Theoretical Cognitive Principles Applied in the Classroom

Five Key Theories:

Critical Thinking Project

Propaganda

Bassham, Irwin, Nardone and Wallace offer this guidance (2007), the analytical philosophy tradition argues that if one can understand how bias and prejudice masquerade as empirical fact or objective interpretation, one is better placed to know what to believe and what to do.

Propaganda Technique	Real World Application	Critical Thinking Technique
Simplification: Good v. Bad Attaching powerful symbols and myths to one's argument and powerful negative symbols to one's opponent's argument.	Being able to distinguish between a campaign advertisement and a legitimate source. It was not uncommon for liberal campaigners to refer to George Bush Jr. as a fascist and for conservative campaigners to refer to Barrack Obama as a socialist.	**Analytic philosophy and logic** **Constructing and deconstructing arguments.** Language tricks are powerful tools in securing consent of people in situations that are actually against their best interests. Example: Homeland security. Giving up our constitutional rights for safety. Can we not maintain our constitutional rights and our safety?
Disfiguration: Smear opposition Taking one part of an opponent's argument out of context, changing its meaning, and highlighting it in such a way that it is presented as the main element in an opponent's platform. Constructing an inaccurate analogy to discredit an opponent's argument, "Hitler wanted universal health care. Therefore, Barrack Obama is Hitler.	For example, When Mitt Romney focused on Barrack Obama's speech, where he stated, "You didn't build that." It was used as a rallying cry against the president. That was only a small section of the speech. The whole speech addressed that advancement of individuals, but also acknowledge family, community support, and governmental support mechanisms allow for small businesses to flourish.	**Natural sciences** There was a natural correspondence between the scientific method and a politically open democracy in which new explanations for human behavior, and new possibilities for intellectual and social evolution, are always present.
Transfusion: Manipulate the consensus values.	A brilliant example is when someone speaks out against one of our three wars and is accused of not supporting the troops. It is entirely possible to support the troops and to think that a war is unjust. That is the heart of transfusion, trying to create a connection where one does not exist.	**Pragmatism** Experimentation to bring about better social forms. Requires constant experimentation, learning from mistakes, deliberately seeking new information and possibilities.
Pandering: Using consensus as a selling point.	For example, the Clydesdale horses bowing at where the twin towers were located during a Super Bowl commercial.	**Psychoanalysis** Uncovering and challenging assumptions that frame behavior. Making informed decisions. Examining other points of views.
Unanimity: One view as the unanimous opinion. Representing one's argument as the will of the majority.	For example, "The American people will not stand for this." Mr. President, "We have had enough."	**Critical theory** **Overtly political** Using social justice to address power inequities Look for manipulation and abuses of power. Unjust dominant ideology is embedded in everyday situations. Western democracies are highly unequal societies.

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Content Fields List:

All critical thinking elements can be addressed:

English	Math	Social Studies	Science
Hypothetico-deductive		Hypothetico-deductive	Hypothetico-deductive
Demonstrate the reasoning that led to a particular answer	Demonstrate the reasoning that led to a particular answer	Demonstrate the reasoning that led to a particular answer	Demonstrate the reasoning that led to a particular answer
Content grammar	Content grammar	Content grammar	Content grammar
How arguments are constructed	How arguments are constructed	How arguments are constructed	How arguments are constructed
Familiar with great works		Familiar with great works	
	Law of gravity	Law of gravity	Law of gravity
Critical thinking is connected to reading and writing	Critical thinking is connected to reading and writing	Critical thinking is connected to reading and writing	Critical thinking is connected to reading and writing
Control group/ Experimental group	Control group/ Experimental group	Control group/ Experimental group	Control group/ Experimental group
Putting arguments together and taking them apart	Putting arguments together and taking them apart	Putting arguments together and taking them apart	Putting arguments together and taking them apart
Validity of an argument	Validity of an argument	Validity of an argument	Validity of an argument
Inductive, deductive, formal, informal, and analogical	Inductive, deductive, formal, informal, and analogical	Inductive, deductive, formal, informal, and analogical	Inductive, deductive, formal, informal, and analogical
Social understanding	Social understanding	Social understanding	Observations and evidence gathering
Asking questions	Asking questions	Asking questions	Asking questions
Cause and effect	Cause and effect	Cause and effect	Cause and effect
Self-criticism	Self-criticism	Self-criticism	Self-criticism

How Critical Thinking is learned in Social Studies:

How arguments are sound or erroneous

Draw on analytics philosophy and logic traditions

Ask the right questions

Think logically

Apply critical thinking to moral problems

Critical thinking is connected to writing and reading

Place critical thinking within their own lives

Teacher models the process

Concrete experiences (case studies, critical incidents, simulations, and scenarios)

Disorienting dilemma- being jolted out of their comfort zone

Multiple opportunities to practice

References:

Bassham, G., Irwin, W., Nardone, H., and Wallace, J.M. (2007). Critical thinking: A student's introduction. (3rd ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

Brookfield, S. (2005). Teaching or critical thinking: Tools and techniques to help students question their assumptions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Popper, K. R. 1. (1959). The logic of scientific discovery. New York: Basic Books.