This course of study presents the required sequence of learning steps and activities to help you develop competence in the subject area of understanding and using critical thinking and critical reading. The entire course of study can take you up to nine weeks to complete, depending on your background. Consult with your mentor regarding accelerating your progress through this course of study.

Introduction

This course of study covers principles of critical thinking and using critical thinking skills. Educators understand and teach principles related to critical thinking, such as thinking skills and deterrents to critical thinking. Consider how competence in critical thinking and critical reading will not only inform your practice, but make your students' learning more meaningful. Not only will you add to your repertoire of education skills, you can employ them to better understand the issues facing education today. For the CTT1, you will complete a performance assessment.

Competencies

There are two competencies covered in this course of study:

**Competency: Principles of Critical Thinking**
The graduate understands critical thinking principles, programs, and concepts.

**Competency: Using Critical Thinking Skills**
The graduate uses critical thinking skills to enhance the understanding of educational issues.

Required Learning Resources:

*Note: These textbooks will be used in other related courses of study.*


Preparing for Success

To successfully complete this course of study, you need the appropriate resources to help with your learning. You should also prepare a calendar to schedule times devoted to your studies. Share your calendar with family and friends so they are aware of your obligations.

Topics

**Acquire Learning Resources**

Arrange to obtain the learning resources listed below so there will be no delays in your studies. These items are essential for you, as this document will guide you week by week in the use of these materials. Some of these items must be shipped to you, so be sure that your mailing address information is current.
Resources

Order your Textbooks

The textbooks that you will need to order for this course are listed below. You will need to order these early in order to avoid any delays in getting them. These textbooks will be used in other related courses of study.


Note: The WGU bookstore has these books available for immediate purchase and delivery. You may shop at other online bookstores, but be sure to order early and use the correct ISBN to get the correct edition.

Access the Learning Community and Message Board

Learning communities and message boards are an integral part of the WGU learning experience. They provide opportunities to learn through communication with the course mentor and other students. Any time you have a question about the content you are learning in this course of study, contact the course mentor for assistance. Course mentors and other students will not provide answers but will engage you in discussion to help you clarify and extend your understanding of important concepts.

In the right-hand navigation portion of the course of study screen, there is a message board area. However, you should use the learning community discussion board for posting, as directed in specific course of study activities. If you have questions of your own, do not hesitate to use the course of study message board to get those answered as you develop your competence.

Request CTT1 Performance Assessment

URL: http://www.taskstream.com

Follow these steps to access the performance assessment:

1. Log in to your MyWGU Student Portal.
2. Go to the "My AAP" tab.
3. In the list below "Course Details," find the assessment you are working on.
4. In the "Assessment Scheduled Date" column, click "Schedule Now."
5. A new window will come up. If there are other considerations you would like to inform the Assessment Delivery Team about, discuss them in the "Other Considerations" box that appears and then click "Continue." If not, simply click "Continue."
6. A request will be sent to your mentor for approval.
7. Once your mentor has approved your request, our Assessment Delivery Team will open the tasks required for the assessment in TaskStream. You will log in to TaskStream to receive the instructions, see the rubric, and submit your assessment for grading.

Take Study Notes
As you engage in the activities throughout this course of study, you will be answering questions, completing exercises, sketching out concepts, and so forth. You have the ability to take your course notes online through the web-enabled course of study. A notebook or study journal (either paper or electronic) makes your learning more active. It also becomes an excellent source of important materials to review prior to demonstrating your competence through the assessment.

Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, Part 1

How is critical thinking defined? What role does critical thinking play in the learning process? What stifles critical thinking? The definition of critical thinking and ways in which critical thinking can be used to enhance learning are the focus of this section's learning. Errors in thinking and deterrents to critical thinking will also be reviewed.

Critical thinking and critical reading are cognitive skills that lead to more effective decision making. Educators understand and teach principles related to critical thinking such as thinking skills and deterrents to critical thinking.

Topics

Critical Thinking Definitions

What is a good definition for critical thinking? How would you describe it? Notice that a good definition is asked for, but not a perfect or precise definition. Critical thinking means several different things to different people. Critical thinking will be defined in this section.

Resources

Take Notes: Critical Thinking Definitions

What is a good definition for critical thinking? How would you describe it? Write your answers in your notebook.

Component Critical Thinking Skills

Review chapter 8 in *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*.

What is critical thinking? How can you promote critical thinking in teaching-learning situations? Discuss these questions in the community discussion thread "Critical Thinking."

Critical Thinking Definitions


Read chapter 8 in *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*. In the URL listed above, access and read the article "Defining Critical Thinking."

In your notebook jot down a list of all the adjectives that describe critical thinking.

Thinking Critically

Read chapter 2 in *Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide*. In your notebook, complete the activities and worksheets in this chapter as you work through it.
Read chapter 2 in *Becoming a Critical Thinker*. 

