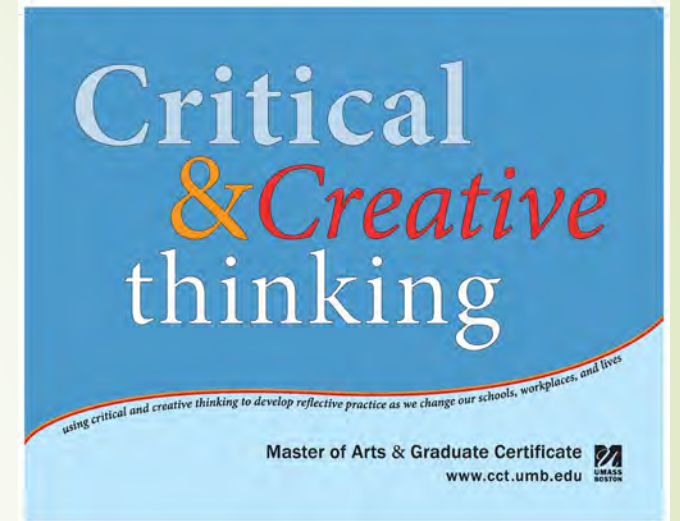# Building Critical Thinking Across the Disciplines

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Overview and Background

- My background and experiences
- Critical and Creative Thinking graduate program (CCT)
- Students across disciplines

Defining Critical Thinking

- Critical Thinking across disciplines → tools/structures
- Multiple "models"
- Argumentation approach
- Skill/disposition development
- Strong/weak sense

Critical Thinking Challenges

- Information overload

- Mis/disinformation

- Beliefs about state of critical thinking among the public

- Understanding of critical thinking = criticizing = critiquing

Publications and Media on Critical Thinking

"America's Critical Thinking Crisis" (Steven J. Pearlman, PhD)

"The Death of Critical Thinking Will Kill Us Long Before AI" (Joan Westenberg, *Medium*)

- ""People Are Less Gullible Than You Think"" (Hugo Mercier, *Reason*)

- "Strategies for Teaching Students to Think Critically: A Meta-Analysis" (Abrami et al., 2015)

Definitions and Metaphors of CT

- reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do" (Ennis, 2015)Tighter integration

- Alternatives in tension

- The pursuit of uncertainty

- The role of deliberate practice

Tool: Metacognitive Goal-setting

- Purpose: awareness of how we think, mental management

- When to use: entering a thinking-heavy process

- Process: set thinking goals, make commitments, track goals, review

- *Source: The Thinking Classroom, Tishman, Perkins, and Jay, 1995*

Tool: Metacognitive Goal-setting
Example Goal Statements

- suspending judgment as I hear ideas different than my own

- noticing the *affective* – recognize my current emotional state as you move through the information/text

- as I read/listen, notice what is NOT being said as well as what is said

- treating the familiar as unfamiliar or "strange" (i.e. decide to learn something new about something that seemed obvious at first)

- consciously discerning fact from opinion/speculation

- being persistent - stay with a challenging/complex idea for a while instead of moving past it quickly

Tool: Methodological Believing and Doubting

- Purpose: discover insight from views different than our own

- When to use: subjective text: editorials, social media, interpretation/discussion sections of scholarly papers

- Process: review text twice, using believing or doubting 'mode' each time

- *Source: The Believing Game or Methodological Believing, Elbow, 2009*

Tool: Methodological Believing and Doubting Example

- *See Example 2 at https://bit.ly/CritThFeb2024*

Tool: Implicit Assumptions in Text

- Purpose: applying critical thinking at the level of language; the written word

- When to use: close reading of text, seeking understanding, clarity, and meaning

- Process: apply specific "prompts", stop at notice words, identify implied assumptions and alternatives

Tool: Implicit Assumptions in Text Example

- *See Example 3 at at https://bit.ly/CritThFeb2024*

Tool: Searching and Multiple Perspective-seeking

- ➧ Purpose: actively seek alternatives when one perspective/belief dominates

- ➧ When to use: web searching, exploring topics that involve a claim or common understanding

- ➧ Process: repeat searches with appended words/phrases on subsequent attempts

Tool: Multiple Perspectives Searching Example

- *See Example 4 at at https://bit.ly/CritThFeb2024*

Tool: Metacognitive Goal check-in
Did you meet your goal today?

- suspending judgment as I hear ideas different than my own

- noticing the affective – recognize my current emotional state as you move through the information/text

- as I read/listen, notice what is NOT being said as well as what is said

- treating the familiar as unfamiliar or "strange" (i.e. decide to learn something new about something that seemed obvious at first)

- consciously discerning fact from opinion/speculation

- being persistent - stay with a challenging/complex idea for a while instead of moving past it quickly

References

Some of the concepts from this presentation are based on the following sources:

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Thank you!

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Or see: