

## What does a school staff need to know about Critical Thinking Skills?

This learning guide is designed for use by instructional leaders and learning communities or as a self-paced study to explore effective Critical Thinking Skills.



This learning guide is intended for use after viewing the short video [Introducing Critical Thinking](#) with Garfield Gini-Newman.

There are specific strategies and tools that can be used to nurture the skills needed for critical thinking, an essential 21st century competency.

### Key understandings:

- Critical thinking is making thoughtful decisions using criteria to guide the decision process.
- Critical thinking helps students learn content more deeply because they are asked to carefully process ideas.
- There is a double payoff with the Learn to Think; Think to Learn approach to critical thinking. Not only do students learn to think more effectively, but also they learn concepts and content through that thinking.
- It is most effective to use a curriculum embedded approach, so engaging students in thinking is part of the regular instructional routine.
- There are five intellectual tools required by critical thinkers.
  - Background knowledge
  - Criteria for judgment (decision making)
  - Critical thinking vocabulary
  - Thinking strategies
  - Habits of mind

### Questions for discussion:

- To what extent does Dr. Gini-Newman's definition of critical thinking challenge or affirm your own understanding of the term?
- What pedagogical strategies encourage critical thinking in students? What are examples of the intellectual tools that are required for critical thinking?
- Considering your own students, describe some instances when they use "critical" thinking effectively.
- What knowledge, skills and attributes do educators need in order to create learning experiences for students that encourage critical thinking?

### For more information:

[Engaging All Learners: Instructional Practices](#) (ERLC)  
(including 9 video clips with Garfield Gini-Newman)

[Critical Thinking Consortium Library of Professional Resources](#)  
(TC2)  
[Tools for Thought](#) (TC2)

Learn more about essential conditions that support implementation planning for new educational policies and initiatives at <http://www.essentialconditions.ca>

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