



# Critical Thinking Education Program



After School Program **Proposal**  
By Saye Taryor

# Table of Content

**P**rogram Overview

**P**rogram Justification

**T**arget Audience

**P**rogram Objectives

**P**rogram Content

**P**rogram Length

**I**inerary Requirements & Resource Checklist

**B**iography of Speaker

**C**ontact

## Program Overview



Under the assumption that the goal of education is to have positive impacts in the lives of those who partake in the process; parents, community leaders, and educators, would do well to promote critical thinking applications and concepts to young men and women in urban communities. This program begins by elaborating on the concept of critical thinking, while providing students with several hands on applications that can be used to improve their process of daily thinking. Students are introduced to several ways of implementing critical thinking applications in education. This will be followed with weekly activities and words of encouragement to get students to maintain intellectual courage.

## Program Justification

- So why is this lecture so important? Self-improvement and social improvement are presupposed values of critical thinking. Meaning critical thinking requires an effort to see others and our selves accurately. This requires recognizing gaps between ideals and practice. This lecture is important because it aims for self and social improvement.
- Strategies of improving everyday thinking are introduced to the students.
- Students are introduced to techniques that will improve their critical thinking, eventually enhance how they notice and refrain from using biases and generalizations. They also are introduced to techniques that will allow them to eventually become more aware of the wide range outlooks and interpretations of urban challenges, allowing for better comprehension on how and what notions to accept or reject, while dealing with daily challenges.
- Students openly engage in a program that allows students to learn a new approach to learning and evaluating information.

# Target Audience



**Students Ages  
12-18**

## Program Objectives

To define critical thinking and provide applications that students can use in everyday living to improve their ability to think critically

To show how critical thinking applications can be beneficial in evaluating everyday challenges and resolving them, if they can realistically be resolved

The development of the student's awareness of their egocentric and sociocentric patterns of thought

To explain the importance of developing intellectual courage

# Program Content

## **Lesson 1: Thinking independently**

Critical thinking is independent thinking, thinking for oneself. Many of our beliefs are acquired at an early age, when we have a strong tendency to form beliefs for irrational reasons (because we want to believe, because we are praised or rewarded for believing). Critical thinkers use critical skills and insights to reveal and reject beliefs that are irrational. In forming new beliefs, critical thinkers do not passively accept the beliefs of others; rather, they try to figure things out for themselves, reject unjustified authorities, and recognize the contributions of genuine authorities. They are not limited by accepted ways of doing things. They evaluate both goals and how to achieve them. They do not accept as true, or reject as false, beliefs they do not understand. They are not easily manipulated. Independent thinkers strive to incorporate all known relevant knowledge and insight into their thought and behavior. They strive to determine for themselves when information is relevant, when to apply a concept, or when to make use of a skill. They are self-monitoring: they catch their own mistakes; they don't need to be told what to do every step of the way.

## **Lesson 2: Developing Insight Into Egocentricity or Sociocentricity**

We can change egocentric tendencies when we see them for what they are: irrational and unjust. The development of children's awareness of their egocentric and sociocentric patterns of thought is a crucial part of education in critical thinking. This development will be modest at first but can grow considerably over time.

## **Lesson 3: Thinking through actions and consequences**

Critical thinkers can take statements; recognize their implications-what follows from them-and develop a fuller, more complete understanding of their meaning. They realize that to accept a statement one must also accept its implications. They can explore both implications and consequences at length. When considering beliefs that relate to actions

or policies, critical thinkers assess the consequences of acting on those beliefs.

#### **Lesson 4: Examine and Evaluating Assumptions**

Critical thinkers have a passion for truth and for accepting the strongest reasoning. Thus, they have the intellectual courage to seek out and reject false assumptions. They realize that everyone makes some questionable assumptions. They are willing to question, and have others question, even their own most cherished assumptions. They consider alternative assumptions.

