

# Stepping UP

## Critical thinking for academic success

A two-hour, interactive workshop that will introduce your students to a range of critical thinking skills. These skills will help your students to become proactive learners rather than passive spectators both in and outside the classroom. Your students will be inspired and enlightened to use their cognitive skills in the pursuit of better academic outcomes.

### RATIONALE

Critical thinking has been the subject of much debate and thought since the time of early Greek philosophers. Critical thinking is defined as the cognitive skills of seeking, analysing, discriminating, logical reasoning, predicting, and transforming knowledge (Scheffer and Rubenfeld, 2000). Critical thinking is the basis for good academic and professional decision-making (Moore, 2007). Fundamentally, "Critical Thinking helps students develop competencies that will serve them throughout their lives". (Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, and Jones, 2000). In conversations with college leaders and heads of sixth form, we have heard that the lack of critical thinking in KS5 students has and continues to be, a primary concern. Today it is important that students learn critical thinking skills, so they can be both the inventors and critics of new information. The good news is that all students automatically perform some aspects of critical thinking. These skills can be improved upon, and students can ultimately master the skills that they naturally possess.

**"Critical Thinking helps students develop competencies that will serve them throughout their professional lives".**

*Dunlap, Van Liere, Mertig, and Jones. (2000)*

### OBJECTIVES

- To enhance creative thinking.
- To improve decision making.
- To enhance problem-solving abilities.
- To stimulate curiosity and improve note-taking.
- To reduce passivity and enhance active learning.

## SKILLS taught and their BENEFITS

**Creative thinking** improves focus and concentration and helps to reduce stress and anxiety. Creative thinking is multi-disciplinary, gives meaning to learning, promotes risk-taking and can lead to feelings of accomplishment and pride.

**Divergent thinking** is open and exploratory. It is good for solving problems and helps students to generate multiple approaches. Divergent thinking encourages students to think more deeply and let go of restrictions.

**The Cornell method** is an organised and systematic process for recording and reviewing notes. It is an interactive approach which is both simple and efficient, and ultimately more productive.

**Active reading** refers to a process of deliberately engaging with the ideas and information in a text and often transforming that information into notes or other artifacts that record one's understanding of and response to the text.

**Reflection** is a process in which students describe their learning, how it changed and how it might relate to future learning experiences. We share the reflection technique known as 'Win-Learn-Change', a powerful three-step model which can be applied across all subjects and disciplines.

**"It was very engaging and helped me self-reflect and understand areas of my thinking that I could develop".**

*Year 12 student – Holmleigh Park High School, Nov 2022.*

### OUTCOMES

By the end of the workshop, your students will have:

- Been inspired to use creative thinking.
- Felt empowered to make informed decisions.
- Grown the confidence to identify, capture and retain key pieces of information.
- Been encouraged to take an independent and proactive approach towards learning.
- Identified how to take notes in an efficient and effective manner.

**GATSBY Benchmarks: 3,6**  
**NERUPI Framework: Practise**  
**PSHE Core: Living in the wider world**

*Statutory Guidance, Curriculum and Frameworks*