

## Developing Critical Thinking<sup>1</sup>

### Underlying Strategies

1. Reflect – don't make quick judgments or accept the first idea that occurs – stop and think about your position/perspective
2. Ask yourself questions and prod yourself for the reasons for your views and others (see more below)
3. Consider and explore alternative ideas and options, conclusions, points of view, other sources of evidence (e.g. other readings from class and our discussions), explanations, and possible solutions (if appropriate).

### Fundamental Strategies

1. Understand logical connection between ideas
2. Identify the relevance and importance of ideas
3. Look across contexts
4. Ask “Why?” and say more about it – identify, construct and evaluate arguments
5. Look at issues from others' points of view – be open-minded and willing to reconsider your position/perspective
6. Can you assess in a formal or informal way the evidence?
7. Learn from one another – form discussion groups, study groups, to explore the issues
8. Take your time to enhance deeper thinking. Walk away from the reading and let your thoughts develop in a creative and flexible manner – let your mind be open and receptive.
9. Cross-fertilization. Infuse what you are learning in class with your other classes and vice-versa.

### Possible ways to think about the reasons (and by no means is this a complete list – just ideas)

1. What is the central focus of the reading? What are the various components? How do they fit together?
2. Why is this perspective being examined by the author?
3. Who decides the policy/curriculum/teaching practice etc re the issue? Who doesn't? Why?
4. Who has voice? Who doesn't have voice?
5. Which groups are included? Which groups aren't included? Why or why not?
6. What does it mean for certain groups? Society? Neighborhoods and communities? Schools? Students? Parents? Others?
7. Remember to compare/contrast your thinking with other readings and class discussions. Are there patterns – similarities/differences?
8. What are YOUR values and beliefs? Does the reading support these or not? How or how not?
9. Are there ethical concerns?

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<sup>1</sup> Sections of the information presented are based on material from CriticalThinking.net