

## **Phil MacDonald**

Peter-Appreciated when you spoke about the student from the 90s that questioned your authority because it seems you accidentally walked in to critical thinking with the aid of someone else but my experience is sort of the opposite. I realized I was into critical thinking on my own before I started pursuing it.

Stanja - My wife is a teacher so talking about the need for critical thinking in schools really connected with me because it's a conversation I've often had with her.

Bill - Connected with your statement about preventive factors of critical thinking in organizations. I work in government and see a lot of road blocks to critical thinking. These might be quite different from the ones you would see in business but it would be neat compare the two.

David - Not so much a connection but I just really appreciated how varied your path to CCT was, going from painting and construction jobs into teaching and working with young kids. I hope I'm able to stay as open to career changes as that.

Amy - When you talked about the slow pace of change it made a lot of sense to me because I see that resistance to change (and levels of approval...) in government where I work as well.

Joey - Metacognition is something that I've noticed a lot in the first two CCT courses and you're right it seems very important to learning and to helping/understanding others.

Mare - My wife is a teacher and she just started teaching English for the first time... it's only week two but she's loving and finds it quite a change from the french/math she's done to date. I think she likes how engaged she is in the material (similar to you maybe when you taught philosophy).

Phil (myself) - my extension would be that I haven't done any courses recently because I was a parental leave with my family, doing a bit of travelling which was a really great chance to work on critical and creative thinking.

Stephan - I really appreciate that you want to lead (be on the cutting edge) of getting others to think critically. It is something I'd also really like to push from within governments.

Yami - I took Political Science in school (which is likely where my critical thinking really started to change) but I didn't realize that until you mentioned it.

## **peter**

Peter

formed at a specific time

think about other times (decades)

Stanja

C = shifting cultures, even if share English language

E = what is the role of expats and foreigners in opening up young people's thinking about differences among people & their ideas

Bill

C = In a program that dates back to 1980s push for teaching critical thinking + interest in obstacles

E = Factors that prevent innovation might be critical thinking (a/a conventional view that it's creative thinking)

david

C = Do others see what you present or not -- depends on their background

E = How does someone get to enjoy listening to what others are thinking/saying?

Amy

C = Change management incl. appreciate yet overcome resistance

E = Capture why people get into change & reflection at some point in their lives

Joey

C = Activist during undergrad days

E = In what senses/ways does World say don't think.

Mare

C = Asked to teach in areas you weren't trained in & finding you like teaching older students

E = Ask students to explicitly combine different parts of their background in a given project

Phil

C = Being expected to ask questions, having that role

E = Happens in relationship -> what kinds of relationship allow & foster Crit Th?

Stephan

C = Oscillation b/w exploring internally & external world; Moving fields of focus

E = We all want the same thing, but what are the resistances to seeing that?

Yami

C = came back to MA after time away (it's my second time after Australia)

E = C&CT as a way to improve legal practice

## **Joey Nguyen**

Peter-

Jumping into an unfamiliar field is not an easy thing, so I can understand that there is a high risk and "unknown" reward associated with it. The point about student challenging you was a great example of how people can react to the idea of why people can be resistant to different forms of thinking.

Stanja-

I think that there is a strong statement made about understanding not just the language of a community, but rather the culture as well, in order to best serve them

William-

I'm glad that you mentioned the idea of culture or environment preventing folks from engaging in critical thinking, because it implies that there are external factors that we might not even be so cognoscente of when we think about individuals who we believe to have the ability to think critically.

David-

Art definitely is the physical or metaphysical manifestation of the idea of critical thinking. When a piece of art is experienced, the interpretation of the art piece is the perspective of the individual interacting with the artist's intention...and sometimes not. That in itself is critical thinking in the most raw form.

Amy-

I feel like for your work, one of the hardest part about teaching/applying critical thinking is other parties accepting that they might be resisting a different perspective or another way of thinking. That tends to dive deeper in the psychology of folks, but it doesn't invalidate the fact that critical thinking is interdisciplinary.