#### **Lesson 5: Evaluating Interpretations and conclusions**

Thinking critically involves the ability to reach sound conclusions based on observation and information. Critical thinkers distinguish their observations from their conclusions. They look beyond the facts, to see what those facts imply. They know what the concepts they use imply. They also distinguish cases in which they can only guess from cases in which they can safely conclude. Critical thinkers recognize their tendency to make inferences that support their own egocentric or sociocentric worldviews, and are therefore especially careful to evaluate inferences they make when their interests or desires are involved. Remember, every interpretation is based on inference, and we interpret every situation we are in.

#### **Lesson 6: Developing Intellectual Courage**

To think independently and fairly, one must feel the need to face and fairly deal with unpopular ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints. The courage to do so arises when we see that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part) and that conclusions or beliefs inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading.

To determine for ourselves, which is which, we must not passively and uncritically accept what we have "learned". We need courage to admit the truth in some ideas considered dangerous and absurd, and the distortion or falsity in some ideas strongly held in our social group. It will take courage to be true to our own thinking, for honestly



questioning our deeply held beliefs can be difficult and sometimes frightening, and the penalties for non-conformity are often severe judgment.

### **Lesson 7: Recognizing Contradictions**

Critical thinkers can pinpoint specifically where opposing arguments or views contradict each other, distinguishing the contradictions from compatible beliefs, thus focusing their analyses of conflicting views.

### **Lesson 8: Comparing and Contrasting Ideals with actual practice**

Self-improvement and social improvement are presupposed values of critical thinking. Critical thinking, therefore, requires an effort to see self, and others accurately. The confusion of facts with ideals prevents us from moving closer to achieving our ideals. A critical education strives to highlight discrepancies between facts and ideals, and proposes and evaluates methods for minimizing them. This strategy is intimately connected with "developing intellectual good faith".

### **Lesson 9: Reasoning Dialectically: Evaluating Perspectives, Interpretations, or Theories**

Dialectical thinking refers to dialogical thinking conducted in order to test the strengths and weaknesses of opposing points of view. Court trials and debates are dialectical in intention. They pit idea against idea, reasoning against counter-reasoning in order to get at the truth of a matter. Children need to develop dialectical reasoning skills, so that their thinking not only moves comfortably between divergent points of view or lines of thought, but also makes some assessments in light of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the evidence or reasoning presented. Hence, when thinking dialectically, critical thinkers can use critical micro-skills appropriately.

### **Lesson 10: Reasoning Dialogically: Comparing Perspectives, Interpretations, or Theories**

Dialogical thinking refers to thinking that involves a dialogue or extended exchange between different points of view. Whenever we

consider concepts or issues deeply, we naturally explore their connections to other ideas and issues within different points of view. Critical thinkers need to be able to engage in fruitful, exploratory dialogue, proposing ideas, probing their roots, considering subject matter insights and evidence, testing ideas, and moving between various points of view. When we think, we often engage in dialogue, either inwardly or aloud with others. We need to integrate critical thinking skills into that dialogue so that it is as useful as possible. Socratic questioning is one form of dialogical thinking.

### **Lesson 11: Listening Critically: The Art of Silent Dialogue**

Critical listeners ask questions as they listen to orient themselves to what a speaker is saying: "Why does she say that? What examples could I give to illustrate that point? What is the main point? How does this detail relate to the main point? That one? Is he using this word as I would, or somewhat differently?" These highly skilled and activated processes are crucial to learning. We need to heighten student awareness of and practice in them as often as we can.

### **Lesson 12: Reading Critically: Clarifying or Critiquing Texts**

Critical thinkers read with a healthy skepticism. But they do not doubt or deny until they understand. They clarify before they judge. Since they expect intelligibility from what they read, they check and double-check their understanding as they read. They do not mindlessly accept nonsense. Critical readers ask themselves questions as they read, wonder about the implications of, reasons for, examples of, and meaning and truth of the material.

They do not approach written material as a collection of sentences, but as a whole, trying out various interpretations until one fits all of the work, rather than ignoring or distorting what doesn't fit their interpretation. They realize that everyone is capable of making mistakes and being wrong, including authors of textbooks. They also realize that, since everyone has a point of view, everyone sometimes leaves out some relevant information. No two authors would write the same book or write from exactly the same perspective. Therefore, critical readers

recognize that reading a book is reading one limited perspective on a subject and that more can be learned by considering other perspectives.

