

# The Massage Educator

issue 2, 2013

# 39,251

The number of massage and bodywork graduates in 2012.

—According to ABMP's 2013 School Enrollment Survey.

Created by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals • philosophy for instructors



## BUILDING CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS IN MASSAGE STUDENTS

A RECAP OF ABMP'S INSTRUCTORS ON THE FRONT LINES WORKSHOP SERIES #4

Were you able to attend one of the inspiring Instructors on the Front Lines (IFL) live workshops presented by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) this year? "Building Critical and Creative Thinking Skills in Massage Students" was the fourth topic in our popular IFL series, and was a huge hit with instructors across the country.



In fact, we had the opportunity to share this incredible information with more than 850 instructors in 26 interactive and fun workshops. Since the IFL series first began in 2009, we've connected with more than 3,100 educators in 101 workshops. As we prepare for our next topic in the IFL series to premier this July (see insert), we wanted to share highlights from the previous "Building Critical and Creative Thinking Skills in Massage Students" live workshop to benefit you and your students.

### CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING

ABMP Director of Education Anne Williams creates the content for all of the workshops in our IFL series. To address the complex topic of critical thinking for "Building Critical and Creative Thinking Skills in Massage Students," Williams researched 14 different educational models for teaching critical thinking skills to students and adapted one of them to make it applicable for the unique classroom experiences of massage therapy students and instructors. She added the component of creative thinking to address the skills massage therapy students and professionals need to adapt to a variety of situations, creatively solve problems, and use the information they've learned.

### DEFINITIONS

Definitions of critical thinking, while varied and with some being more extensive than

ACTIVITY!

## Divergent Thinking



We want students to be able to generate new ideas often and effectively. Help them "learn by doing" by using divergent thinking in your classroom. Divergent thinking asks students to list as many responses to a given stimulus as they can in a specific amount of time. For example, you may ask them to list as many muscles of the body as they can in 3 minutes. Other examples: list all of the ways you'd adapt a session for a pregnant client; list all possible career paths; list all of the pathologies we've covered this quarter. Use this exercise to create new ideas, gauge depth of knowledge, or review content.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

others, all have this in common: they stress that critical thinking encompasses *thinking about thinking*. This includes the awareness that thinking itself is a process that can be enhanced and changed. Many of our students enter our classrooms with the belief that they're as smart as they're ever going to get in that moment. They don't realize they have the capacity to change and grow in a plethora of ways; one of them being their ability to enhance all of the skill sets that make up critical thinking.

As educators, it becomes our privilege and responsibility to teach our students how to build their critical thinking skills. The IFL content focuses on teaching students *how* to think while teaching them *what* to think (your course content) through specific teaching methods, activities, and forms and tools to structure thought. This fourth workshop in the series contained 30 different activities and exercises to use with students in the classroom.

Creative thinking can be defined as thought processes that improve the ability to be creative. Like critical thinking, this is an ability that can be developed and enhanced. Tweaking the way we teach and ask students to use content can greatly improve their creative thinking skills.

### THINKING TOOLS

This educational model addresses six approaches to thinking (called thinking tools) that comprise critical and creative thinking skills: observing, generating ideas, asking questions, connecting, solving problems, and synthesizing/transforming. Let's take a look at how educators can help students develop these skill sets.

**Critical thinking** = Deconstructing Tools, such as analyzing, evaluating, identifying

**Creative thinking** = Constructing Tools, such as synthesizing, connecting, transforming

## 1 Observing

*Facts learned directly through the senses.* Students with observing skills can use their senses analytically to gather information by visualizing concepts, listening critically, and touching critically. Instructors can help students develop visual observing skills by using photos, images, videos, etc., in each class and asking students to analyze the images. This not only helps them understand the material, but also increases recall. Two components of listening critically are avoiding selective listening and closed mindedness. Having all instructors teach a structured and student-centered approach to palpation is one aspect of teaching students how to touch critically.

## ACTIVITY!

### Observing: Observe and Speculate

The Observe and Speculate activity develops the Observing Thinking Tool while increasing student interest. Engage your students before delivering your lecture or hands-on content by asking them to analyze a photo, body, bone, business card, etc., and speculate about it first before you begin sharing content. Adding this small additional step makes the information personal and students are more invested in hearing the outcome than if you went right into the lecture.

### Example Activity—Bones and Boney Landmarks

1. Break students into small groups.
2. Pass out two different bones to each group.
3. Ask students to observe and feel each bone and write down everything they can about the bone's features.
4. Ask students to speculate about the function, purpose, and location of the bone.
5. Bring students back to the large group and discuss findings.