In your notebook, write a summary to describe critical thinking. How is your definition and understanding of critical thinking changing?

**Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, Part 2**

The subject of critical thinking and critical reading continues with the topics of critical thinking standards and deterrents to critical thinking.

**Topics**

**Critical Thinking Standards**

We are in an era of accountability in education, in all segments. So, not only are stakeholders interested in whether students can read and do mathematics, they are interested in whether students can think critically. Are there standards for the critical thinking process? Standards for critical thinking will be reviewed in this section.

**Resources**

**Critical Thinking Standards**

**URL:** [http://www.criticalthinking.org/about/nationalCouncil.cfm](http://www.criticalthinking.org/about/nationalCouncil.cfm)

In the URL above, access and read the article “The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking.”

Identify and define component skills of critical thinking. Record these in your notebook.

**Reasoning Critically**

Read chapter 7 in *Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide*. Complete the "Thinking Activities" found in chapter 7.

On the message board, read the postings of your peers, but also reflect and post on the discussion topics titled "Reasoning Critically" and "Reasoning Critically 2."

**Performance Assessment**

**URL:** [http://www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)

Complete task 609.3.1-02, 07 for the CTT1 performance assessment in TaskStream.

**Deterrents to Critical Thinking**

Why is critical thinking so seemingly elusive? What gets in the way of effective critical thinking? Imagine how learning might improve if these deterrents were removed. This section will cover deterrents to critical thinking and ways to address them.

**Resources**

**Thinking Errors**
Read chapter 6 in *Becoming a Critical Thinker*.

Share examples of errors in thinking in the community discussion thread "Errors in Thinking."

In your notebook, complete the chapter activity "Applying the Guide to Reasoning" on page 264 of *Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide*.

**Critical Thinking Deterrents**

Access through the WGU library e-reserves, Teacher Education > Advanced Educational Psychology > Understanding and Using Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, and read chapter 4 of *Effective Study Skills: Maximizing your Academic Potential* by Roberts. This is within Critical Reading and Thinking.

Think of examples to illustrate the deterrents to critical thinking. Record your thoughts in your notebook.

**Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, Part 3**

The subject of critical thinking and critical reading concludes with the topic of circular reasoning.

**Topics**

**Circular Reasoning**

Would it be true that if you said something often enough that it would be true? For the same reason, if you assume something to be true and base your argument on that without proving it, have you really proved anything? These are two potential outcomes of circular reasoning. How would you define circular reasoning? This section will review circular reasoning.

**Resources**

**Take Notes: Circular Reasoning**

In your notebook, write a definition of circular reasoning. Think of examples of circular reasoning.

**Circular Reasoning**

Review chapter 4 in *Effective Study Skills*. Access this material through WGU library e-reserves > Teacher Education > Advanced Educational Psychology > Understanding and Using Critical Thinking and Critical Reading. This is within Creating Reading and Thinking.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Part 1**

How can you teach your students to think critically? How will that help them learn? Critical thinking and problem solving have much in common. They can be used in tandem to help students work through difficult material. This section will review various critical thinking skills and programs that can be used to help students learn how to use critical thinking in their learning process.

**Topics**

**Analogies**
Analogies explore the relationships between things (i.e., how they are similar and how they differ). They are used in critical thinking programs to encourage students to think in new ways. What are analogies, and how do they relate to critical thinking? Types of analogies and ways to use them will be reviewed in this section.

**Resources**

**Analogies**

**URL:** [http://www.factmonster.com/spot/analogy.html](http://www.factmonster.com/spot/analogy.html)

In the URL above, access and read the article "What's an Analogy?" At the bottom of the page, click on "Try Today's Analogy." Did you select the best answer?

Search the website using the term "analogy," and read additional information on analogies.

**Take Notes: Analogies**

In your notebook, develop a list of the different kinds of relationships that might be evidenced in analogies, such as "part to whole" or "similarities." Write a sequence of the thinking steps that need to occur when solving analogies. Share those steps in the discussion topic "Solving Analogies."

**Critical Thinking Skills Programs**

It is safe to say that there are existing programs to help learners acquire critical thinking skills. What types of programs are available to develop critical thinking skills? You should employ your own critical thinking skills in comparing and contrasting the different programs you will learn about. Various critical thinking skills programs will be reviewed in this section.

**Resources**

**Critical Thinking Skills Programs**

Review chapter 8 in *Cognitive Psychology and Instruction*.

**Take Notes: Critical Thinking Skills Programs**

In your notebook, develop a matrix to compare and contrast critical thinking skills programs such as CoRT, Productive Thinking Program, and IDEAL Problem Solver.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Part 2**

This section continues with the topics of critical thinking/problem solving and using critical thinking. Critical thinking and problem solving are similar but distinct kinds of thinking skills. Critical thinking involves the use of specific kinds of thinking skills when listening to conversation or reading text. Detecting bias, analyzing arguments, distinguishing fact from opinion, and understanding the presenter's purpose are all essential critical thinking skills.

