

Critical Thinking and Learners' Conception of Knowledge- A Meeting Point

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Abstract

Critical thinking as a topic lurks fascinatingly behind and about higher education and professional development. The scope of research done on critical thinking revolves mainly around how to promote and sharpen student's critical thinking skills as they are considered to be at the heart of successful academic assertiveness. However, there is another component, namely developmental epistemology, which is central to developing and fostering critical thinking skills and which should be taken into account in pedagogical implications and applications. Epistemological development has been the subject of a number of studies over the last half century that indicate that there is a developmental sequence in learner's epistemological beliefs and that this influences the manner in which the learners function; significantly affecting their capacity for critical thinking. In particular, this paper looks briefly at the relationship between critical thinking and epistemological development as a process as well as beliefs of the individual learner, both standing for learner's conceptions of knowledge which impact to a great extent the acquisition of critical thinking skills and the process of critical thinking as a whole.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, epistemology, beliefs, knowledge