Promoting Critical Thinking through Work-Integrated Learning

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Unitec Institute of Technology

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Desert Rat
A Game
Give as many attributes (synonyms) for the word “critical” as implied in “critical thinking” as you can.

What does being “critical” mean?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synonyms and Descriptively Similar Words for “Critical”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acute, Analytical, Astute, Attentive, Careful / Cautious, Categorising, Cogent, Complete, Comprehensive, Crucial, Detailed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decisive, Detecting, Diagnostic, Differentiating, Discerning, Discriminating, Distinguishing, Essential, Establishing, Exhaustive, Fathoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundamental, Important, Independent, Indispensable, Investigative, Interrogative, Judicious, Key, Logical, Methodical, Meticulous</td>
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<td>Objective, Observing, Open-minded, Perceptive, Perspectivity, Pinpointing, Problem-Solving, Prudent, Questioning, Rational, Reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Searching, Selective, Sensible, Serious, Thorough, Thoughtful, Understanding, Vital, Wise</td>
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Psychedelic, Man
The Paper

Promoting Development of Critical Thinking through Work Integrated Learning

Sixteen pages of pure bliss. Three pages of references ~60, three pages presenting the evaluation task and scales, and two one-page appendices (the ten CT dimensions explained and PABBAVEM defined.

Argues for and defines Critical Thinking.

Suggests that WIL presents perfect opportunity to develop and demonstrate the learning of Critical Thinking.

Positions CT within a larger research agenda / concept of higher-level thinking capabilities and dispositions.

Introduces the Critical Thinking Profiler, and its ten dimensions.
The Context

Associated with WIL for 25 years, specifically cooperative education, professional practice, and Industry Engaged Learning.

Do not currently have students in WIL.

However, Unitec is undergoing a huge makeover in implementing Applied Practice—virtually all postgraduate programs and qualifications will have organisational and community projects. Includes a major reconceptualisation and delivery of dissertations, masters, thesis, and PhDs.

Bhavana Mehta just completed her masters thesis on the state of the art of CT learning in New Zealand tertiary sector.
The Purpose

Stimulate greater dialogue concerning Critical Thinking.

Provide much-needed clarity with respect to the development and assessment of Critical Thinking.

Provide tools and techniques for facilitating the development of Critical Thinking.

Address a real industry and social needs for independent, Critical Thinkers.

Create better and more Critical Thinkers.
The Scales

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Ten point scales for the ten dimensions of Critical Thinking.
The Task

This exercise has you describe a difficult problem you have had to solve, a tough decision you have had to make, or other challenging situation in which you have found yourself where a course of action was required but you were uncertain as to what to do.

“DISPASSIONATE OBJECTIVITY IS ITSELF A PASSION, FOR THE REAL AND FOR THE TRUTH.”
ABRAHAM MASLOW
The Task

1. Define the problem, or describe the decision or other challenge clearly. Explain precisely what you were facing. Include how and why this problem, decision, or other challenge was important.

2. Describe the context in which the problem, decision, or other challenge occurred. Describe the circumstances surrounding it.

3. Explain what actions you took and why. How did you attempt to solve the problem, make the decision, or resolve the challenge in question?

4. Evaluate or critique the effectiveness of what you did.

5. Identify the results, outcomes, or consequences of what you did. What happened as a result of the course of action you took or the decision you made?

6. Explain what you might have done more effectively and why.

7. Explain what you learned from this experience, if anything. What conclusions can you draw from the problem, decision or other challenge, the way you handled it, and the effects of your solution, decision, or course of action?
The Offer

Collaborate with me on design and delivery of the instructional process and assessment regime with various cohorts of students.

Particularly interested in comparing student cohorts from different disciplines and domestic and international students.

Purposes include validation and enhancement of tools and process, and improvement of the facilitation of the learning of Critical Thinking.
The Research Agenda

Current version of the RJRA Model
Critical learnership is a way of thinking about and restructuring the way we approach learning. It is intentional, focused, and strategic. It builds and relies upon individual (and team) self-direction and autonomy, agency, and initiative. Critical learnership is empowering and enabling, placing both responsibility and tools for learning in the hands of learners, and equipping them to wield control and means effectively. *Hays and Reinders*

If we are to ever attain sustainable organisational and community development, and design and implement innovations to improve health, vitality, productivity, or other desired measures of performance that will stand the test of time, then we are going to have to change the way we practice and how we develop professional practitioners.

*Unconference* to be held in March-April 2017 in Auckland.