What is Critical Thinking?

*Preparation time: **30'***   *Teaching time: **1 x 60'***

Abstract

This lesson explores the essence of critical thinking, tracing its origins, significant contributors, and practical applications. Participants will learn how critical thinking enables individuals to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and form reasoned conclusions. Using historical examples like Socrates' Socratic Method and contemporary applications in various fields, the lesson highlights the importance of critical thinking in navigating modern societal challenges. Interactive discussions and activities will enhance participants' ability to think clearly, rationally, and critically in diverse contexts.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Critical Thinking from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*
- Quiz on Critical Thinking from the *Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course*
- Online games and activities to enhance Critical Thinking like: *Chess.com*, *The Talos Principle*, Spent, Brainstorm Numberdyslexia.com,

Keywords

Critical Thinking,
Socratic Method,
Media Literacy,
Problem-Solving,
Rationalism

Lesson aim

This lesson's objective is to introduce students to the concept of critical thinking by highlighting its core ideas, providing historical context, and applicability in contemporary society. It aims to improve their ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, and draw reasonable conclusions, so they can successfully navigate complex issues and make informed decisions in various personal and professional contexts.

Lesson outcome

Students will learn about the history and development of critical thinking as well as its use in a variety of industries, including business, healthcare, and education. They will learn to apply critical thinking techniques which can be carried out in real-world situations, such as challenging presumptions and assessing the evidence. Additionally, students will reflect on the societal importance of critical thinking society for encouraging cooperative problem-solving and informed decision-making.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming Up

- Involving participants and introducing the topic by asking general questions regarding the topic such as: *"What does critical thinking mean to you?"*
- Provide a brief lesson overview, focusing on the relevance in the modern world.
- Present an example of critical thinking in action, such as a decision-making scenario

min. 6 - 20: Collaborative Learning

- Discussion: The origins of critical thinking, emphasizing on Socrates' contributions and the Socratic Method.
- Highlight key historical developments (the Enlightenment, different thinkers). Have students in small groups do some research.
- Lead a group discussion on how critical thinking applies and works in democratic societies and in relation to media literacy.

min. 21 - 50: Practical Application

- Use the Socratic Method to explore a complex question
  - Guide participants to analyse the question, consider multiple viewpoints, and draw reasoned conclusions.
- Conduct a group activity where participants analyse a real-world scenario (evaluating conflicting news articles).
- Encourage students to individually or in pair use games like Chess.com or Spent to enhance strategic and reflective thinking.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion

- Summarise the lesson by highlighting the significance, uses, and history of critical thinking.
- Reflective questions with an emphasis on what they should remember from this lesson like:
  - *"In which aspect of your life do you think you can apply critical thinking?*
  - *"What barriers might prevent people from thinking critically?"*

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to Moodle; examples of Socratic dialogues and critical thinking scenarios; access to online games like Chess.com and Spent; handouts or digital links to further reading materials on critical thinking; PowerPoint/Prezi presentation which is enriched with visual materials (images and video clips) and research based factual information.