## Independent Study Course Syllabus

**Course Number:** EDUC 908  
**Course Title:** Improving Student Thinking

- **Online:** X Distance Learning

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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Nadine McFadden</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phone number:</td>
<td>440-238-9118</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:NMcFad98@aol.com">NMcFad98@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Contact Address: | 17536 Brandywine Drive  
Strongsville, OH 44136 |

| Units: | 3 |
| Grade Level: | 6-12 |

### Course Description

In order to maximize students’ potential a teacher needs to foster inquiry, which leads to knowledge and proficiency. It is imperative to help students manage learning situations that they will encounter in the real world. The overall goal of this course is to help modify current materials and instruction into elements that provide more elements of critical thinking. The intention is not to omit standard criterion-based questions and evaluation, but rather to incorporate higher-order thinking activities into what the instructor is doing at present. Information in this course is in alignment with the National Standards for the teaching profession that are available at [http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards](http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards).

### Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year to complete assignments. You have up to one year from the date of registration, and no less than three weeks (one week per credit), to complete the course.

### Course Materials

- Course binder - The binder contains all necessary materials, helpful information, and explanations of each assignment.
- Text – *Critical Thinking: Building the Basics* by Timothy L. Walter, Glenn M. Kundsvig, and Donald E.P. Smith. **Students are required to provide themselves with a copy of the text. If you prefer, you can access a website and purchase a used copy of the text.**
Course Requirements

- Compose questions that address the categories of comprehension, evaluation, and creativity. *These 2 activities comprise 20% of total grade.*
- Complete the Intellectual Process chart. *Comprises 10% of grade.*
- Create three lesson plans, on pertaining to each of the three strategies contained in the course text. *Comprises 30% of grade.*
- Create three activities that incorporate cognitive writing. *Comprises 10% of grade.*
- Design a rubric that evaluates thinking skills. *Comprises 10% of grade.*
- Review and report on five articles relating to improving student thinking. *Comprises 20% of grade.*
- Complete the course evaluation
- Contact time – Contact the instructor three times via e-mail during the work period:
  1. Upon initial receipt of the course material and inspection by the student.
  2. Halfway through the course, as a form of progress report. (The student will determine the halfway period.)
  3. Upon completion of the course and prior to submission of materials to the instructor.
     - Contact with the instructor is encouraged at any time.

National Content / Common Core Standards

- National Standards are available at [http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards](http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards). Standards addressed are:
  - III. Instructional Resources
  - V. Meaningful Learning
  - VII. Multiple Paths to Knowledge
  - IX. Assessment
  - X. Reflective Practice
- Additional information is provided regarding Standards in the pages following this syllabus.

Learning Objectives / Outcomes

- Define and apply higher-order thinking that address comprehension, evaluation, and creative questioning for use with students in content areas in the classroom.
- Apply aspects of intellectual competence through questions developed for student’s content areas.
- Research and analyze literature to develop strategies for ways to improve student thinking.
- Create critical thinking questions for classroom use.
- Review and synthesize critical thinking strategies.
- Compose and integrate written activities that incorporate critical thinking into lessons.
• Use methods from research to evaluate thinking skills used with classroom students.
Plan lessons using strategies for developing critical thinking

**Schedule of Topics and Assignments**
Work will be completed in chronological fashion as presented in course binder.

**Evidence of Learning**
- Course instructor will observe evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through student’s reflective writing assignments.
- Course instructor will observe evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through the accuracy of the information the student presents.
- Course instructor will observe evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through care of explanation of the work submitted.
- The student will demonstrate the application and integration of course content to student’s teaching area(s) by means of work submitted.

Grading rubric will be included with the course binder. Work of substandard quality (equivalent to a letter grade of C) will be returned to the student for completion or revision.

**Grading Policies and Rubrics**
Example:
250 total points possible
250 – 225 = A
224 – 200 = B or Credit Grade
Below 200 points = no credit

The discernment between an A or a B is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubrics). Coursework falling short of a quality equaling a B or a Credit Grade will be returned with further instructions.

All assignments must be completed in order to receive a grade. In addition, all assignments are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

**Grading Options**
Course participants have the option of requesting a letter grade or a credit/no credit when submitting the online grade form. Students will submit grade form when coursework has been completed. (Instructions will be provided for online grading by the instructor.)
Instructor/Student Contact
Contact the instructor three times via e-mail during the work period:
1. Upon initial receipt of the course material and inspection by the student.
2. Halfway through the course, as a form of progress report. (The student will determine the halfway period.)
3. Upon completion of the course and prior to submission of materials to the instructor.
   - Contact with the instructor is encouraged at any time.

References/Resources
Cotton, Kathleen, “Classroom Questioning”, North West Regional Educational Laboratory

Golub, Jeff, Activities to Promote Critical Thinking, National Council of Teachers, Urbana, Illinois 61801


Levine, Mel, Phd., Developing Minds, video, WGBH Ed., Boston, 2002


Rosenblum-Cale, Karen, Teaching Thinking Skills, National Education Association, article, reproduced with permission


“The Role of Questions in Teaching, Thinking, and Learning”
www.criticalthinking.org, Foundation for Critical Thinking, P O Box 220, Dillon Beach, CA, 94929

Final Course Grade and Transcripts
When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Center for Professional Development website (http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd) to “Submit Grade Form”. Once the instructor fills out the grade form online, students may log back in to request their Grade Report as well as order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information see the Independent Studies Policies and Procedures that were
sent to you when you received your course materials, or in your online course. They are available, also at [http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd](http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd) - under General Information > CPD Policies.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue. URL [http://www.fresno.edu](http://www.fresno.edu).

**CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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<th>CE 1.</th>
<th>Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.</th>
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<td>CE 2.</td>
<td>Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.</td>
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<td>CE 3.</td>
<td>Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.</td>
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<td>CE 4.</td>
<td>Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.</td>
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<td>CE 5.</td>
<td>Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.</td>
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<td>CE 6.</td>
<td>Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.</td>
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**FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

| **Student Learning Outcomes Oral Communication:** Students will exhibit clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically evaluate content and delivery components. |
| **Written Communication:** Students will demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others. |
| **Content Knowledge:** Students will demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts. |
| **Reflection:** Students will reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement. |
**Critical Thinking:** Students will apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to new situations.

**Moral Reasoning:** Students will identify and apply moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and articulate the norms and principles underlying a Christian world-view.

**Service:** Students will demonstrate service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.

**Cultural and Global Perspective:** Students will identify personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to evaluate complex systems.

**Quantitative Reasoning:** Students will accurately compute calculations and symbolic operations and explain their use in a field of study.

**Information Literacy:** Students will identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, explain how that information is organized, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.