

# Common Misconceptions and Partial Understandings

## ENGLISH Program

### Global Competencies



#### Critical Thinking

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This resource supports educators in developing a deeper awareness of what **critical thinking** means. By exploring the common misconceptions and partial understandings related to this competency, we can move towards a shared understanding across Manitoba schools.

##### Common misconception and/or partial understanding

*Critical thinking encourages learners to criticize ideas or others. It teaches learners to be disparaging or judgmental.* (Gini-Newman and Case)

##### Extending our understanding of critical thinking

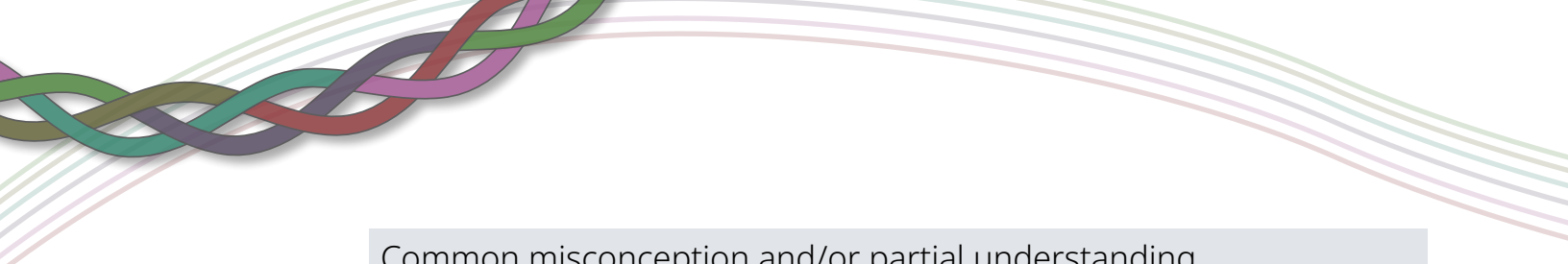
Critical thinking is not about criticism or being disparaging to others; instead, it is “critical thinking” (i.e., focused thinking while keeping in mind specific criteria). Critical thinking involves making a reasoned judgment while considering relevant criteria, such as what would be reasonable or sensible to believe or do.

##### Common misconception and/or partial understanding

*Critical thinking equates to cynicism. It encourages learners to doubt or discount everything they read or hear.* (Gini-Newman and Case)

##### Extending our understanding of critical thinking

Critical thinking is focused on making thoughtful decisions and reasoned judgments based on criteria. Rather than learners being cynical or discounting everything they read or hear, they are instead encouraged to be respectful, informed thinkers with ongoing attitudes of self-reflection.



## Common misconception and/or partial understanding

*Critical thinking is largely focused on logic and argumentation.*  
(Gini-Newman and Case)

### Extending our understanding of critical thinking

Fully understood, thinking critically is usefully and creatively applied to any task we may want to undertake, ranging from engaging with daily news to making a decision about what course to take or how to solve a problem with a friend. Critical thinking is something we need to address and support learners within and across ALL disciplines and courses.

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## Common misconception and/or partial understanding

*Young learners cannot think critically or even be taught to think critically.*

### Extending our understanding of critical thinking

Children can begin to think critically from early childhood. In fact, research suggests that “there are kernels of critical thinking and rational thinking even in infancy” (Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek 162). The Delphi Report, a prolific study, focused on the topic of critical thinking in schools. It suggests “from early childhood, people should be taught...to reason, to see relevant facts, to consider options, and to understand the views of others” (Facione 27). Critical thinking is important to model and explore in intentional ways, starting with the earliest learners.

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#### References

Facione, Peter A. *The Delphi Report*. California Academic Press, 1990.

<http://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/12-The-Delphi-Report-on-Critical-Thinking.pdf>.

Gini-Newman, Garfield, and Roland Case. *Creating Thinking Classrooms: Leading Educational Change for This Century*. Corwin, 2018.

Golinkoff, Roberta Michnick, and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. *Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells Us about Raising Successful Children*. American Psychological Association, 2016.