

CRITICAL THINKING IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

FOR YEARS 7 AND 8

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What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking includes examining, questioning, evaluating and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about issues and practices.

Definition taken from: <https://hpe.tki.org.nz/professional-learning-support/teaching-approaches/critical-thinking-and-critical-action/>



Why is this important in Physical Education?

PE while practical at heart, is an academic subject. In this, we are required to think, problem solve, use, critique and create knowledge. This can be achieved by encouraging akōnga to take time to critically reflect on their roles within PE based scenarios and practical sessions that we provide.

How can we include critical thinking in our PE programmes?

What is important to note, is that our students don't just learn higher level critical thinking simply by experiencing a range of challenging situations. For our students to become effective critical thinkers, and go on to take critical action, there needs to be explicit teaching of critical thinking strategies.

This involves:

- Creating a safe space for issues and situations relevant to your students to be explored
- Creating specific learning opportunities and scenarios where our students must think critically.
- Allowing time for the students to discuss and debate, to plan, analyse and evaluate, to innovate and reason.
- Allowing time for students to experiment and practice some of the ideas they have come up with

Recent Findings - NMSSA Results 2022

Year 4: 87% of year 4 students were meeting the curriculum expectations of critical thinking at Level 2

Year 8: **only 33% of Year 8 students were meeting the curriculum expectation** of critical thinking at Level 4. This is consistent with 2017 results and follows a decline from 2013.

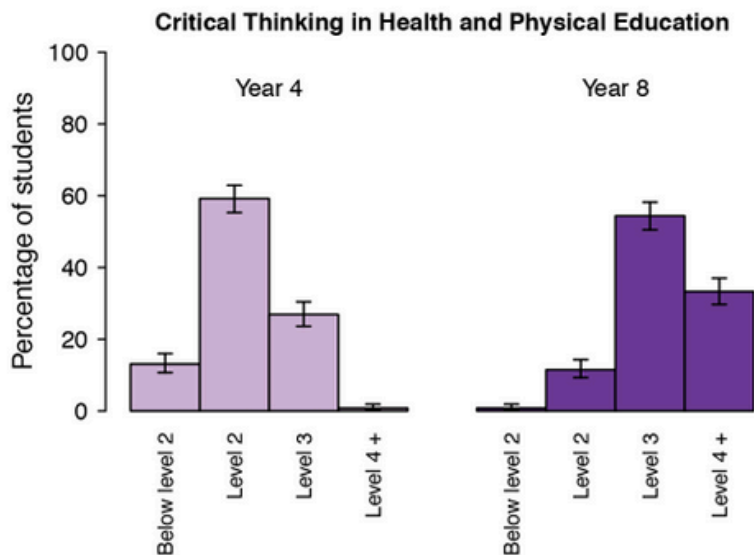


Figure 6: Achievement against the curriculum on the CT assessment, by year level

IS THIS RESULT A REFLECTION ON THE ABILITY OF OUR STUDENTS TO THINK CRITICALLY AT YEAR 8 AND BEYOND?

OR

IS IT A REFLECTION ON THE OPPORTUNITIES WE PROVIDE TO ALLOW THEM TO DEVELOP SKILLS AND STRATEGIES TO THINK CRITICALLY?

Where to go to find out more:

NMSSA 2022 Report

<https://nmssa.otago.ac.nz/reports-and-resources/health-and-physical-education-achievement-reports/>

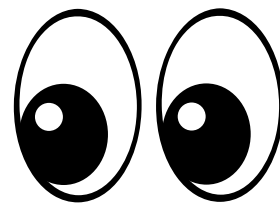
HPE on TKI:

<https://hpe.tki.org.nz/professional-learning-support/teaching-approaches/critical-thinking-and-critical-action/>

Studytime:

<https://studytime.co.nz/articles/why-critical-thinking-is-so-important/>

What can it look like?



Curriculum related critical thinking examples at Level 4

Level 4

Strand A: Safety management

Scenario:

The school tuck shop has decided to no longer sell heated food due to the safety risk of over heated food causing injury to students.



Critical thinking questions:

1. What is the issue here?
2. What are your thoughts about this?
3. Who is responsible if a student is injured and what are they responsible for?
4. How restricted should our food access become?
5. What are the advantages/disadvantages of this situation?
6. What responsibilities do different people in this situation hold?
Student/tuckshop/school?
7. What could other outcomes be?

Level 4

Strand B: Science and Technology

Scenario:

Students that come through the green doors into class get access to the whole PE shed full of gear. Students that came through the red door only have access to a bucket of cricket bats. The students are asked to create a game that can be played on the school playground.



Critical thinking questions:

1. Who has been considered in this situation?
2. Are you advantaged or disadvantaged?
3. How do you feel about your situation?
4. How do you feel about the situation of the others?
5. Would you stand up and say something? What would you say, and to whom?
6. What would need to change in this situation?
7. What process would you go through to change the situation?

Level 4

Stand C: Identity, sensitivity and respect

Scenario:

Mixed netball teams are playing at an interschool tournament. You notice the coach of the team you are in is giving significantly less court time to the boys in the mixed team, over the girls.



Critical thinking questions:

1. How do you feel about this considering your own gender?
2. Why do you think the coach could be making that decision?
3. Who is being advantaged/disadvantaged?
4. What needs to change?
5. What process could you go through to address this situation?
6. What outcomes would you be looking for?

Level 4

Strand D: Societal attitudes and beliefs

Scenario:

We know that one reason young people choose not to belong to club or team sports is the cost of belonging. There are many young people who would love to play, but their families cannot afford the many costs associated with it.

Critical thinking questions:

1. What are the costs associated with belonging to a club/team sport?
2. How would it feel if you were not able to play a sport due to cost?
3. How do those who can afford to play feel?
4. What could be some possible solutions to the costs?
5. How would these solutions effect those who couldn't play and those who could play?
6. What impact would your solutions have at a societal level?
7. What change would you like to see?

