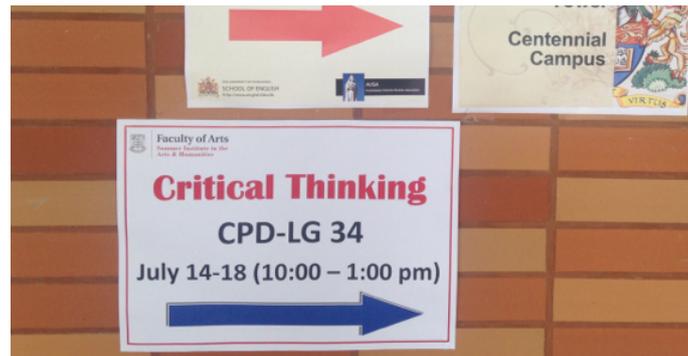


Call for chapters
Abstracts by 15th Dec. 2014

Demystifying Critical Thinking in Multilingual and Intercultural Education

Edited by Fred Dervin (University of Helsinki, Finland) &
Julie Byrd Clark (Western University, Canada)

To be published by Info Age Publishing in 2016
BOOK SERIES Contemporary Language Education
<http://www.infoagepub.com/index.php?id=11&s=s0017>



Following a very successful volume on reflexivity in multilingual and intercultural language education (Routledge, 2014), the editors of this new volume wish to tackle the burning issue of Critical Thinking (CT). CT is often said to be a key skill of 21st century education and is very much used as a mantra by educational institutions without always defining it. The literature contains hundreds of definitions of CT but there is no consensus on a single definition. Thus ‘my CT’ does not always correspond to ‘your CT’.

One of the most basic definitions of CT could be: “The ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate ideas and arguments” (Fisher, 2011). In a study on views held by academics about CT, T. Moore (2013) found six definitional strands: CT (i) as judgment; (ii) as skepticism; (iii) as a simple originality; (iv) as sensitive readings; (v) as rationality; (vi) as an activist engagement with knowledge; and (vii) as self-reflexivity. One thing is for sure: CT involves developing certain dispositions (probing), skills (cognitive and meta-cognitive) and habits of mind (Costa & Kallick, 2009). Some scholars are interested in the reasoning process behind CT, others the outcomes. Yet again there is no agreement in global scholarship and practice about its components or simply its definition.

Recently the idea of CT has been criticized for at least two reasons. *First* CT can feel too negative for some, leading to equating CT with mere adversely criticizing others. According to Fisher (2011) some scholars have thus proposed to call it ‘critico-creative thinking’ to insist on its positive, imaginative aspects. *Second* CT has often been criticized for being too Western, to contain too many Western norms. In their 2011 article entitled *Critical thinking and Chinese university students: a review of the evidence*, Jing Tian and Graham David Low discuss the apparent lack of Chinese students’ CT skills. They question the usual argument that Chinese culture does not allow ‘criticality’ and show that the students’ previous learning experiences have an

influence on their level of CT. CT is often used as a way of comparing educational ‘cultures’ – some have more of it than others – thus leading to unfair ethnocentric and homogenizing judgments (Holliday, 2010).

How do we then define this contested disposition, skill and habit of mind in order to make it useful? Is it possible? Can we work from definitions of CT that avoid creating hierarchies between learners and their ‘cultures’? Whose conceptions of critical thinking could we use to do so? Can we *once and for all* avoid falling into the trap of giving the privilege of CT to the ‘Western world’? In other words can CT be demystified?

This volume concentrates on the context of multilingual and intercultural education. Potential authors are welcome to consider the following questions:

- What constitutes a critical thinker in multilingual and intercultural education in the 2010s? What dispositions, skills and habits of mind are needed? (Students, teachers, teacher educators and researchers)
- How can CT contribute to renewing multilingual and intercultural education? What alternative models of CT can be used to enrich multilingual and intercultural education?
- Can CT be taught and learnt? If so, how and in what ways and under what kinds of conditions?
- If CT exists then what is *uncritical thinking* in multilingual and intercultural education?
- Can digital technologies help to promote CT in multilingual and intercultural education?
- The issue of assessing CT is problematic. Yet can CT be assessed summatively or formatively in multilingual and intercultural education?

Interested authors please send a 300-word abstract to the editors by **15th Dec. 2014**. (fred.dervin@helsinki.fi & jbyrdcla@uwo.ca). Full chapters should be ready by **1st Sept. 2015**.