

TEACHING FOR CRITICAL & CREATIVE THINKING

TWEET: #tc5815

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Someone Who Thinks Critically Can ...

- **Identify Assumptions Behind Thinking & Actions**
- **Check Assumptions for Accuracy & Validity**
- **Take Informed Action**

Someone Who Thinks Creatively Can ...

- View Ideas & Actions from Multiple Alternative Viewpoints
- Generate Interpretations & Actions that Differ from the Usual Mode of Thought or Practice
- Communicate Learning Through a Variety of Modalities & Forms – Visual, Kinetic, Auditory, Symbolic

A CRITICALLY & CREATIVELY INFORMED ACTION IS ...

- One Based on Evidence / Experience that Can be Justified
- One That Has Its Assumptions Known & Checked
- One That Stands a Chance of Achieving Its Intended Consequence
- One That Has Been Viewed from Multiple Perspectives
- One That is Enacted Via Multiple Modalities

KINDS OF ASSUMPTIONS

- CAUSAL - purport to explain a sequence of events
- PRESCRIPTIVE - assumptions about how things should happen, we should behave
- PARADIGMATIC - framing, structuring assumptions viewed as obvious, common sense, taken for granted

4 Key Intellectual Traditions

- ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY – logical fallacies, argument analysis – inductive, deductive, analogical, inferential reasoning
- NATURAL SCIENCE – hypothetical-deductive method, principle of falsifiability
- CRITICAL THEORY – uncovering power dynamics & ideological manipulation
- PRAGMATISM – experimental & creative pursuit of beautiful consequences (E.g. democracy, inclusion, connection)

An Example

- Clinical Depression is Caused by External Circumstances
- The Way to Deal With It Is To Reason Through It & Tell Yourself To Snap Out of It
- Medications Are For Those Too Weak To Deal With The World

Rooted in Ideology: PATRIARCHY

(Men are to be entrusted with making decisions by virtue of their superior rationality & logic)

Counter: A Flaw in Chemistry, not Personality

Creativity: Medication, Meditation, Music

An Example

- I Am Free of Racism
- I Don't See Color or Race
- I Treat Everybody the Same

Rooted in Ideology: WHITE SUPREMACY

(The norm for leadership is White & Whites are not racial beings. They can escape racism by moral determination)

Counter View: Whites as Raced, Engaging in Racial Micro-Aggressions, H.E. as Racialized

Creativity: What Would Classrooms, Teaching, Content Look Like Racialized in Favor of Other Racial Groups?

Question ...

- **What most helps your students to think critically &/or creatively?**

Circle of Voices (5 people)

- Individuals reflect on the discussion topic (1 min)
- Participants go round the circle in order - each person has up to 1 minute of uninterrupted air time to give their viewpoint on the topic. No interruptions are allowed
- Move into free discussion with the ground rule that every comment offered must somehow refer back to a comment made by **someone else** in the opening circle of voices. This need **NOT** be agreement - it can be a disagreement, a question, an elaboration or extension, an illustration, etc.

How Is CRITICAL THINKING Learned?

What Students Say ...

- By Instructors MODELING, MODELING & MODELING via:-
- Critical Incident Questionnaire
- Assumption Inventories
- Ending Presentations, Discussions & Exercises with Questions
- Chalk Talk – Visual Discussion

An Example: Chalk Talk

- Instructor writes a question in the middle of the board
- 5-10 minutes of silence is declared
- Students write responses to the question on the board whenever they feel ready
- Students & instructor draw lines linking comments & add questions & reactions

Critical Incident Questionnaire (CIQ)

- MOMENT MOST ENGAGED AS LEARNER
- MOMENT MOST DISTANCED
- ACTION MOST HELPFUL
- ACTION MOST CONFUSING
- WHAT SURPRISED YOU MOST

HOW ADMINISTERED?

- Last 5 minutes of Class
- Anonymous
- Frequency Analysis of Main Themes
- Reported Out at Start of Next Class
- Negotiation NOT Capitulation

How Is It Learned?

What Students' say

- Consistently Providing Real World Illustrations / Examples
- Instructor Point – Counterpoint
- Structured Devil's Advocacy (Solo Point-Counterpoint)
- Speaking in Tongues

How Is It Learned?

What Students' Say

- What do YOU think Professor?
- Drawing Discussion
- Musicalizing Discussion
- Incremental - Begin With Basic Mental Protocol /Inquiry Applied to Topics Well Away From Students' Experiences then Gradually Move Closer to Home (c.f. Vigorous Exercise)

How Is It Learned?

What Students Say

- When Students Have to Face & Respond to a 'Disorienting Dilemma' (Mezirow) - a situation engineered to take them by surprise / reverse / upset their expectations
- Dangerous (Appropriate) Disclosure
- Classroom Geography – Teach from Siberia
- Clashing Contradictions: Defining Democracy
- No Speech: Visual, Musical, Graphic, Symbolic, Kinetic SILENCE as NORMAL

Question ...

- **HOW DO YOU MODEL
CRITICAL &/OR
CREATIVE THINKING
FOR YOUR
STUDENTS?**

CIRCULAR RESPONSE

(10-12 members)

- **Go round the circle: each person has up to a minute to talk - NO INTERRUPTIONS**
- **What you say must respond to the previous speaker's comments (can be a disagreement or expression of confusion)**
- **Once all have spoken move into open conversation with no ground rules**

Follow Up ...

- www.stephenbrookfield.com
- TEACHING FOR CRITICAL THINKING(2012)
- THE SKILLFUL TEACHER (2006, 2nd. Ed.)
- sdbrookfield@stthomas.edu