Putting Critical Thinking Into Practice

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CT = Hunting Assumptions

- Assumptions constantly frame all our actions, judgments & decisions
- We need to check that these assumptions are accurate & valid
- We need to understand that different people bring different interpretations & perspectives to understanding content & applying skills
- Checking assumptions & seeing things differently helps us take INFORMED ACTIONS as scholars, workers, citizens, parents etc.
SO. Exercises to practice thinking are designed to help people...

- Understand that multiple perspectives exist on issues, knowledge & practice
- Become aware that the assumptions they hold are not shared by everybody else
- Get comfortable with ambiguity
3 Techniques

• Today’s Meet (social media tool)
• Circle of Voices (discussion tool)
• Chalk Talk (visual tool)
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- It’s not stealing because I give you permission!
- Click on links: Workshop Materials
- Click on link for Critical Incident Questionnaire
- Listen to The 99ers while you steal – Spotify, Bandcamp, I Tunes

(www.the99ersband.com)
• Go to www.todaysmeet.com/
• Create a nickname for yourself & log in – *don’t use your real name*
• Greet us by posting a welcome!
• Anytime you have a question or comment post it on Today’s Meet
• I’ll check the feed & respond throughout the session
Incorporating *Today'smeet*

- *Today'smeet* is a useful way to get students to ask questions, provide examples, respond to questions & offer reactions to the class.
- It by-passes the dynamics of verbal participation – giving everyone an equal chance to speak.
- It provides anonymity – meaning nobody runs the risk of looking stupid.
- It allows students to ask questions as they occur to them – not only when the professor invites questions in class.
• What STOPS students from thinking critically?
Chalk Talk

- Instructor writes a question in a circle in the center of the board.
- Students gather at the board and write their responses to the question.
- Others draw lines to connect postings, or they add to postings that have already been made.
- Done silently & ends when board is full or postings cease.
- Debrief happens as the whole group looks for clusters of agreement & ignored outliers.
Examples of Chalk Talk Questions

- What is a Proof?
- How do we decide a hypothesis is a plausible one to test?
- Why is Theory ‘A’ accurate?
- What does Aspergers look, feel, sound like?
- What’s the core idea of this theory, process, policy, concept?
When critical thinking happens in your classroom what does it look like?

- Look,
- Sound
- Feel like?
Circle of Voices
Circle of Voices

• Students think silently about a question posed by the teacher & make notes on their response

• Participants go round the circle in order - each person has up to 1 minute of uninterrupted air time to give their response to the question. No interruptions allowed.

• Students then move into open conversation with the ground rule that you can only talk about 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 illustration, an extension, a new thought that a comment prompts etc.
What Students Appreciate

• It begins with silent time to think named as part of the exercise – those who need time to process appreciate this
• The structure decreases anxiety for students who wonder what ‘participation’ looks like
• Everyone is heard in the first round
• It forces students to listen to others
• It makes it easier to participate in the future – if participation is important to you then you must engineer it very early on
Question

• What STARTS Students Thinking Critically?
Post on Todaysmeet.com/

• An new idea about what starts students from thinking critically that was shared, OR....

• A question about how to get students to start thinking critically that was raised during the Circle of Voices conversation, OR...

• A technique or activity for promoting critical thinking that intrigued you, OR...

• Something someone said or did that you appreciated during Circle of Voices
Circular Response
Circular Response

• Pose a question
• Go round the circle. Each person in the group takes a turn & has the floor to speak for 1 minute – NO INTERRUPTIONS. However, whatever you say MUST respond to/build on/refer back to the previous speaker’s comments
• Once all have spoken move into open conversation with no ground rules
Question

• How Do You MODEL Your Own Practice Of Critical Thinking For Students?
Post on Todaysmeet.com/

• An new idea about how to model critical thinking that was shared, OR....

• A question about how to model thinking critically that was raised during the Circular Response conversation, OR...

• Something someone said or did that you appreciated during Circular Response, OR...

• Any final questions you have about teaching students to think critically
• http://www.stephenbrookfield.com/
• Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools & techniques to Help Students Challenge their Assumptions (2012)
• The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust & Responsiveness in the Classroom (2015, 3rd ed.)
• The Discussion Book: 50 Great Ways to Get People Talking (2016) - with Stephen Preskill
• All published by Jossey-Bass / Wiley