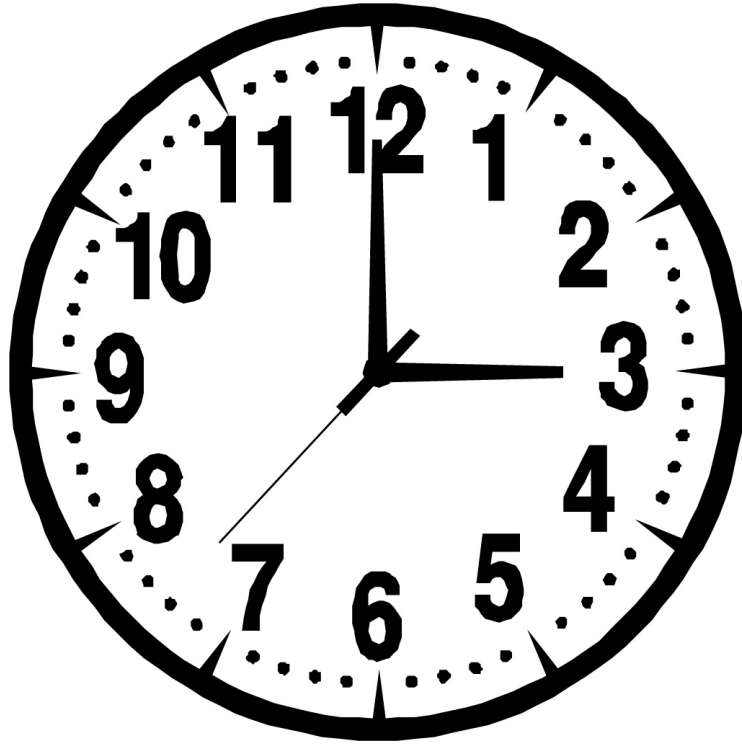
### **Lesson 13: Generating or Assessing Solutions**

Critical thinkers use all available information relevant to their problems, including solutions others have tried in similar situations, they are flexible and imaginative, willing to try any good idea whether it has been done before or not. Fair-minded thinkers take into account the interests of everyone affected by the problem and proposed solutions. They are more committed to finding the best solution than to getting their way. They approach problems realistically.

### **Lesson 14: Final Reflections**

The final week is used to get a general feedback and summary from each student.

## Program Length



This program is a 14-week course, and each lecture is approximately, 45 minutes to an hour.

# Itinerary Requirements & Resource Checklist

Television with s cord connection

DVD player

1 Projector / Projector Stand / Projection Screen

Copy Machine

Heavy-duty stapler

Computer availability to students

Laptop or computer with s cord connection

Salary and payment (will negotiate)



# Biography of Speaker

**Saye Taryor** is a writer, a social entrepreneurship activist, and the founder of 1up Consulting/Entertainment. Saye graduated from Piney Woods high school (a historically black boarding school, located in central Mississippi) in 1992. Soon after, He enrolled in the University of Southern Mississippi, where he pursued a journalism degree, before heading back to Atlanta, to jump--start a music career.

As an artist/co-founder of the independent label, “Neanderthol Entertainment”, he was able to learn many aspects of the music business and gained over twelve years of experience. After working several corporate jobs and partaking in the music industry for a few years, Mr. Taryor realized that his calling was to illuminate young men and women about the importance of social entrepreneurship, and to dedicate himself, and others, to practice and improve their thinking skills more often.

He then attended Georgia State to learn more about critical thinking and public speaking. After leaving the music industry, losing his job, home, and many other material belongings, he has been open to the public about his personal trials and tribulations, and has released an award winning blog, discussing his experiences while homeless called, “Homeless, living in America”. Saye hopes to be more active with critical thinking programs and social entrepreneurship workshops like “Generation Y” which he and Linda A. Brooks first hosted in 2009. He is currently a writer for the Examiner, and often submits articles to ViewsHounds. Other published works include, “The 2009 1up Entertainment Music Guide and Directory, Vol. 1”, “Country Life School”, "What Do You Think, and, “A Fathers Burden”

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