Tool for tertiary teachers

Facilitating Critical Thinking in Initial Teacher Education

Background to the critical thinking tool

This project was developed on the premise that the teaching profession needs teachers who are critical thinkers able to make wise decisions around curriculum and pedagogical practices. This in turn influences the thinking of the children they teach and contributes to a more critical society.

The researchers undertook a participatory action research project across two initial teacher education providers. The project investigated an approach to developing critical thinking skills in final-year early childhood students. This was based on similar research undertaken in Sweden and Canada called *a learning circles and sharing circles approach*.

The approach involves skilled facilitators creating contexts for discussions that challenge assumptions and support emerging critical thinking.

All learning circles and sharing circles were analysed and transcribed. Analysis of key themes was undertaken on transcribed data. Researchers shared and compared their findings to ensure a level of inter-rater reliability.

The research and data results were used to inform the development of this critical thinking tool. The importance of time; relationships; open-mindedness and links to practice and confidence were identified as key themes in the development of critical thinking.

This tool is designed for tertiary teachers to use in their everyday work to develop critically thinking students. Although the tool developed as a result of a project focused on early childhood initial teacher education, the authors intend that teachers working in other disciplines will also find this tool helpful. The tool comprises:

» Posters
» Summary cards
» Individual cards

The posters and summary and individual cards are designed to be used by tertiary teachers in multiple ways:

» when they are designing and developing their teaching
» when they are teaching
» when they are assessing students
» when they are reviewing their teaching.

Other possible uses include: to develop student evaluations; for tertiary teachers to write reflections on their practice and to be used at staff meetings to discuss effective practice, strengths and areas for development.

Tool Format

The tool is presented in two formats to reflect the diverse ways that tertiary teachers work.

The global format comprises poster, summary cards and individual cards grouped in the areas of:

1. open-mindedness
2. time
3. relationships
4. change
5. confidence

The sequential resources comprise poster, summary cards and individual cards grouped in the areas of:

1. planning
2. teaching
3. assessing
4. reflecting

Available resources

Giroux, H. (1988). *Teachers as intellectuals Toward a critical pedagogy of learning.* Bergin & Garvey Publishers Inc. Massachusetts.

Facione, P. (2011). *Critical thinking: What is it and why it counts.* Retrieved from http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1922502/Critical-Thinking-What -it-is-and-why-it-counts.pdf Copyright Peter A. Facione, Measured Reasons and the California Academic Press.

Lloyd, M. & Bahr, N. (2010). Thinking critically about critical thinking in higher education. *International Journal for the scholarship of teaching and learning.* 4 (10) 1-16.

Moore, T. (2013). *Critical thinking: seven definitions in search of a concept.* 38 (4) 506-522.

Mulnix, J. (2012). Thinking critically about critical thinking. *Educational Philosophy and Theory.* 44 (5) 464-479.

Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2014). (2nd ed.). *Critical thinking Tools for taking charge of your professional and personal life.* Pearson Education, Inc. New Jersey.

Summers, T. & Betts, R. (2015). *Facilitating critical thinking in initial teacher education (ITE) early years student teachers.* (Project Report). https://akoaotearoa.ac.nz/critical-thinking-initial-teacher-education

The full resource set is available at:
www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/critical-thinking-initial-teacher-education