

Course report for the Faculty of Education and Society at Malmö University

Course name:

“Educating for Critical Thinking”

Background information

- Semester: VT23
- Ladok code: HP622E
- Number of registered students: 25
- Number of students who responded to the summative course evaluation: 13

Implementation	Mark with an X
The previous course report is communicated in connection with the start of the course	
Early dialogue on expectations for the course	X
Formative course evaluation	X
Summative course evaluation	X
Feedback to students	X

Forms of evaluation

Formative dialogue during the course and summative evaluation in Reflex.

Summary of the students' course evaluations

Question 1: To what extent do you consider you have achieved the learning objectives of the course?

5 of 13 (38%)	has to a very large extent (level 6)
3 of 13 (23%)	has to a large extent (level 5)
4 of 13 (31%)	has to some extent (level 4)
1 of 13 (8%)	has not to some extent (level 3)
0 of 13 (0%)	has to a small extent (level 2)
0 of 13 (0%)	has to a very small extent (level 1)

Mean: 4,9
Standard deviation: 1,0

Question 2: To what extent do you think that the working methods / learning activities on the course have reinforced your learning and your ability to achieve the learning objectives?

4 of 13 (31%)	has to a very large extent (level 6)
4 of 13 (31%)	has to a large extent (level 5)
2 of 13 (15%)	has to some extent (level 4)
3 of 13 (23%)	has not to some extent (level 3)
0 of 13 (0%)	has to a small extent (level 2)
0 of 13 (0%)	has to a very small extent (level 1)

Mean: 4,7
Standard deviation: 1,2

One student wrote that the course was one of the more organized courses so far in the program, there was a lack of group work.

Question 3: To what extent do you consider that the types of examination on the course gave you the opportunity to show how well you had achieved the learning goals?

4 of 13 (31%)	has to a very large extent (level 6)
6 of 13 (46%)	has to a large extent (level 5)
2 of 13 (15%)	has to some extent (level 4)
1 of 13 (8%)	has not to some extent (level 3)

0 of 13 (0%) has to a small extent (level 2)
0 of 13 (0%) has to a very small extent (level 1)

Mean: 5,0
Standard deviation: 0,9

Question 4: To what extent do you consider that the course as a whole has met your expectations?

3 of 13 (23%) has to a very large extent (level 6)
4 of 13 (31%) has to a large extent (level 5)
5 of 13 (38%) has to some extent (level 4)
0 of 13 (0%) has not to some extent (level 3)
0 of 13 (0%) has to a small extent (level 2)
1 of 13 (8%) has to a very small extent (level 1)

Mean: 4,5
Standard deviation: 1,3

The specific reasons why the student who was very critical of the course is highlighted below under “Other noteworthy perspectives from students”.

Question 5: To what extent has the course given you the opportunity to take responsibility for your own learning?

7 of 13 (54%) has to a very large extent (level 6)
5 of 13 (38%) has to a large extent (level 5)
1 of 13 (8%) has to some extent (level 4)
0 of 13 (0%) has not to some extent (level 3)
0 of 13 (0%) has to a small extent (level 2)
0 of 13 (0%) has to a very small extent (level 1)

Mean: 5,5
Standard deviation: 0,7

Other noteworthy perspectives from students

- One noteworthy problem was that the course clashed with other mandatory courses in the program. This was mainly due to a misunderstanding by the teacher, who was relatively new to the program at the time of the course. This should therefore not be a problem in the future.

- One student complained that the sessions were not recorded. This was, however, by design. As the sessions are mainly a chance for sharing of perspectives, the GDPR rules prohibit recordings of the student responses.
- Some criticized the course material for being too narrow in scope. Especially some participants wanted the material to reflect better how critical thinking is addressed within different disciplines. On the other hand, some students singled out the course material as rewarding.
- The video lectures were especially appreciated by many participants.
- Problem with the sessions not showing up in KronoX
- The course was graded as G or U. One participant felt that it would be reasonable that a course on this level could also be graded as VG.
- One student was particularly critical and had many suggestions for improving the course, for instance:
 - The student said there was a lack of constructive alignment in the course. Especially the lectures were especially mentioned, as they did not seem to correspond to the final assignments (although they were also attractive and concise). The student also mentioned that the lectures were too theoretical, as the final examinations concentrated on the practical applications of critical thinking.
 - The course literature was not a good fit.
 - Too broad and unclear examination tasks.

Analysis

There were some critical perspectives raised in the evaluation. Especially one student was critical of the course outline and implementation. Many of these concerns that he or she had, and the concerns mentioned by the other students, are quite easy to fix. In the future, the course material and the course outline should be assessed to better consider the different ways in which critical thinking is taught within different disciplines. As critical thinking is a perspective that is mostly highlighted within the liberal arts and behavioral sciences, an effort should especially be made to consider teaching critical thinking within the natural sciences, technology, and medicine, to mention a few.

The students generally appreciated the lectures.

Given that the students come from various international contexts, it became apparent during the course that many students had different views of what constituted critical thinking, and what limits they had as educators in teaching critical thinking (especially in contexts where the students weren't expected to be critical thinkers, only learn what the teacher was teaching).

Given this difference, the teacher believes this course should be mandatory for all students earlier in the program.

Action plan

Building on this course outline, the course material and perspectives presented in the lectures should be assessed. More focus should be on how critical thinking is taught within the various disciplines. The various international perspectives on critical thinking should be highlighted and developed in future courses.

Proposed revisions to the course syllabus

Under the “Course contents,” the students learn that the course will, among other things, deal with the following:

- “The objectives and goals of higher education
- Critical approach in theory and practice
- The introduction and practice of critical thinking
- Learning as a research process
- Progression in critical thinking
- Translating critical thinking into speech and text
- Assessment of critical approaches”

This list should be stricken, as it risks overpromising what the course can contain.