word(s)**: Use a dictionary or other standard source to define each word, concept, or theme. Maybe the word represents a concept you’ve studied at length, such as the word “proactivity”.

Provide students with pictures to relate (in any way) to the word or concept chosen; for example “proactivity”.

Students may use freezer paper and markers to write or make, as a group, their connections from the picture to the word/concept.

Allow all groups to share their picture/concept connections.

Tips:

* Create direct analogies: **What words have the same or similar meaning?** (use a Thesaurus or book of synonyms)
* Describe personal analogies: **What would it feel like to have the characteristics or traits of**…? (describe emotions and physical attributes)
* Identify compressed conflicts: **What words have the opposite meaning or characteristics?** (use a book of antonyms)
* Create a new direct analogy: **What words have the same or similar meaning?**