

Designing Learning Activities to Engage and Build Critical Thinking

How can we activate our students' critical thinking in the classroom or online?

How can we design assignments that guide students toward achievement of our expectations for critical thinking?

“Because critical thinkers seek to draw intelligent conclusions, they are sufficiently open-minded that they can adopt a skeptical attitude

- Toward *their own* ideas
- Toward *their own* assumptions, and
- Toward the evidence *they themselves* tentatively offer,

as well as the assumptions and evidence offered by others (Barnet & Bardau, 2011).

ENG 100

Argumentative Research Paper

Students:

1. Arrive at a contentious topic through classroom discussion and topic exploration prewriting activities.
2. Complete a tentative outline listing potential arguments for both sides of the debate.
3. Complete an annotated bibliography assignment, centered around at least 3 different arguments for their side of the debate (with supporting evidence for each argument)
4. Draft the “Arguments for Their Side” Body Section with paraphrased and cited support
5. Complete an annotated bibliography assignment, centered around at least 2 different arguments for the other side of the debate (with supporting evidence for each argument)
6. Draft the “Arguments for The Other Side” Body Section with paraphrased and cited support
7. Add counterpoints to the arguments for the other side. (However, ...)
8. Draft an Introduction
9. Draft a Conclusion
10. Compile with Works Cited, Title, and Headings

Audience = Individuals on The Other Side of the Debate