**CRITICAL THINKING**

# overview

***Critical thinking involves making judgments based on reasoning: students consider options; analyze these using specific criteria; and draw conclusions and make judgments. Critical thinking competency encompasses a set of abilities that students use to examine their own thinking, and that of others, about information that they receive through observation, experience, and various forms of communication.***

**Here are some illustrative examples from teachers around our district to jump start your thoughts about what critical thinking looks like in a classroom. These are by no means meant to be “prescriptive”; you do not have to suddenly include the following activities in your teaching. These are here to demonstrate that critical thinking is already occurring with your students and that many of the daily activities you do can be seen through a critical thinking lens.**

**Illustrative Examples:**

* witty repartee
* gives thoughts and opinions with supporting details
* debate skills
* takes what’s learned in class and explores further at school or home (i.e., finds a documentary, book, website on the subject and wants to share with class)
* after reading an article, student argues that view of author (understands bias)
* sharing of views/opinions different than others; backs up with evidence
* questioning that status quo
* not taking things at face value but questioning; backing up arguments with reasoned statements
* think beyond the obvious and ask questions
* inquiry projects/Genius Hour allows for sense of curiosity/interest
* uses variety of resources appropriately to locate specific information
* persuasive compositions showing more than one perspective
* class discussions and conversations
* accessing different sources when doing research (i.e., text, tech, people)
* comparing/contrasting
* assess effective use of technology; focuses on content vs. being distracted by the technology
* class meetings where students brainstorm solutions to problems and then evaluate them; revisit how the solution worked (or not) and adjust if needed
* planning effectively
* during inquiry, a student realizes a different idea than originally thought (may see this in play, writing, conversation, centres, “invitations”, projects)
* be an “entrepreneur” and create product from research and imagination
* during inquiry, generates many ideas for topics and makes choice based on reasoning
* student expresses curiosity when conversing
* “Four Corners” activity (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) with backup reasons
* choose a site for building a fur trading fort based on involved stakeholders, location of furs and transportation of trade goods
* summarize a text in your own words
* write in role (taking on a different perspective)
* solve a Math problem and explain why solution makes sense
* show another way of adding/subtracting to make it easier for a younger student
* create an interesting new Math problem based on the situation shown in an initial problem
* represent information in a novel way
* connect consequences to a cause in scientific or historical events
* use clues from a photo or drawing to develop a reasonable explanation
* inferring from text or visuals
* comparing impact of two events; make an evaluation based on evidence
* critique the piece: identify and assess the merits and shortcomings of a designated figure, product, or performance; judge the better or best of a group
* reframe questions to deeper levels (i.e., instead of “What food group does ice cream belong to?” reframe it to “Should ice cream be part of a family’s diet?” or instead of “What kind of information is found in an atlas?” to “Which of these three atlases is the most useful, reliable, and easiest to use for our purposes?”)
* when students are taking time to wonder about ideas/things/concepts, either out loud or in their writing
* when students ask probing questions and they contemplate information to decide if it is right
* students ask and try to answer the why and how questions; they go beyond the text or topic being discussed and infer to extend their thinking, and responses are beyond the obvious
* the teacher had the class fill in the sentence, “If I were a turkey at Thanksgiving, I would \_\_\_\_\_” to which one kid wrote, “Hide in a cow suit!”
* in Math, asking students open-ended questions and students must explain answers (i.e., “Which number in this group does not belong? Why? 15, 2, 8, 13, 16”) (i.e., “How many numbers can you write with 8 in the hundreds place?”) For further examples see: Good Questions for Math Teaching: Why Ask Them and What to Ask by Peter Sullivan and Pat Lilburn
* <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/CriticalThinkingCompetencyProfiles.pdf>