

Transforming our teaching: using the Critical Thinking Skills Toolkit

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This work forms part of the Meeting Employer Demands for Higher Order Thinking Skills HEFCE Catalyst Fund Innovations in Learning and Teaching and addressing barriers to student success.

The Critical Thinking Skills Toolkit

Critical Thinking (CT) skills are essential for both academic achievement and future professional employment. The toolkit has been designed and informed by research and experts in CT. It has been developed in collaboration with employers to ensure graduates leave university ready for work and able to transfer the critical thinking skills they have acquired within future working environments. The toolkit operationalises our institutional adaptation of Facione's critical thinking skills framework¹ and is designed to develop a common language of CT. In addition the toolkit addresses the skills diagnosis identified in the Watson Glaser test and is underpinned by the work of Abrami et al³ who recommend teaching of CT is immersed within existing discipline content. The toolkit contains 10 branded teaching guides which provides a flexible framework to guide students on how to unpack and reconstruct information and present these findings for an in-class activity or assessment. Specifically this covers how to:

- ✓ find and assess information credibility
- ✓ critically read, interpret, analyse a wide range of information
- ✓ draw inferences and deductions
- ✓ make and challenge assumptions
- ✓ identify and interpret arguments
- ✓ evaluate and explain findings

The expectation is that by the end of their studies students will be competent in all of these skills. We believe this approach provides a loose scaffold which could support and transform teaching across the different faculties. Do you agree?

The challenges to developing critical thinking

Although the Critical Thinking Toolkit contains an essential set of skills to develop a reasoned argument, the foundation of knowledge on which individuals build their argument must be accurate and based on objective measures. Helping students to be open minded, independent and unbiased and to utilise appropriate techniques to examine information systematically and with objectivity must also be a central goal of all learning and teaching activity. Shifting the balance is key to development.

**Subjectivity: perception
belief & opinion**



Objectivity: Evidence

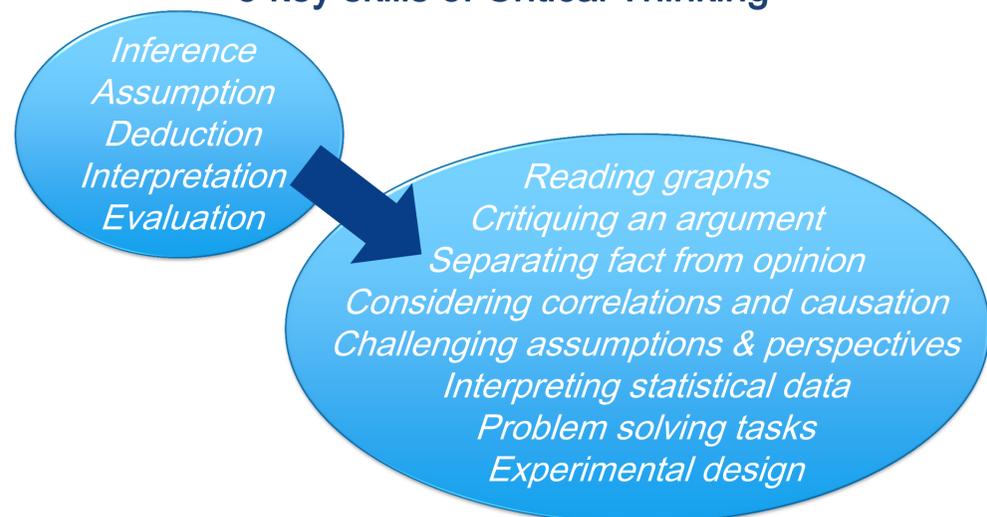


@cttoolkit



How can we develop critical thinking skills?

Suggested activities for teaching and developing 5 key skills of Critical Thinking



Be part of the transformation and share your thoughts and ideas – contact us!

The project team are looking to develop a compendium of good practice in Critical Thinking. This will contain examples of learning, teaching and assessment activities which support the development of critical thinking skills amongst students. All staff can utilise this to enhance their own educational practices. The project team are keen hear from staff from all faculties, library and support services who are willing to share their ideas and offer insight into the activities they utilise to support the development of critical thinking skills. For more information contact Hilary Wason – h.wason@kingston.ac.uk