## 2 Generating Ideas

*The process of devoting attention to a subject, enlivening prior knowledge, and inspiring new thought.* Students with this skill set can generate many different thoughts about a topic in a short amount of time; exactly what they need to do in all aspects of working with clients. Students may be in the habit of waiting for you to tell them what they should know and think. Develop students' ability to generate their own ideas by using brainstorming, free writing, and divergent-thinking activities. (See page 1 for a Divergent Thinking activity.)

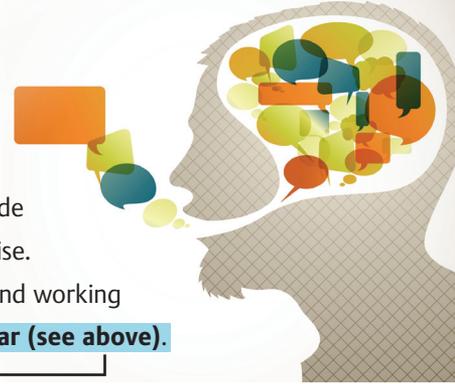




# 3

## Asking Questions

*The process of refining questions to elicit more useful information.* This thinking tool includes the ability to ask deeper questions about a topic, formulate powerful questions, and recognize and challenge assumptions. Activities in this section include starbursting, the powerful question pyramid, and the challenge-assumptions exercise. Bringing awareness to the assumptions students are bringing into the classroom, and working through them, is vital. [Learn more about all of these tools in the online webinar \(see above\).](#)



# 4

## Connecting

*The process of finding links between concepts, objects, and processes.* The ability to take information learned in different courses and from different sources and put it together in new ways is integral to a massage therapist's success. The tools in this section teach students these skills while they're learning your course content. Exercises include mind mapping, categorizing charts, and topic analysis forms. For example, students often learn the muscles of the body by section of the body. Do you ever ask them to re-sort that information by asking them to list all of the muscles of the body that flex?

# 5

## Solving Problems

*The process of identifying problems and possible solutions, and selecting the best one.* Problem solving is a life skill that needs to be learned and practiced. In the live workshop, and in the online webinar, we look at ways to teach traditional problem solving in new and interesting ways. We also introduce a new approach, appreciative inquiry. Instead of asking "What's broken and how can I fix it?" appreciative inquiry asks "What's working and how can I get more of it?" This is a strengths-based approach that resonates with students and instructors.

### ACTIVITY!

#### Solving Problems: Reverse Brainstorming

Reverse brainstorming is a unique twist on traditional brainstorming that uses a reversed question to arrive at new insights, trends, and solutions. A lively, fun, but still informative discussion stems from asking "How can we cause the problem?" instead of "How can we solve the problem?"

#### Steps

1. Identify the problem. (Example: 43 percent of my first-time clients don't return.)
2. Flip the problem by asking "How can I cause this problem?" (Example: "How can I keep first-time clients from ever coming back?")
3. Brainstorm ways to cause the problem.
4. Flip the causes to better understand trends and possible solutions.

**Reverse Brainstorming in Action:** How can instructors cause students to lose interest and become bored in the classroom? (This was a fun activity in the live workshops!)

# 6

## Synthesizing/Transforming

*The process of internalizing new information by linking it to prior experience and knowledge, translating it into your own language, and then presenting the knowledge in a different way.* This thinking tool focuses on developing students' ability to integrate all of the other skills together and personalize what they've learned to adapt to each unique situation as it arises. Incorporating dynamic art-based learning exercises, like songs, skits, and reenactment, is one way to personalize information for the student while creating an engaging kinesthetic learning experience.



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# Education for Educators

ABMP provides multiple opportunities for instructors and administrators to jump back into the (physical and virtual) classroom to enhance their skills. Be sure to take advantage of these exciting opportunities:

## LIVE EVENTS

- **Instructors on the Front Lines Workshops**  
Offering 18 complimentary workshops in 2013. Our new topic, "Building Communication Skills in Massage Students," begins in July; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **Massage Therapy Foundation's "Teaching Research Literacy" Workshops**  
ABMP is sponsoring four workshops in 2013; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **ABMP's Annual School Issues Forum**  
Join us in Colorado for our April 2014 event; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **American Massage Conference**  
ABMP is the Education Sponsor for the conferences every May and September; [www.americanmassageconference.com](http://www.americanmassageconference.com).