Joey-

Critical thinking is like "a chicken or the egg" complex with myself. I couldn't develop my own identity and focus without learning critical thinking, and it was crucial to understand my own environment and circumstances to develop how I would think critically. They go hand in hand and only strengthens me as an individual

Philsara-

You made it an excellent point about critical thinking is beyond the application of professional or academic, but even in our daily lives. We have to think critically, and the impacts are both at the expense of our job/profession, or in our own personal lives.

Stephan-

The point on sustainability constantly requires critical thinking to solve the issues of sustainability, and how to make everyone jump on board. This point coincides with some others that I have already reflected on, but in his case, it could be more on a global scale.

Yamiley (Yami)-

I really appreciate the context that you provided when you talked about your background and upbringing. It may or may not apply to you, but if you want to see what literature that is out there for the topic of racial identity, the MID or Minority Identity Development theory is a great resource. There are many adaptations, so I just grabbed this one for you. It is broken down in stages.

[http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/staff/tlink/development/theme\\_identity\\_and\\_cohort/race\\_stages.html](http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/staff/tlink/development/theme_identity_and_cohort/race_stages.html)

## **Bill Haney**

Peter - The challenge is to get students you teach to think in a way that might be in contrary to the way that the professor might be teaching it. That is, to be confident enough to challenge even the professor's idea in class. How do you do that?

Stanja - "How to take the school into the next 30 years." Great phrase. In business the #1 desire of employers is to have new employees who are good critical thinkers. They belief is that it will be critical thinking that propels businesses into higher profits, better innovations, and better products/services. It is nice to hear that schools might be interested in that concept too.

David - "...I reveal myself and what I am thinking through a painting that I might be doing. And most of the time people can see that..." And now you have shifted into special education. I wonder how much you are able to reveal yourself in your teaching, especially in the public school system. How hard is that to do when curriculum and "individualized instruction plans" are used with kids. I don't know.

Amy - In a regulated industry like finance, how can employee TAKE CHANCES when they are rewarded for "being the same" (inside the box thinking). I would like to hear the techniques you use to do that. And maybe if you show the chances YOU take they will be empowered to take chances too.

Joey - You said, "...I need to understand my own self identity and how that shapes my thinking in able to understand how others might think and how we might disagree (meta-cognition)..." I think that is key to someone's own development in any profession, especially in higher education. To help another means you need to know yourself as much as possible first (or at least a willingness to know yourself). I wonder if the typical student WANTS to be developed? Or are they just there for 120 credit hours to get a degree. I'm not sure.

Mare - Wants to teach philosophy to children. I think that there are many more resources about critical thinking for children than for adults. I'm not sure why. I especially like the lessons on how the law (a case is presented and the students think it through) can be thought through by young people. And yes, I agree...teaching critical thinking has helped me to become a better critical thinker too.

Phil - I wonder how you can use the same methods you use to create music to make change more effectively (faster?) in government.

Stephan - Seems to me that there is some psychological connection between a "binding-type religion" that you once were a part of...and your current travels around the world (the freedom you now experience). The question I have is how you can use that new-found energy toward the pursuit of creativity and how we can relate to one another as humans. I don't know the answer to that, but seems to me that you have a LOT of energy to be funneled someplace.

Yami - I'm a bit confused about the direction you seem to want to go in. I think you want to go into law, at least that I what I think you said you want to go. Is that correct? Seems to me that "focus" is needed. I think this class will be good to help you think through and maybe make decision on a permanent direction? Not sure...up to you.

### **Stanja Seivright**

Peter. Connected with being in a hotbed situation and liked that. Would love to have deeper explanation on the birth of the concept of critical thinking.

Stanja. I may have needed to better explain why I feel the environment I am in could benefit from the application of critical thinking.

Bill. Like his concern for the lack of critical thinking and innovation in the culture of most businesses today.

David. Like his desire for looking deeper ,asking questions and probing for another way. I related to his enjoyment for teaching teenagers and being around children and how their thinking can motivate you.

Amy. I connect with her saying that it is tough to train people to think differently and I like that she says it is important to figure out how and why people resist. I like that she was more or less saying that change is not easy and this is most true when you apply it for yourself.

