ADDRESSING THE CRITICAL THINKING TEACHING GAP

According to the Foundation for Critical Thinking, 89% of faculty agree teaching critical thinking is a primary objective.

In the health sciences, critical thinking is associated with strong diagnostic and problem-solving skills, as well as being an effective, persevering, flexible, inquisitive, and confident practitioner.

However, 77% of faculty were unsure how to foster critical thinking skills while covering necessary course content, and only 9% were able to incorporate critical thinking consistently and effectively in their courses.

The problem is, while academic institutions are fully aware of the need for critical thinking development, educators are often unfamiliar with the instructional activities best suited to facilitate critical thinking.

When it comes down to it, the content students are taught in the classroom is useless to them without the proper critical thinking framework to put it into practice.
Unique to your subject matter, there are an infinite number of ways to creatively incorporate core critical thinking skills into your course.

Teaching critical thinking requires an active-learning, student-focused approach. The goal is to design activities that help students think through the lessons themselves, transforming their acquired knowledge into effective practices.

» Teaching Strategies to Promote Critical Thinking

Simulations
Begin by considering the real-world applications of your course materials. Create a contextual environment, virtual or physical, in which students can practice their understanding of the material and their critical thinking skillset in a low-stakes setting.

Problem-Based Learning
Encourage students to make decisions with incomplete information or address problems and answer scenario-based questions that can be approached in more than one way.

Case Study Analysis
Serve as a role model for the critical thinking process by leading the class through evaluation. In addition, delivering content through a flipped classroom model can help students prepare before discussion, allowing for more effective use of class time.

Reflective Writing and Debriefing Sessions
Help learners understand what they have learned, the rationale behind the decisions they made, what they could have done differently and why, and how they will apply what they learned.

» Faculty Beliefs Regarding Critical Thinking

89% — Teaching critical thinking is a primary objective

9% — Able to incorporate critical thinking consistently and effectively

77% — Unsure how to foster critical thinking skills

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Additional Resources

» Bloom’s Taxonomy (revised) is a useful tool for developing activities and assessments that meet these higher-level requirements.