

Critical thinking skills



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Critical Thinking Skills Critical thinking is an important topic in education today. Educators today are very interested in teaching this skill to their students in the classroom. Critical thinking is much more than us applying simple thoughts to a specific topic or issue; it is a disciplined and reflective way of thinking. Critical thinkers like to gather information from all of the senses, verbal and/or written expressions, reflection, experience, reasoning, and observation. As educators today, we ask ourselves, are we not teaching critical thinking on a daily basis when we are teaching subjects such as math and science, these are the two disciplines that embody correct and logical thinking. The answer, sadly, most of the time is no.

Please take great consideration in the following two quotes: “But if thought is to become the possession of many, not the privilege of the few, we must have done with fear. It is fear that holds men back. Fear lest their cherished beliefs should prove delusions; fear lest the institutions by which they live should prove harmful, fear lest they themselves should prove less worthy of respect than they have supposed themselves to be.” ~ Bertrand Russell (Principles of Social Reconstruction) retrieved from criticalthinking.org on March 17, 2009. We should be teaching students how to think. Instead, we are teaching them what to think. (Clement and Lochhead, 1980, Cognitive Process Instruction. Maybe now we can see the problem.

All education consists of conveying to our students these two different things: (1) subject matter (what do we think) and, (2) the correct way our students to assess the subject matter that is being taught (how to think). We tend to do an excellent job of transferring our academic disciplines, but we

frequently fail to teach our students how to think effectively concerning the subject matter, that is, how to appropriately understand and evaluate the information. Researchers have argued that this type of questioning can be changed. Educators will need to substitute more ??? thoughtful??? and ??? wise??? questioning tactics for these patterns. ??? The good thinking model included: comparing, interpreting, observing, summarizing, and classifying; suggesting hypotheses; taking decisions; creating; criticizing and evaluating; designing investigations; identifying assumptions; and coding, gathering and organizing data or information, as well as applying principles to new situations???. (Pithers, 2001, p.

241) It seems as if this list is very similar to Dewey??™s six steps of practice or even Bloom??™s six levels of thinking although this ??? good thinking??? model has far more than six steps. Critical thinking has been taught across the curriculum for many years now. We have found that its main roots were first in math and science. Today we find it also being taught in health. Researchers have found that by integrating critical thinking into the health curriculum, the students are better able to understand, retain, and apply the material that is being taught. ??? Teaching for critical thinking poses an important and emerging instructional challenge to the health education profession???.(Broadbear, Keyser, 2000 pg. 325) The National Health Education Standards sees the importance and need for developing students that are critical thinkers.

No single critical thinking approach will satisfy all teachers and learners, but the type of instruction that will be provided to help with improving the students thinking, will prove to be very much warranted. In this day and age

we as educators and health educators need to be able to design our curriculum and learning activities with critical thinking in mind. Critical thinking is both a process and an outcome. When it is used as an outcome, it is best understood from an individual's point of view" this means that you are obtaining meaningful understandings as well as your content-specific critical inquiry abilities, skills, and dispositions. (Garrison, Anderson, Archer, 2000 pg. 2) The teacher is going to be the one responsible for determining if the quality of the critical thinking as an outcome is going to fit within the educational parameters or content that is being taught. Using critical thinking as a product has best been observed to work well when individuals are working on their own educational assignments. (Garrison, Anderson, Archer) Problem-based learning is a growing enthusiasm for developing critical thinkers.

They seem to encourage learners to think critically about the course work they are striving to learn. The ideas we all have are erected upon one or more metaphors. If we can change the metaphors, then the whole of our theoretical system should change as well. Researchers believe that making these changes can unlock the kingdom of our minds. We know today that critical thinking skills are very important in our everyday life. Critical thinking skills help us to function in the modern world today.

Critical thinking has also become very important in universities around the country. If all of the education sectors will aim to and prepare their graduates for the world outside of school, their abilities to think will be well at its premium. We as educators need to pay attention to the students interests, expectations, and wishes so that we can make an impact on their

learning and plan our programs in unison with them. (Pithers, Soden)Preparing students to be critical thinkers for our new millennium should be a top concern to all facets of our society today, whether you are a parent or an educator. In our society, we must as educators, study proposed models as a framework to better understand the cognitive nature of providing an environment conducive to preparing students for the tough decisions they have to make in today??™s world. ReferencesBroadbear, J. T. , Keyser, B. B. (2000).

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