Teaching Critical Thinking Skills to English for Academic Purposes Students

Advance Consulting for Education

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1. What is critical thinking?
2. Critical thinking and culture
3. Critical thinking tasks, Bloom’s Taxonomy
4. Structuring arguments
5. Types of reasoning
6. Receptive and productive critical thinking activities
What is Critical Thinking?

• Work with a partner to define ‘critical thinking’.
What is Critical Thinking?

“Critical thinking is disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.”

www.dictionary.com
What is Critical Thinking?

- Active
- Systematic
- Rational
- Reasonable
- Reflective
- Evaluative
- Evidence-based
- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Skill

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Critical Thinking and Culture

Passive transmission of knowledge

Active construction of knowledge
## Critical Thinking Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy Level</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>define, label, recall, list, identify, describe, state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>interpret, paraphrase, modify, explain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Bloom’s Taxonomy Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloom’s Taxonomy Level</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>compute, apply, demonstrate, generate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>analyze, categorize, relate, differentiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>create, combine, reconstruct, summarize, revise, modify, design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>compare, evaluate, critique, support, conclude, justify, discriminate, contrast, defend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structuring Arguments
Structuring Arguments

Statement or Position

Supporting Point #1
Supporting Point #2
Supporting Point #3
Supporting Point #4
Dogs make better pets than cats

- Dogs are friendlier.
- Dogs can offer comfort.
- Dogs can be trained.
- Dogs get you out for exercise.
Structuring Arguments

Statement or Position
- General Point
- More Specific Point
- More Specific Point
- Most Specific Point

Statement or Position
- Most Important Point
- Less Important Point
- Less Important Point
- Least Important Point

Statement or Position
- Supporting Points
- Opposing Points
- Rebuttal of Opposing Points
- Restatement of Supporting Points
Structuring Arguments

Statement or Position

- Supporting Point #1
  - Supporting Point for Point #1
  - Supporting Point for Point #1

- Supporting Point #2
  - Supporting Point for Point #2
  - Supporting Point for Point #2
Types of Reasoning

Deductive reasoning

*General statement #1:* All human beings have a heart.

*General statement #2:* You are a human being.

*Conclusion:* Therefore you have a heart.
Types of Reasoning

Inductive Reasoning

*Specific example #1*: A witness saw you commit the crime.

*Specific example #2*: Your fingerprints are at the crime scene.

*Conclusion*: Therefore you committed the crime.
Types of Reasoning

Flawed Reasoning

A contradiction is flawed reasoning that allows to two completely opposite points to be true, when in fact it is only logically possible for one to be true.
Flawed Reasoning

A circular argument is flawed reasoning whose conclusion is also used as a statement to support the conclusion. In other words, a conclusion is used to support itself.
Types of Reasoning

Flawed Reasoning

A false analogy is flawed reasoning that uses an analogy that is not acceptable or logical. An analogy is when two objects, considered to be similar, have the same property. A false analogy is when two objects, considered to be similar, are actually different with respect to the particular property being used in the reasoning.
Types of Reasoning

Flawed Reasoning

An illogical conclusion is flawed reasoning that is simply not logical. A simple example is saying that two plus two equals five. We know that according to mathematics, this is not logical.
Types of Reasoning

Check out this website for great examples of flawed reasoning, also known as Logical Fallacies

https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com
Critical Thinking Skills

- Receptive
- Productive
Receptive Critical Thinking Activities

1. Give students a series of statements. Have them distinguish between statements which are positions and those which are supporting details.

2. Give students a series of statements. They have to distinguish between statements that are facts and those that represent the position or opinion of the author.
Receptive Critical Thinking Activities

3. Provide students with a series of statements about an argument. Students have identify which are supports for that arguments and which are rebuttals to weaken opposing claims.

4. Students read a short text and identify the author’s voice, viewpoint and or biases.
5. Students read a short text and make a diagram that illustrates their understanding of the structure of the argument.

6. Students read a series of arguments and identify those which are deductive and those which are inductive.

7. Students correct arguments with flawed reasoning.
8. Students read a longer academic article. They identify the qualitative supporting points and the quantitative supporting points in the article.

9. Teach students about the different levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Give them the different task verbs and have them place the verbs at the correct level.
10. Students read a series of arguments and identify any flawed reasoning in the arguments.

11. Provide students with an academic article (short or long, depending upon the language proficiency level of the students). Students apply several of the receptive critical thinking subskills to the article to determine if the author has constructed a good argument or not.
1. Put a simple position statement on the board. Students work individually to write two supporting details for each position statement.

2. Students write three sentences about a topic you provide to demonstrate deductive reasoning. They write another three sentences to demonstrate inductive reasoning.

• Students read a longer academic article. They identify the qualitative supporting points and the quantitative supporting points in the article.
3. Students write six statements, three of which are facts and three of which are opinions.

4. Students construct a written text following one of the argument structures presented.
5. Students construct a spoken debate using one of the argument structures presented.
Review

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Thanks for participating!

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