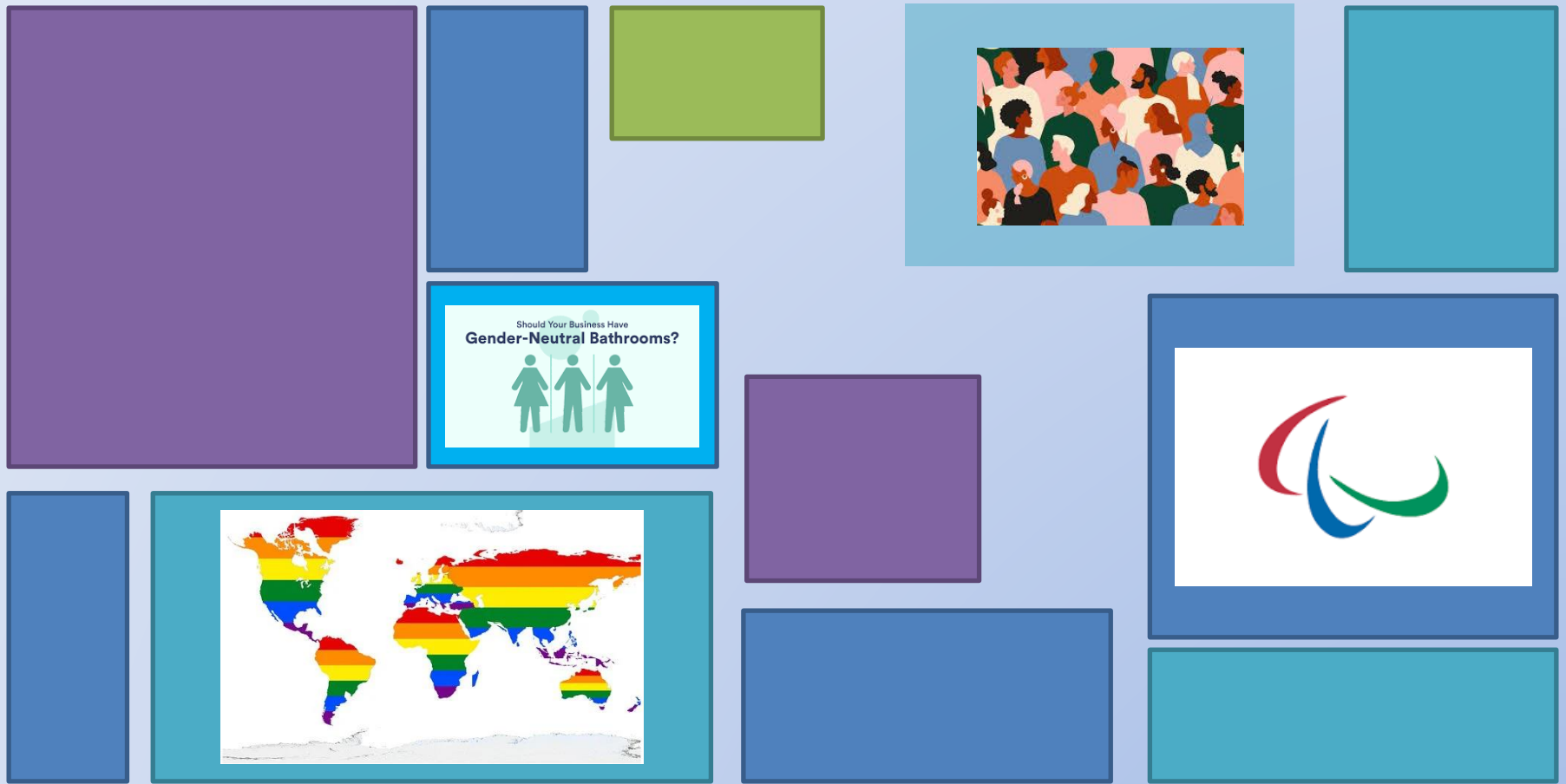




EC SO5001: Diversity & Difference in a Modern World

Theme 7: Applying Critical Thinking to Issues of Diversity and Difference (Part 1)

The Learning Outcomes for this Module

- critically understand the key influences on the social (re)production of individual and group identities and how gender and sexual diversity, class, poverty, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, race and age represented in our society;
- critically reflect upon individual representations of identity in the media and society and the politics of recognition;
- critically engage with theories of difference and how these assist the study of conflict and inequality in society.

