



Lesson 11

Critical Thinking Tools & Skills

Preparation time: 30'

Teaching time: 1 x 60'

Abstract

This learning scenario expands on the notion of critical thinking and introduces the main critical thinking tool and skills. Critical thinking skills and tools are intended to improve awareness, thinking, and thinking critically, about an angle that the story is being told. Participants will be introduced to various tools and techniques that can significantly improve critical thinking skills and learn through practical exercises and historical examples to illustrate their application. They will also be introduced to the concept of narrative theory that considers every news footage as a narrative, which means that it has someone telling it, and that every story has a particular angle from which it is narrated or told. This particular angle is called the perspective or point of view.

Online educational resources

- Lesson on Critical Thinking Tools & Skills from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Quiz on Critical Thinking Tools & Skills from the Sorting Facts from Fiction online Moodle course
- Explore argument mapping with [Rationale](#)

Keywords

*Critical Thinking,
CT Tools & Techniques,
Analysis & Interpretation,
Understanding CT,
The Socratic Method*

Lesson aim

The aim of the lesson is for students to understand that critical thinking is a fundamental, essential skill for today's media literacy and orientation in the current media world, but also a crucial cognitive skill. They will be introduced to various tools and techniques, such as: Analysis, Interpretation, Inference, Explanation, Self-regulation, Open-mindedness, that can significantly improve their thinking abilities, along with practical exercises and historical examples to illustrate their application.

Lesson outcome

Students will have a better understanding of key critical thinking skills and tools and their importance for today's media literacy and orientation in the current media world. They will be able to identify sources to practice and improve their critical thinking and understand the historical examples of critical thinking methods.

Lesson implementation process

min. 1 - 5: Warming-up

An effective way of involving participants and setting common expectations about what they will learn is to ask a few preliminary questions on the subject. The educator introduces the topic and class contents, prepares PowerPoint/Prezi presentation; various teaching methods: lecturing, discussion, group work, self-reflection.

min. 5 - 20: Collaborative learning

In the next 15 minutes participants talk about how critical thinking could be improved and what are the skills needed for it. The educator explains some key information: essential CT skills (Analysis, Interpretation, Inference, Explanation, Self-regulation, Open-mindedness) and mentions historical examples of critical thinking (The Socratic Method, Scientific Revolution, The Enlightenment, The Manhattan Project).

min. 20 - 35: Discussion and Practical Application

The educator asks a question to be examined critically in the form of the Socratic method (suggested topics are the most relevant one for today: Social Change in Today's World is Impossible; The Economic Inequality in the World is rising vs "Absolute poverty is vanishing rapidly" (Jordan Peterson).; "Artificial intelligence will take all our jobs and that's not necessarily a bad thing" Elon Musk etc).

To effectively use these tools, the educator facilitates the following steps with the participants:

1. Identify the problem or question at hand
2. Gather relevant information from credible sources
3. Apply appropriate critical thinking tools
4. Analyze and evaluate the information
5. Draw conclusions and make decisions
6. Reflect on the process and outcomes

min. 35 - 50: A Kahoot quiz

Play the Critical Thinking Skills & Tools *Kahoot* quiz with the participants, covering various aspects of critical thinking tools and techniques.

min. 51 - 60: Conclusion and Reflection

Make a short summary of the lesson, mentioning that thinking more critically and thoroughly about the pressing issues of today's world can help us understand it better, being more self-aware and making better decisions about your present and future. Present the sources for further reading and exercise. Ask a couple of questions which help reminding the participants about the most important messages you would like to give.

Materials / Tools

Video projector; laptop/desktop; Internet connection; access to *Moodle*; examples of news articles and fact-checking scenarios; handouts or digital links to fact-checking tools; PowerPoint/Prezi presentation enriched with visual materials (images and video clips).