**Topics**

**Critical Thinking/Problem Solving**

What is the relationship between problem solving and critical thinking? How do students logically
approach problem solving? Consider how this relationship might be helpful to different age groups and audiences. Critical thinking and problem solving will be reviewed in this section.

**Resources**

**Message Board: Problem Solving**

What are the steps of problem solving? How is effective problem solving critical to effective teaching? Answer these questions in the course of study message board.

**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving**

Read chapter 3 in *Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide*.

In your notebook, complete the "Thinking Activities" in chapter 3. Discuss a thinking activity in the discussion topic "Problem Solving."

**Using Critical Thinking**

How is critical thinking employed in classroom instruction? What are ways that you could enhance the use of critical thinking in the curriculum that you teach or the program in which you work? Ways to use critical thinking in instruction is the focus for this section. Consider how your professional practice might improve.

**Resources**

**Argument Errors**

In your notebook, develop a matrix to explain the kinds of errors that are made in arguments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant Reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circular Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasty Generalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Experts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate Experts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dated Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fact vs. Opinion**

Read chapter 7 in *Reading for Thinking*. In your notebook, explain the criteria for identifying facts. Complete exercise 1 on page 364-365.

**Purpose and Tone**

Read chapter 8 in *Reading for Thinking*. Why is understanding an author or speaker's purpose important? Record your answer in your notebook.

**Using Critical Thinking**
Using the textbook readings as a reference, write in your notebook ways that you can use critical thinking in education. Focus on arguments, identifying fact vs. opinion, and purpose and tone.

Complete "Sharpening your Skills" exercises and tests 1-4 in chapter 7 of Reading for Thinking.

**Performance Assessment 609.3.1-01, 04, 05**

URL: [http://www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)

Complete task 609.3.1-01, 04, 05 for the CTT1 performance assessment in TaskStream.

**Performance Assessment 609.3.1-02, 03**

URL: [http://www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)

Complete task 609.3.1-02, 03 for the CTT1 performance assessment in TaskStream.

**Arguments**

Review chapter 6 in Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide. In your notebook, define arguments, reasons, and conclusions.

Read chapter 5 in Becoming a Critical Thinker. In your notebook, complete exercises 41-45 in this chapter.

Read chapter 10 in Reading for Thinking. In your notebook, identify the purposes of arguments. Apply four types of support common to arguments to a real situation. Identify the kind of support being used to support an argument.

**Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, and Problem Solving, Part 1**

How could your students organize information for problem solving? What role does critical reading play in understanding information? Using critical thinking and critical reading skills together can help students and teachers learn to carefully analyze and understand information. This section will review ways students can:

- Order and structure information to assist in problem solving.
- Use critical reading skills to make reasoned judgments.
- Understand the meaning of information to which they are exposed.

One of the most important critical thinking skills is the ability to detect relationships across and within topics. To the critical reader, any single text provides but one portrayal of the facts, one individual's "take" on the subject matter. Critical readers thus recognize not only what a text says, but also how that text portrays the subject matter. They recognize the various ways in which each and every text is the unique creation of a unique author. A non-critical reader might read a history book to learn the facts of the situation or to discover an accepted interpretation of those events. A critical reader might read the same work to appreciate how a particular perspective on the events and a particular selection of facts can lead to particular understanding (Kurland, 2000).

Critical reading is an essential skill that enables teachers and students to think critically about world issues.
Topics

Structuring and Organizing Knowledge

In the CPT1 course of study, schema theory was discussed. From that course of study you found out that schema theory is one way to describe how individuals structure and organize knowledge. This discussion is expanded in this topic. What strategies can be employed to structure information? This section reviews strategies for structuring and organizing knowledge.

Resources

Structuring Knowledge

Access WGU library e-reserves, Teacher Education > Advanced Educational Psychology > Understanding and Using Critical Thinking and Critical Reading, and read chapter 1 in Structural Knowledge: Techniques for Representing, Conveying, and Acquiring Structural Knowledge. This is found within Structural Knowledge, Description, Rational, and Assumptions. Take notes in your notebook.

Patterns of Organization

Read chapter 3 (pp. 127-144) in Reading for Thinking. In your notebook, describe a graphic organizer that helps information to be compared and contrasted.

Message Board: Graphic Organizer

Share your graphic organizer ideas in the course of study message board.

Summarizing and Synthesizing

Read chapter 5 in Reading for Thinking. In your notebook, explain the five steps for writing an effective summary. How does writing summaries promote effective thinking and learning?

Problem Solving


Review chapter 8 in Cognitive Psychology and Instruction.