*All three Learning Outcomes therefore relate to
Critical Thinking skills*

So what is Critical Thinking?

From your studies, what do you understand critical thinking to mean?



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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
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Defining Critical Thinking

- Individually, make a note of a short phrase to complete these sentences.
- Critical thinking is _____.
- Critical thinking is not _____.

Defining Critical Thinking

- In discuss and try to come to a consensus. Record your group responses.
- Critical thinking is _____.
- Critical thinking is not _____.

Defining Critical Thinking

- In your groups, decide what critical thinking “looks like” when someone is thinking critically.
- Draw a picture on your flip chart sheet that highlights critical thinking within your field.
- What does a critical thinker look like?
- What would they be doing?
- What makes them different?



What is Critical Thinking?

“Higher-Order Thinking”

“Complex Thinking”

What is Critical Thinking?

- The words 'critical' and 'criteria' come from the same root word meaning judgment (i.e. it means to make judgements)
- Critical Thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. (Robert Ennis)

Critical thinking = “Grappling with open-ended problems”

“Effective personal and professional functioning requires dealing with open-ended problems that are fraught with significant and enduring uncertainties about such issues as the scope of the problem, interpretations of relevant information, range of solution options, and potential outcomes of various options.”

From Helping Your Students Develop Critical Thinking Skills
Cindy L. Lynch and Susan K. Wolcott, October 2001, The IDEA Center

Examples of when we should use critical thinking...

- Professional problems
 - What is the best interpretation of a piece of literature?
 - How can a leader most efficiently promote effective team work?
- Personal problems
 - What should I do to optimize my career development?
- Civic problems
 - How should I vote in my Local Elections?

Critical Thinking – A working definition

“Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action”.

(From: Scriven and Paul, 1987)



What is this quote saying about critical thinking?

Critical thinking is
*the intellectually disciplined process that
results in a guide to belief and action.*

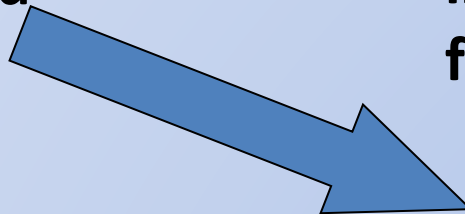
- What are the “intellectual tools” that you use in your work?
- What does this “process” look like, in your discipline, in your studies?

Critical Thinking in Action

Critical thinking is *the intellectually disciplined process that results in a guide to belief and action.*

The tools for this “process”
include actively and
skillfully:

- ✓ *Conceptualizing*
- ✓ *Applying*
- ✓ *Analyzing*
- ✓ *Synthesizing*
- ✓ *evaluating*



information gathered
from, or generated by,

- ✓ *Observation*
- ✓ *Experience*
- ✓ *Reflection*
- ✓ *Reasoning, or*
- ✓ *Communication*

What Critical Thinking is *NOT*

- “Egocentric” thinking which:
 - Leads to self-serving perspectives and evaluations
 - Leads to a false sense of objectivity
 - Leads to flawed thinking
 - Lends itself to the unconscious substitution of subjective intuitions for intellectual standards in thinking

Instead of thinking:

- Its true because I believe it
- Its true because we believe it
- Its true because I want to believe it
- Its true because I have always believed it
- Its true because its in my selfish interest to believe it

**...you should foster an awareness that critical thinking
is more than thinking, it's:**

- ✓ Reflecting upon
- ✓ Questioning
- ✓ Monitoring
- It's "thinking things through."

A Well-Cultivated Critical Thinker:

(Richard Paul and Linda Elder, the Foundation for Critical Thinking:
<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>)

- Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely
- Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively
- Comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards
- Thinks open mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as needs be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems

What you can do:

1. Become aware and discuss with your colleagues **how and why critical thinking is important** to your work.
2. **Model for students**—in a very explicit way—how you “**think things through.**” Give the gift of your time, your mentorship in issues large and small.
3. Remember that students are on a **developmental path.** Meet them where they are in terms of their readiness for complex decision making. Sometimes the comfort zone is for absolute “rights and wrongs.”
4. Never forget that at the heart of critical thinking is learning to **ask relevant, important questions.** To re-evaluate, to reconsider and reflect on the answers –and then ask the next set of questions—are the intellectual habits of mind we wish to cultivate in our students.

References

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