



CAMBRIDGE

# Breaking the Readiness Myth

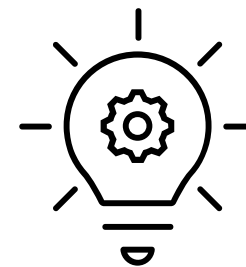
## Scaffolding Critical Thinking Across Levels and Disciplines

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Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

# Session Goals



Understand how critical thinking grows from beginner to advanced levels



Explore scaffolded strategies across subjects and learning abilities



Connect techniques to *your* real classroom context



Walk away with classroom-ready tools and adaptable activities

The mindset shift:  
Critical thinking is not reserved for top-tier students—it can and should be cultivated at every level.

- **Define critical thinking in your subject.**  
Jot your ideas on a post it. Then collaborate to find common threads.

### **Guiding Questions:**

What do your students already do that requires critical thought?

What makes it difficult to teach and assess?

*“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think,” Albert Einstein*

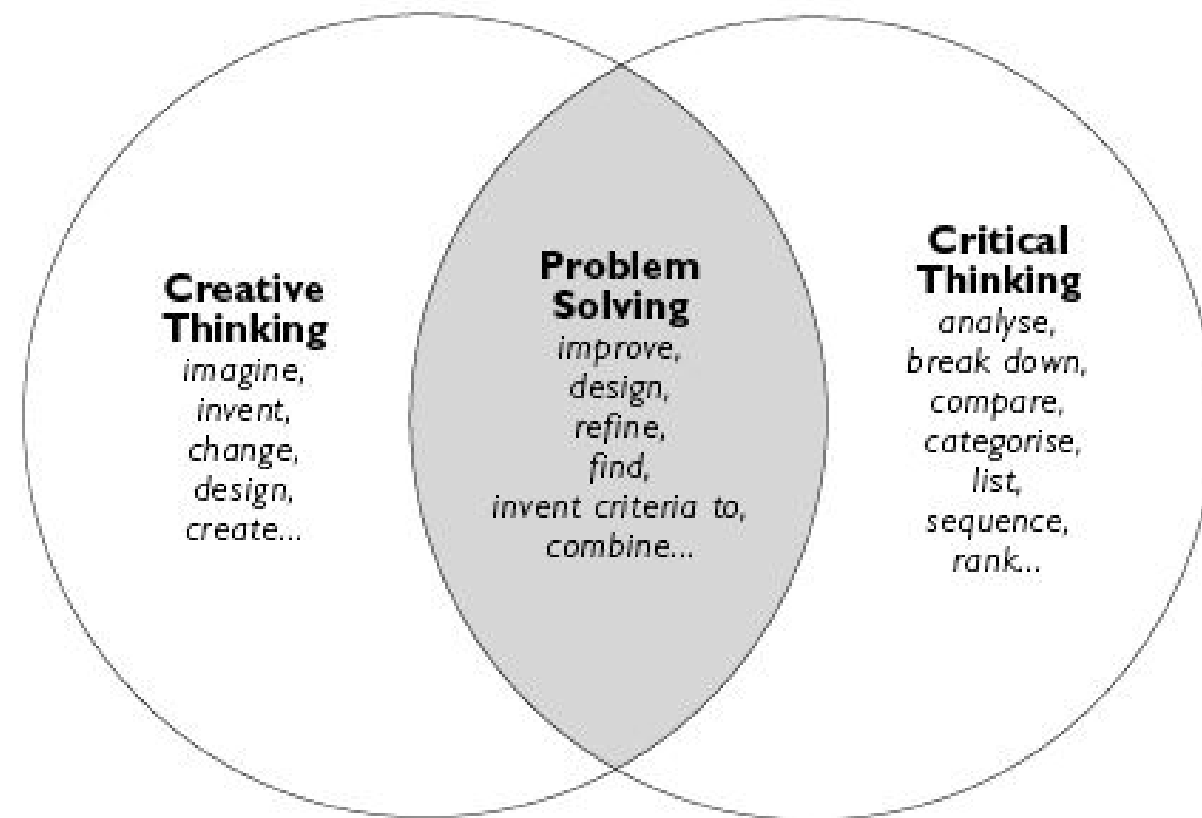
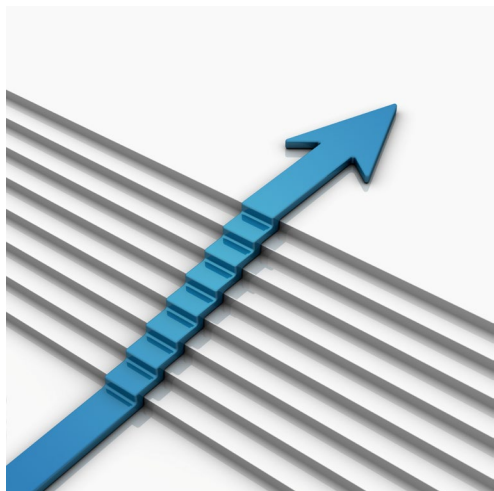
# Collaboration