## VIRTUAL EVENTS

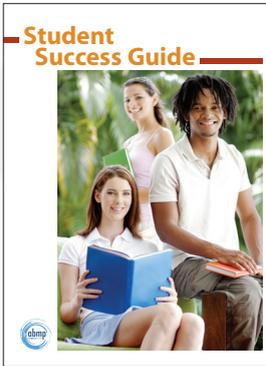
- **Webinars for Instructors**  
Includes our Instructor 101 series and 15 others. Visit ABMP's Online Education Center; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **Webinars for Massage School Owners and Administrators**  
More than 15 topics to choose from in ABMP's Online Education Center; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **Webinars to Use in the Classroom**  
More than 100 professional webinars in ABMP's Online Education Center; [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com).
- **World Massage Conference**  
ABMP sponsors this online conference each June and November; [www.worldmassageconference.com](http://www.worldmassageconference.com).





# Student Membership

Through student membership, ABMP partners with your students to increase their opportunities for success in your classroom and beyond. Give your students the tools they need by introducing them to the benefits of being an ABMP student member! Here's what they get with their ABMP student membership:



## Student Success Guide

This valuable resource gives students tools to build 12 different skill sets including note-taking, memorization, and time management.

## Message Year Planner

Students are able to organize and plan their academic and personal lives with this handy planner.

## Knead to Know Newsletter

Quarterly newsletter for students with tips and insights on succeeding in their program.

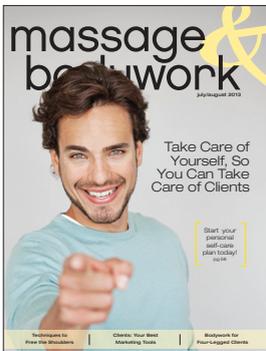
## Online Study Resources

Tools include digital flashcards, study forms, graphic organizers, and dozens more resources to help students learn, recall, and use information.



## BizFit Resources

Help your students get a head start on their career with their own free website, email account, business cards, client forms, customizable newsletters and brochures, and more!



## Massage & Bodywork Magazine

Connects students to the massage profession and introduces them to new ideas, techniques, and career options.

## ABMP's Liability Insurance

Our comprehensive occurrence-form coverage is the best value in the profession and provides the highest aggregate coverages available.

## Discounts

Valuable discounts on a variety of goods and services, including wireless plans, business resources, and more!

**Bonus:** Student members receive a significant discount on their first year as a professional member and schools may receive a referral credit for student members who become professional members.



Contact your ABMP School Liaison at 800-458-2267, ext. 649, or email us at [education@abmp.com](mailto:education@abmp.com) to learn more about introducing your students to this amazing membership opportunity.



# instructors on the front lines

## Workshop Series



### **NEW TOPIC #5:** "Building Communication Skills in Massage Students"

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is excited to introduce a new topic in our live Instructors on the Front Lines (IFL) workshop series!

Communication skills affect every aspect of a therapist's ability to initiate, manage, and maintain a healthy therapeutic relationship with clients, yet many massage students struggle with the basic interpersonal communication required to work effectively with peers and instructors.

"Building Communication Skills in Massage Students" gives instructors the tools they need to effectively address this important area.

**In this free, 5-CE hour workshop, learn how to teach students:**

- Core concepts in communication.
- Communication goal setting.
- How to recognize habits that block communication.
- How to eliminate communication blockers from interactions with others.
- How to communicate actively with friends, family, peers, and instructors.
- How to transfer these key skills into a massage practice to communicate effectively with clients.

### **Upcoming Workshops**

Register at [http://www.abmp.com/instructors\\_on\\_the\\_front\\_lines/](http://www.abmp.com/instructors_on_the_front_lines/)

**JULY 26, 2013:**  
Denver, CO

**AUGUST 9, 2013:**  
Kansas City, MO

**AUGUST 16, 2013:**  
Columbus, OH (at the Ohio Council of Massage Therapy Schools)

**AUGUST 23, 2013:**  
Boston, MA

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2013:**  
San Diego, CA (at the American Massage Conference)

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2013:**  
Virginia Beach, VA

**OCTOBER 11, 2013:**  
Indianapolis, IN

**OCTOBER 25, 2013:**  
Sacramento, CA

**NOVEMBER 8, 2013:**  
Baltimore, MD

**DECEMBER 6, 2013:**  
Las Vegas, NV

**COMING SOON!**  
2014 Dates and Locations