



Comparing Critical Thinking Conceptualization of Faculty in and Outside Colleges of Agriculture

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Introduction

- ▶ Most universities have critical thinking as one of their student learning outcomes or as part of their quality enhancement program
- ▶ Critical thinking is a complex concept
- ▶ Most faculty do not have a clear concept of what critical thinking looks like and especially how to evaluate it

Purpose

- ▶ The purpose of this study was to understand how college of agriculture faculty conceptualize critical thinking versus how non-agriculture faculty conceptualize it.

Methods

- ▶ Convenience sample
 - ▶ Workshop participants at an ALE conference (32)
 - ▶ Participants of a college-wide Critical Thinking Academy in a college of agriculture (30)

Methods

- ▶ Participants asked to define critical thinking by creating a mind map of key concepts or behaviors that describe/define critical thinking



Graphic 18: Mind Mapping for Writers
Design: Bertha Lucía Fries

Methods

- ▶ Deductive analysis using Paul & Elder's Elements of Thought(2012) as the framework:
 - ▶ Purpose, Questions, Information, Inferences, Concepts, Implications, Assumptions, and Points of View
 - ▶ Two investigators independently analyzed maps
 - ▶ Met to reconcile differences in conceptualization

Implications

- ▶ Richard Paul states that all learning occurs with a purpose (Paul & Elder, 2012)
- ▶ The fact that neither group identified purpose implies that faculty do not think about the purpose of their teaching.
- ▶ Faculty not concerned that students understand the purpose of their field of study, of the authors of their texts, or the purpose of the courses they are taking.

Implications

- ▶ Leadership educators identified POV while AG did not
- ▶ Many leadership theories (transformational, LMX, Social Change Model) indirectly include Point of View as part of their relational approaches
- ▶ Implies that considering others' POV is a part what good leaders do and what leadership educators teach

Conclusions

- ▶ “To think logically is to think relevantly to the purpose that initiated the thinking...” Susan Stebbing (1939)
- ▶ Being able to hear multiple perspectives is critical to being a Fair-minded thinker.

Further Study Needed

- ▶ With the emphasis on knowing your purpose as an element of critical thinking, why is it that university faculty failed to identify this element?
- ▶ Why, did faculty in the college of agriculture not consider POV as an element of critical thinking?