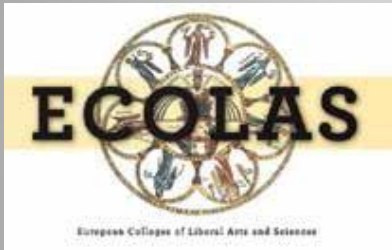




Erasmus+



# Encouraging Critical Thinking

**Interactive and innovative learning  
in Liberal Arts**

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*The Best Liberal Arts and Science Teaching Expanded and Reinforced*

- Define critical thinking
- Experience one learning activity to stimulate critical thinking
- Design, facilitate and evaluate the activity

**Workshop outcomes**

- Pre-activity: Make your own definition of critical thinking
- Discuss in pairs: 5 minutes
- Formulate a definition for your pair

**What is critical thinking?**

Beyer (1995)

- judging the quality of something (information, an assertion or an event) against some **criteria**
- *kriterion* (Greek)  
= benchmark for judgements made
- critical thinking = criterial thinking

**What is critical thinking? (continued)**

Why should teachers foster students' critical thinking?

**Purpose**

- Where do your students manifest the biggest difficulty- in terms of critical thinking?

**Purpose**

Experience the show TODAY!

**Learning activity:**

*Who wants to be the Millionaire*

Your task (in pairs, 10 min): Design a question concerning critical thinking OR lib education + 4 possible answers A, B, C, D  
Prepare a relatively simple question or a more challenging question

- You may include some funny answers
- Mark one answer that is correct
- Email it to [pleschova@eurea.sk](mailto:pleschova@eurea.sk) or hand it written on a paper

**Learning activity:** *Millionaire contest*



- Option 1: using paper cards
- Option 2: using software

**Let us simulate the game show**

- Connect to a wifi, password: bislaliberal
- Go to

<https://respond.cc>

Insert session code:

**Option 2: using free software**

- What was the best question designed for the game show?

**Reflection**

- Which questions did you find problematic?

**Reflection**

- Assign homework and tie the activity to homework (reading)
- Give clear and detailed guidelines to students on how good questions should look like
- Instead designing questions testing factual knowledge questions should ask the respondents to use more complex thinking skills, including *making judgements against criteria*
- Teacher has to pre-prepare questions, too

## **Activity design**

- Focus on key ideas/concepts from the reading

what is the central argument of the author?

what conclusion does the author make in the study?

- Ask to discriminate between similar definitions
- Ask to compare/contrast perspectives  
where do the authors A and B differ/agree?

**Types of good questions**

- Do not explain answers, leave this to the end
- Preparation and follow up reflection is more important than conducting the activity itself
- Post-activity: Allow students enough time to reflect on the nature of Q&A:

What was the best question designed for the game show?

Judge questions against the previously given criteria: clarity, unambiguosness, completeness...

Designing a meaningful variety of answers is often more challenging than the questions

**Facilitation of activity**

## **Benefits**

- Ability to pose questions is central for critical thinking
- Active learning, interactivity, reflection
- Enjoyable for students, as they contribute to creating the activity

## **Pitfalls**

- Students may come up with questions that you do not know to answer or are uncertain
- Ask students to pre-submit the answers 😊

# **Benefits and pitfalls**



- It is possible to develop all students to become critical thinkers in one semester?
- Is critical thinking is subject (discipline)-specific or not?

**Other questions to think of**

- A chapter on Critical Thinking in the Teacher Training Kit
- Beyer, Barry K. (1995). *Critical Thinking*. Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

*Thank you very much for contributing to this workshop!*

**Further references**