



Measuring Critical Thinking In Higher Education

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Abstract

Critical thinking is an essential part of learning in higher education, but still lacks a sense of consensus around its meaning. There isn't a clear definition of the concept as it can be interpreted in several ways. The present study conducted a literature review to define critical thinking and how to measure it in college students. The findings uncovered currently available assessments of it and challenges that researchers face when trying to assess critical thinking in students. It was concluded that the lack of clarity surrounding critical thinking causes confusion and debate on how to conduct measurement of the concept and leaves gaps in the literature as a whole, causing a need for further research.

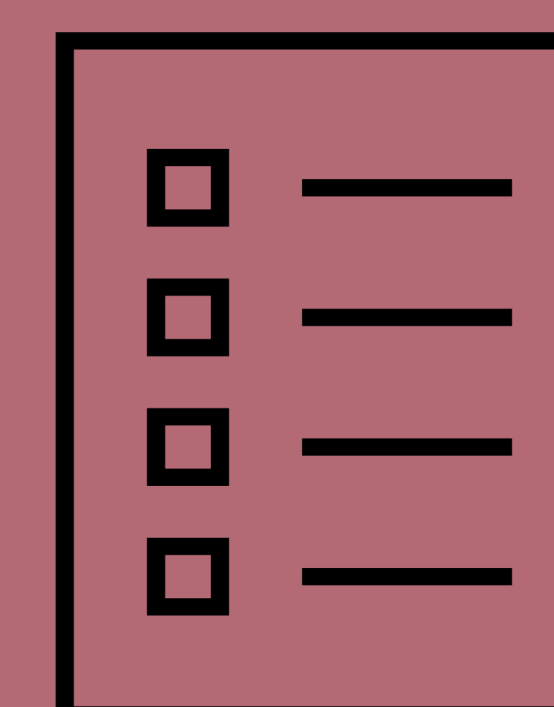
Introduction

- ❖ Critical thinking vital for success in many aspects of life from education to future career success.
- ❖ Lack of comprehensive and consistent definition in scholarship
- ❖ Critical thinking is difficult to measure due to various definitions.
- ❖ My research mentor, Dr. Radha Modi, and I hope to bring clarity to the overall understanding of critical thinking assessment in higher education.
- ❖ The purpose of this research is to synthesize sources to be used in the development of a future study that will investigate how political polarization affects critical thinking among college students.

Method

A comprehensive literature review was conducted on the topic of critical thinking:

- ❖ First, nine peer-reviewed articles were found and read.
- ❖ Next, key points were identified in the articles and annotated bibliographies were written for each.
- ❖ Then, a synthesis on critical thinking was written using the sources.



Findings

The literature review resulted in important findings:

- ❖ There is considerable debate on the meaning of critical thinking and a lack of consensus within its literature.
- ❖ There are a variety of tests available to assess critical thinking: the Halpern Critical Thinking Test (HCTA), the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT), Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, and California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST).
- ❖ It is difficult to engage young people in critical thinking regarding controversial issues because polarization makes them fearful of criticism from sharing their opinions. (McAvoy & Hess, 2013).
- ❖ There are many different challenges to comprehensively assessing critical thinking in students (Bensley & Murtagh, 2011).

Discussion

There are several challenges to the measurement of critical thinking as a multidimensional concept. The absence of a common definition leads to confusion around critical thinking assessment and a lack of clarity in its literature. Taking a scientific approach and utilizing multiple measures are strategies that may help with its assessment. The current gaps in critical thinking research provide an important opportunity for intervention.

Further research should be done on critical thinking in college students and how specific factors, like political polarization, affect this ability. A better understanding of critical thinking in higher education would help teachers develop more effective strategies to advance their students education. It would help them teach students how to be more open-minded and deliberative, creating a more welcome classroom.

References

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