Promoting Critical Thinking through Cooperative Learning

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Workshop Goals

Agenda

Critical thinking involves entering imaginatively into opposing points of view

Two activities central to critical thinking

- Identifying and challenging assumptions and
- Exploring and imagining alternatives.

—Stephen Brookfield

In critical thinking all assumptions are open to question, and the inquiry is not biased in favor of a particular outcome.

—Joanne Kurfiss

Eight Teaching Principles that Support Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum

1. Critical thinking is a learnable skill; the instructor and peers are resources in developing critical thinking skills.

2. Problems, questions, or issues are the point of entry into the subject and the source of motivations for sustained inquiry.

3. Successful courses balance challenges to think critically with support tailored to students' developmental needs.
4. Courses are assignment centered rather than text-and-lecture centered. Goals, methods, and evaluation emphasize using content rather than acquiring it.

5. Students are required to formulate and justify their ideas in writing or other appropriate modes.

6. Students collaborate to stretch their thinking, for example, in pair problem solving and small group work.

7. Several courses, particularly those that teach problem-solving skills, nurture students' metacognitive abilities.

8. The developmental needs of students are acknowledged and used as information in the design of the course. Teachers in these courses make standards explicit and then help students learn how to achieve them.
What is Cooperative Learning?

What are the barriers to cooperative learning? Your own? Your students'? Your chair's? Your institution's?

Helping Students Make Connections: The Importance of Previewing Material.

“Spiral Curriculum”

Time for a Story
How many ideas can you remember from the story?

• 14 Ideas in the Passage
• No picture: 3.6
• Picture Before: 8.0
• Picture After: 3.6
**BLOOM’S TAXONOMY**

Evaluation  
Synthesis  
Analysis  
Application  
Comprehension  
Knowledge

Higher Order Thinking

Parker Palmer