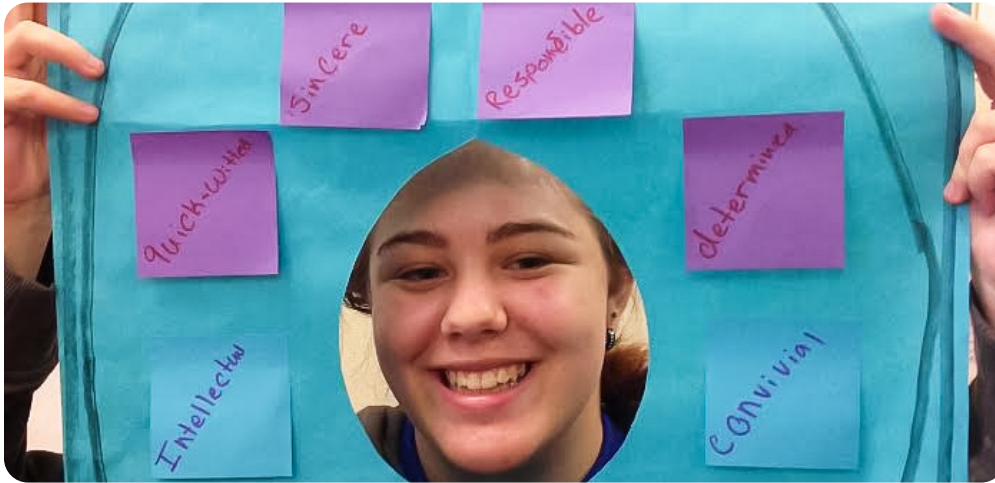




Pace Brantley Preparatory, Longwood, Florida



## SNAPSHOT

*Pace Brantley Preparatory*

- 140 Students (1-12)
- 28 Teachers
- 39 Full-Time Staff
- Private school serving students with diagnosed learning disabilities

Students come to Pace Brantley Preparatory with all kinds of learning needs. Thinking Maps gives teachers the tools they need to help every student succeed. Consistent use of Thinking Maps across grade levels and content areas has reduced anxiety for students and given them confidence in their abilities to tackle grade-level content and standards.

## A SAFE SPACE FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Pace Brantley is a small private preparatory school for students in grades 1-12 with diagnosed learning disabilities. Their students have diverse backgrounds and abilities, with many diagnosed with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), executive functioning disorders, or language-based learning disabilities. Most of them come to Pace Brantley because they have not been successful in their public schools. Pamela Tapley, the Head of School, says, "They come to us kind of broken and bruised, and their families are often in tears and just don't know what to do. When they get here, we look at the whole picture to figure out what that student needs."

The school was founded on the belief that every student can learn when given the right supports and resources.

Small classes, additional small group and one-on-one attention, and extra time to focus on core standards give students a space where they can thrive. Teachers and administrators also take care to create an environment where students can make mistakes and build confidence in their ability to learn. Pamela had already experienced the power of Thinking Maps over the course of her career as a

**"One of the things I loved about the Thinking Maps training is that you can literally get training one day and implement it in the classroom the next. That's huge."**

- Jennifer Foor, Principal, Pace Brantley

## A SAFE SPACE FOR STUDENTS... (CONTINUED)

public school teacher and administrator. When she came to Pace Brantley, she knew she wanted to bring Thinking Maps to the school. Jennifer Foor, Principal for Pace Brantley, was one of the first to go through the training of trainers in 2017 and immediately began rolling out the Maps to teachers.

She says, “For us, the thinking process is where our students struggle. So, for our teachers to have this tool in their toolbox, and to have a common language that teachers and students use across the board, I could immediately see the value.”

## STRATEGIES THAT WORK FOR ALL TYPES OF LEARNERS

Students and teachers now use Thinking Maps across all grades and content areas. They are also beginning to roll out *Write from the Beginning... and Beyond*.

Thinking Maps provides a structure for thinking that benefits students with all kinds of learning differences. Jennifer Portilla, who teaches high school government and a critical thinking/study skills class, says, “It really helps our students because for many of them, things get jumbled in their brains, and it’s just really hard for them to organize information. Thinking Maps gives them a framework to do that. It takes a weight off their shoulders to say, ‘I don’t have to be responsible for figuring out my own system; there is a system in place for me.’” Jennifer also uses the Maps for her own planning. “I know I teach very differently now compared to before I had Thinking Maps. Thinking Maps provides a

consistent structure to my classes that I didn’t have before.”

Katie Reekie, a speech pathologist and middle school language arts teacher, uses Thinking Maps in a variety of ways in her classroom. At the beginning of a new unit, students use a Map to activate prior knowledge. As students listen to or read new information, they use Maps to take notes. When they are creating their own learning products or completing an assignment, the Maps help them organize their thinking and plan their approach. She uses Thinking Maps as an authentic assessment of student understanding. “It’s been helpful as an assessment tool because I have so many students who are language impaired and have a hard time expressing their thoughts, especially in writing. But if they can put it in a Map, it’s a great way for me to assess what they’ve really learned in class.”

### PACE BRANTLEY PREPARATORY MULTI-FLOW MAP

**Implementing  
Thinking Maps at Pace  
Brantley Preparatory**

**“The kids are very automatic with the Maps now. They know what kind of Map they need to create for a specific kind of thinking or product... I have really seen the benefit.”**

- Katie Reekie, Speech Pathologist, MS ELA

**“One of the added benefits of Thinking Maps is the way it reduces anxiety. It puts our students in a brain state where they are ready to learn new academic information.”**

- Jennifer Foor, Principal

**“It’s changed how I plan personally for myself. I plan my lessons in Thinking Maps. It creates a structure that makes planning easier.”**

- Jennifer Portilla, High School Government and Study Skills Teacher

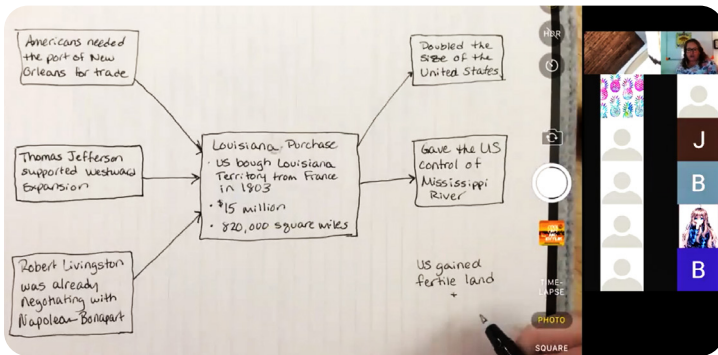
**“It’s been phenomenal to help our kids really understand the thought processes and chunk information in a way that works for their brains. They are learning skills they will take with them in life.”**

- Pamela Tapley, Head of School

# BUILDING CONFIDENCE, ENGAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

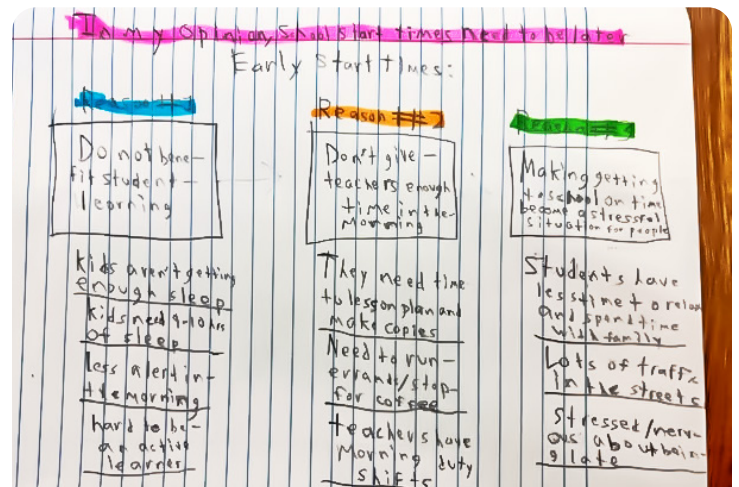
The more students use the Maps, the more they gain confidence in applying thinking strategies. Jennifer Portilla says, “It just becomes automatic for them. It helps them take ownership of the information when they read a passage—they are more able to recognize text structure and know what information they should be taking out of it. And when we start talking about a topic, they automatically start thinking in Thinking Maps.”

Katie concurs and adds that Thinking Maps helps her students stay more engaged with learning. “Thinking Maps is the antidote to disengagement, which is especially important right now after COVID. It helps them take ownership of the learning process and become re-engaged in the classroom.”



Providing a consistent structure and language for learning has helped to reduce student anxiety and stress. Because students know what to expect and what to do, they are able to concentrate on content and stay in the right state of mind for productive learning. Jennifer Foor describes Thinking Maps as a “cozy blanket” that reduces student anxiety and builds confidence in their learning abilities.

They have seen real differences in student performance, too—especially when it comes to writing. Students learn how to use the Maps to organize their ideas prior to writing. Since adding dedicated “Map planning time” to the beginning of their writing assessment, they have seen significant improvement in the final writing products across all grade levels.



**“If you want to engage kids with learning, Thinking Maps is the place to start... Thinking Maps is a strategy that works for all different types of learners.”**  
- Katie Reekie, Speech Pathologist and English Language Arts Teachers, Pace Brantley

Most importantly, students are better prepared for long-term success, whether they plan to return to public school to complete their K-12 journey or stay at Pace Brantley until they graduate. Thinking Maps helps students with diverse learning needs master grade-level content and standards so they can stay on track. Jennifer Foor says, “Our goal for our students is that they have the option to do whatever they want to do, whether that means attending a community college, attending a traditional four-year college, or entering the workforce. Getting executive functioning skills online so they can do that is 100% related to Thinking Maps. These are strategies they can take with them through life, wherever they go.”

**“Thinking Maps touches every aspect of what we do here, no matter what your role is.”**  
- Pamela Tapley, Head of School, Pace Brantley