Take Notes

Describe in detail an important problem you have solved recently. Explain how you used the five problem solving steps on page 82 of Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide to solve the problem.


Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, and Problem Solving, Part 2

This subject continues with the topics of critical reading goals and modes of analysis.

Topics
Critical Reading Goals

What is the purpose of reading critically? Why is this important in the learning process? This section will review the goals of critical reading. What skills or strategies support analyzing material as you read critically? Modes of analysis in critical reading will be reviewed in this section.

Resources

Message Board

What is the difference between critical thinking and critical reading? Share your thoughts in the course of study message board.

Topics and Details

Read chapter 3 in Reading for Thinking. In your notebook complete the practice tests included in chapter 3.

Read chapter 4 in Reading for Thinking. In your notebook complete the practice tests for chapter 4.

Goals of Critical Reading

URL: http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading.htm#linkc

In the URL above, access and read the article "Goals of Critical Reading." In your notebook, interpret the statement that critical readers make sense of what the author says, means, and does. How does what you have learned about critical thinking relate to critical reading?

Modes of Analysis

URL: http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_thinking.htm

Access and read the article "What is Critical Thinking?" from the link above. As you read through this web page, take notes on the main characteristics of critical thinking.

Annotating and Paraphrasing

Read chapter 2 in Reading for Thinking. Describe symbols for annotating text. Complete the "Sharpening Your Skills" activities in this chapter. Record this activity in your notebook, along with completing the practice tests included in chapter 2.

Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, and Problem Solving, Part 3

The subject of critical thinking, critical reading, and problem solving continues with the topic of drawing inferences.

Topics

Drawing Inferences

An inference is a guess or a guess based on the evidence. What is "drawing inferences" when a person reads critically? Obviously this is something that you have done, could do more of, and that
you want to teach learners how to do. This section will review information on drawing inferences in critical reading.

**Resources**

**Inference**

**URLs:**

- **Critical Reading.com: Inference Table of Contents**
  [http://criticalreading.com/inferencetoc.htm](http://criticalreading.com/inferencetoc.htm)
- **Cuesta College: "Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions"**
  [http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/AS/309.HTM](http://academic.cuesta.edu/acasupp/AS/309.HTM)

Access and read all of the articles on inference and critical reading at the links above. What is the difference between something that is inferred and something that is implied? Answer this question in your notebook.

Review chapter 6 in *Reading for Thinking*. In your notebook analyze excerpts to identify key facts.

**Message Board: Inferences**

Share your thoughts on the difference between something that is inferred and something that is implied.

**Drawing Inferences**

Read chapter 6 in *Reading for Thinking*. Think of three examples of inference. How is inference related to individual prior knowledge? Record your responses in your notebook.

**Practice Tests**

In your notebook, complete the practice tests for chapter 6 in *Reading for Thinking*.

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**Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, and Problem Solving, Part 4**

The subject of critical thinking, critical reading, and problem solving continues with the topics of inferring/implications for reading.

**Topics**

**Inferring/Implications for Reading**

If inferring is guessing based on the evidence, what role would critical thinking play? What is the relationship between inferring and critical reading? Consider how critical thinking skills would inform making inferences in reading. This section will review the concept of inferring and its implications for reading.

**Resources**

**Inferring**
Read pages 163-168 in *Thinking Critically: A Concise Guide*. In your notebook identify examples of inference. What are the implications of inference for reading?

**Review chapter 8 in Reading for Thinking.**

Find passages to read in other books and articles. Practice identifying the authors’ point of view, purpose, and tone. Record this practice in your notebook.

**Performance Assessment**

**URL:** [http://www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)

Complete task 609.3.1-06, 07 for the CTT1 performance assessment in TaskStream.

**Conclusion**

Congratulations on completing the course of study for understanding and using critical thinking and critical reading. You will find that the strategies and concepts in this course of study is valuable knowledge in the classroom and in other educational settings. A clear grasp of the how your students learn will provide you with the fundamental support you need to design appropriate instruction to facilitate and enhance your students’ learning. With the skills you have learned in this course of study, you have developed the competency to optimize progress and create an effective learning environment for students.

For your convenience, screenshots showing the instructions for each performance task related to this course of study are available at the links below. Please note that the instructions may change slightly from time to time. For the most up-to-date instructions, evaluation rubrics, and other related material, please log in to TaskStream. You will not have access to these tasks in TaskStream until you request them through your AAP and your mentor approves your request.

CTT1 609.3.1-02, 07  
CTT1 609.3.2-01, 04, 05  
CTT1 609.3.2-02, 03  
CTT1 609.3.2-06, 07

**Topics**

**Next Steps**

You have completed the CTT1. Your next step is to prepare for the objective assessment for this domain, the PIC1.

**References**

**References**