- In small groups, cluster your post its on a large poster-sized sticky sheet and identify common themes
- Present 2-3 key terms or ideas identified

# What makes critical thinking difficult to teach?

## What Do These Terms Have in Common?

- Analyzing evidence
- Drawing conclusions
- Evaluating credibility
- Asking meaningful questions
- Recognizing assumptions



If these skills are shared, then we can build shared strategies for teaching them—regardless of subject or level.

Remember: These are teachable, not innate. We are not born with these abilities—they are grown over time.



# How Critical Thinking Develops Across Levels

**Instructions:** Each group will explore a case study for a specific subject area.

Each case includes tasks at 3 levels: Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced

1- Discuss how thinking evolves across these levels

*Think: What shifts in questioning, analysis, or reasoning happen at each level?*

2- Identify what scaffolding would be needed to move students up

## Sample: English General Paper 8021

Level	Task Description	Sample Student Response	Scaffolding Strategies to Reach Next Level
Introductory	Distinguish between fact and opinion in a news article.	"The article says that 'the government allocated \$5 million' — that's a fact. 'A waste of money' is opinion."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Model how to verify facts using trusted sources</li><li>• Provide guided practice classifying fact vs. opinion</li><li>• Use highlighters to color-code sample texts</li></ul>
Intermediate	Identify bias in an editorial piece.	"The author only quotes one side and uses charged phrases like 'reckless policy' — this suggests bias."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a bias checklist with questions (e.g., "Whose voice is missing?")</li><li>• Compare two opposing editorials</li><li>• Model "neutral" vs. "loaded" language</li></ul>
Advanced	Evaluate conflicting perspectives on a global issue.	"One article supports UBI using Finnish trials, while another warns it discourages work. Both are valid but incomplete without global evidence."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide structured comparison charts</li><li>• Use sentence frames for evaluative writing</li><li>• Guide students in sourcing global examples or counterpoints</li></ul>

# Four Ways to Scaffold Thinking

1

Socratic  
Questioning

2

Deconstructing  
Arguments

3

Case-Base  
Problem Solving

4

Metacognition &  
Self Reflection

## Instructions:

- Each table receives a handout with four strategies.
- As a group, choose **one** strategy and apply it to its scenario prompt.
- Spend 3–4 minutes discussing how the strategy supports thinking progression.
- Use the Reflection Grid to note key takeaways.
- Briefly share insights

# Reflection & Take Aways

- What worked? What will you use?
  - Which scaffolding strategy made critical thinking feel most accessible?
  - What surprised you about how your group approached the task?
  - Where in your own teaching could you use one of these strategies?




## Moving Forward: Action Planning

One lesson or unit where I will apply progressive scaffolding: \_\_\_\_\_

One thing I'll stop doing to make more space for student thinking: \_\_\_\_\_

One mindset shift I want to carry into next term: \_\_\_\_\_





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world**

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# Thank you!