

IMPROVE CRITICAL THINKING IN NON-PHILOLOGY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The current study aimed to argue that developing critical thinking skills in language learners is an important component of non-philology classes. A variety of approaches, including explicit teaching of critical thinking skills and the use of specialized programs, have been proposed to increase learners' critical thinking abilities.*

Keywords: *Critical thinking, aspect, encourage reading, evaluate evidence, self-reflection, feedback.*

Critical thinking is an essential skill that can benefit individuals in all areas of life, including their academic and professional pursuits. While some may believe that critical thinking is only for those studying philology or related fields, the truth is that this skill can and should be developed by all students, regardless of their major. In particular, non-philology students can greatly benefit from improving their critical thinking skills to better analyze and evaluate information, make sound decisions, and communicate effectively.

In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, the need to foster critical thinking skills in students from diverse academic backgrounds has become increasingly paramount. Traditionally, critical thinking has been associated with disciplines such as philology, but its importance extends far beyond the realm of philology. (The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Thinking in Higher Education, 2015) As undergraduate students are being tasked with conducting more sophisticated research, academic librarians and faculty have recognized the vital role of critical thinking in empowering students to navigate the complexities of information literacy. (Ellis & Whatley, 2008)

One key aspect of developing critical thinking skills is the integration of information literacy instruction within the broader curriculum. By aligning library research assignments with course content, students are better able to contextualize their information-gathering efforts and engage in a more meaningful and thoughtful analysis of their sources (Torrell, 2020).

Here are some ways to help non-philology students increase their critical thinking abilities:

❖ **Encourage reading and discussion:** Reading a variety of materials and engaging in thoughtful discussions with peers can help students develop their critical thinking skills. Encourage students to read articles, books, and other texts from a range of perspectives and to actively participate in discussions to analyze and evaluate the information presented.

❖ **Teach students to ask questions:** Encourage students to ask questions about the information they encounter in their studies. Help them develop the habit of questioning the validity and reliability of sources, the assumptions underlying arguments, and the implications of different perspectives. By teaching students to ask critical questions, you

can help them improve their ability to think critically about the information they encounter.

❖ Provide opportunities for problem-solving: Assigning complex problems or projects that require students to analyze information, identify patterns, and develop solutions can help them enhance their critical thinking skills. Encourage students to approach problems from multiple angles and to consider various solutions before arriving at a conclusion.

❖ Teach students to evaluate evidence: Help students develop the ability to evaluate the evidence presented in arguments and theories. Encourage them to consider the quality of the evidence, the credibility of the sources, and any biases that may be present. By teaching students to critically evaluate evidence, you can help them develop a more discerning approach to information.

❖ Encourage self-reflection: Encourage students to reflect on their thought processes and decision-making abilities. Ask them to consider how they arrived at certain conclusions, what biases may have influenced their thinking, and how they can improve their critical thinking skills. By encouraging self-reflection, you can help students become more aware of their cognitive processes and develop a more objective and rational approach to problem-solving.

❖ Incorporate logic and argumentation exercises: Teach students the principles of logic and argumentation, and provide opportunities for them to practice constructing and analyzing arguments. Assign exercises that require students to identify premises, evaluate the logical soundness of arguments, and draw logical conclusions. By honing their skills in logic and argumentation, students can improve their ability to think critically and assess the validity of arguments.

❖ Provide feedback and guidance: Offer constructive feedback to students on their critical thinking skills and provide guidance on how they can improve. Encourage students to seek clarification, ask for feedback, and engage in critical reflection on their own thinking processes. By providing support and guidance, you can help students develop their critical thinking skills and become more effective thinkers in all aspects of their lives.

❖ Engage in real-world applications: Provide opportunities for students to apply critical thinking skills to real-world scenarios. Encourage them to analyze current events, case studies, or practical problems in their field of study. By connecting critical thinking to real-world situations, students can see the relevance and importance of developing this skill in their academic and professional lives.

❖ Encourage creative thinking: While critical thinking involves analyzing and evaluating information, creative thinking involves generating new ideas and solutions. Encourage students to think creatively and outside the box when approaching problems or assignments. By fostering creativity alongside critical thinking, students can develop a well-rounded approach to problem-solving and decision-making.

❖ Foster a supportive learning environment: Create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students feel comfortable expressing their ideas, asking questions, and engaging in discussions. Encourage collaboration and open-mindedness among students, and provide opportunities for them to learn from each other's

perspectives. By fostering a positive learning environment, you can create an atmosphere that encourages critical thinking and intellectual growth among non-philology students.

In conclusion, increasing critical thinking skills in non-philology students is essential for their academic success and future career prospects. By incorporating reading, discussion, questioning, problem-solving, evidence evaluation, self-reflection, logic and argumentation exercises, real-world applications, creative thinking, feedback, and fostering a supportive learning environment, educators can help students develop the critical thinking skills necessary to navigate complex challenges and make informed decisions in their academic and professional lives. By empowering non-philology students with strong critical thinking skills, educators can better prepare them for success in a rapidly changing and complex world.

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