

Some Ideas to Incorporate Critical Thinking/Self-Directed Learning Practice Prior to Developing a CT Rubric

These are some suggestions for things we can work on this year. Many of these are probably already being used. Maybe choose two to focus on first semester and see what you notice as a result.

1. Have multiple copies of dictionaries and other relevant resources available in quantities for small group work; intentionally model and encourage their use.
2. Offer regular and multiple opportunities to work in small groups to construct meaning collaboratively; focus on a specific problem, be clear about the product, hold students accountable
3. Intentionally teach how to do dialectic annotations
4. Create provocative hooks for introducing new concepts; e.g. Theology 4B begins with Fright Week – 4 days of 20-minute clips of documentaries illustrating social injustices
5. Design major assignments in such a way that allows students meaningful choice; may include choice in: medium of the product/assessment, theme to explore, topics to explore, sources to use, questions to answer on a test.
6. Teach SEEI technique for short answer reflections or text questions (works well as a simple format for reflective journal entries):
 - S – State student’s position
 - E – Elaborate: further explanation of the statement (may use the phrase “In other words...”)
 - E – Exemplify: provide an example/evidence from the material to back up the position (may use the phrase “For example...”)
 - I – Illustrate: provide a metaphor or analogy to illustrate the point
7. Provide regular and multiple opportunities for students to do metacognitive reflection, i.e. to reflect on particular aspects of their thinking
8. Frequently and regularly embed a self-assessment component in minor and major assignments – assessing both content and quality of their work
9. Predict common misconceptions you have noticed about particular class texts or topics in order to head them off at the pass
10. Consistently use the language of critical thinking – in class, in the department, across the school (see suggested beginning glossary)
11. Introduce consistent and clear expectations regarding craftsmanship, e.g. MLA heading, TNR, 12 pt., double-spaced, parenthetical citations, attribution to author, definitions, no contractions, no “you” statements
12. Be willing to recognize when work is simply not good enough and return for revision

13. When appropriate, introduce Socratic Circles (see “The Art and Craft of ‘Gently Socratic’ Inquiry”)
14. Try using the One-Minute Essay assessment at the end of class: What was the most important thing that you learned during today’s class? and What important question do you still have? Look for accuracy, precise language, and conciseness. Tell students constantly to ask themselves: What do I mean? Am I saying what I mean? Will my reader understand what I’ve written?