

Critical Thinking Dispositions: The Need for a Balanced Curriculum in Collegiate Critical Thinking Courses.

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Critical Thinking Dispositions: The Balanced Curriculum in Collegiate Thinking Courses

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Abstract

The aim of this synthesis is to argue that students cannot become critical thinkers simply by being taught the analytical skills of critical reading, v

Without learning the necessary dispositions of critical thinking into well-rounded, effective thinkers. The study is focused on at Mass Bay Community College. The present curriculum is based on the skills of determining the soundness and validity of an argument, encouraging the obtainment of critical thinking dispositions, and becoming more aware of the role their listening and communication skills have on their ability to think effectively. As Kirby and Goodpaster (1999) state, "We become what we have thought about and who we will become what we think" (5). Dispositions are "inclinations and habits of mind that lead to productive thinking" (Tishman, Perkins, and Jay 1995, 37). Being able to make judgment, listening to multiple perspectives, and having intellectual curiosity are a few thinking dispositions that are present in the proposed curriculum. Ennis, Paul, Tishman et al. (1996) state that the incorporation of thinking dispositions into critical thinking courses in the curriculum presented in this synthesis is designed to engage students in exploratory activities to help foster and cultivate dispositions of critical thinking. The lesson plans are created with the intention of reinforcing the tendencies to transfer knowledge, utilize metacognitive strategies, and apply thinking dispositions in various scenarios and exercises. The curriculum also includes thinking dispositions and incorporates the enhancement of listening and behavioral skills. Each lesson includes a description of dispositions, an activity to encourage the fostering of those dispositions; goals, and attention to mental management and transfer of skills. The objective is to incorporate nineteen dispositions into a pre-existing critical thinking curriculum so that college students become reasonable, reflective, and focused thinkers and decision makers.

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