



# THE QUEST FOR CRITICAL THINKING

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# Presenters

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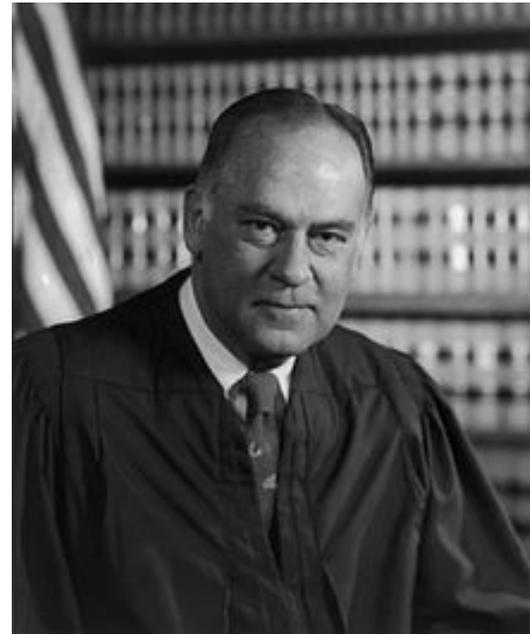


# What Is Critical Thinking?

- **From the Critical Thinking Community:** *Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.*
- **From John Dewey:** *Active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends.*
- **From Oxford Dictionaries:** *The objective analysis and evaluation of an issue in order to form a judgment.*

# Or Is It Better Seen Than Defined?

- Justice Potter Stewart on pornography: *I know it when I see it.*



# **‘High Impact Practices’**

**Educational practices that promote critical thinking (per Association of American Colleges and Universities and National Survey of Student Engagement) share these characteristics:**

- Demand considerable time and effort**
- Provide learning opportunities outside of the classroom**
- Require meaningful interactions with faculty members and students**
- Encourage interaction with diverse others**
- Provide frequent and meaningful feedback.**

# The Role of Writing



# Defending the Liberal Arts

- Cuts to programs / requirements
- Societal values (and college values)



# Science and Critical Thinking



# Trends That Worry Some Educators

- Larger class sizes
- Emphasis on speed to degree
- Emphasis on professional training
- Less than rigorous assignments
- Online education

# What If Employers Actually Care?

Results from 2013 AACU survey of employers:

- 93 percent say that “a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than undergraduate major.”
- 95 percent say they prioritize hiring graduates with skills that will contribute to innovation in workplace.
- 95 percent want those they hire to demonstrate ethical judgment and integrity; intercultural skills; and the capacity for continued new learning.
- More than 75 percent say they want more emphasis on five key areas including: critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings.

# But What If the Major Is Key?

*From Aspiring Adults Adrift:*

The probability of four-year college graduates who studied social sciences, humanities, science, math, and communication working an unskilled job hovered between 14 and 17 percent, but the probability for graduates who studied engineering and computer science was just 4 percent.

# How to Assess Success

- Why assessment matters
- Testing
- Portfolios
- Audits of curricular requirements, opportunities and participation

# Q & A

- Your questions
- Your suggestions for future coverage

**With Thanks**