Joey. I would love Joey to expand on the ways CT has been crucial to his development.

Mare. I like that Mare wants to combine her learning and experience to date to improve children's learning.

Phil. I connect with him saying that it is helpful to see things from a different perspective. Particularly like the connection to music and the idea that we have to zoom in and out to not loose the overall concept.

Stefan. I connect with the education he has received through travel. I like the connection between sustainability and CT and then the combo of International Relations-represents diversity of thinking and I agree that this is an exciting potential.

Yami. I like that her experiences to date produced questions for her and that she made the conscious decision to change her college experience.

### **David Kooharian**

Peter Taylor. I connected with your idea of the importance of critical thinking. In many ways I feel that my whole life has been a process of critical and creative thinking.

Sangay. I connected with your role as an educator and the importance of critical thinking.

Bill. I liked the path that you have taken and it makes me feel better about choosing this program.

Amy, I liked how you are trying to apply critical thinking to your job.

Joey, I connected with your interest in critical thinking and education.

Mare, I really connected with your education past and your work with philosophy. Credentialing is a big issue for me as well.

Phil, I connected with your need for critical thinking in music and in work. It is important to see things from different angles.

Stephen, I loved your story. What a fascinating journey. I like how you are trying to connect sustainability to international relations through critical thinking.

Yami, I liked how you are heading into criminal law. We need smart people like you to make the system work.

### **Yamiley Sanon**

Professor Peter Taylor - he came into the US in the 1980s and came into Boston and has a PhD. Biology. He got into critical thinking within the 1990s and was intrigued at the questioning aspect of critical thinking.

We connected with interest questioning others and facts.

Sanja - from Jamaican living in the Bahamas

Has 2 children works with schools in mental development and increase the critical thinking in the students and faculty in school environment

multi-international

multilingual

She is Caribbean and so am I.

Bill lives in Atlanta,GA

Works at a University in GA as a professor teaching critical thinking

Has a passion for critical thinking to evolve critical thinking in different perspectives.

I have been to Atlanta several times I have family/friends that live there that's my connection

David lives in cape cod he is an artist

Changing career path and became a high school art teacher

got a teachers certificate, wants to learn more about critical thinking to engage with the teenagers and explore the mind in a more in depth context.

Amy - Quincy

Financial services - I also work in a call center with financial services

Problem solve - viewing from the outside looking and vice versa.

Help development the complexity of the issues and how it should be approached to fix it.

Joey - grow up in Dorchester lives in Quincy

Finishing Masters in Education

We both grew up in Massachusetts

Self Identity shapes thinking

Metacognition

Nurture vs. Nature

Mare living in Virginia and teaches six grade english and a part time teaching night time community college.

Changing career path to become a full time teacher at the community college.

I went to undergrad in Virginia

Phil is from Ukon in Canada

He works as a Cabin advisor at his job.

He is a musician similar to the industry

I have family in Montreal, Canada

Interested in critical thinking to improve his own and understanding other views

Stephen lives in Rome, Italy

He was a film maker and producer in LA

expand his knowledge in critical thinking

He was previously a Jahova witness

My interest in this course in particular is learning to evolve as a person and to learn from other people perspectives. I am from Massachusetts, I have a Bachelors in psychology. I plan on going to law school in the near future to pursue my career as a criminal defense lawyer. So I feel as though this course will be a platform for shaping my path into law.

### **Amy Seidl**

Peter Taylor: connected with the idea of wanting people to ask more questions and be open to alternative ideas. I see a lot of resistance to that in my work and it is often puzzling as people often aren't even open to discussion, let alone taking new action.

Stanja: I understand wanting to leverage critical thinking as part of strategic planning for the school. I've seen many instances where those responsible for strategic planning don't seem to consider alternative ideas or think about the best approach/order of implementing new processes.

Bill: agree with the need to understand what prevents people in business from being willing or able to consider new ideas, new products, new ways of doing things. I see that quite a bit and find it really interesting how much resistance there can be. I'm happy to discuss further and share experiences on the topic if interested.

David: Loved the comment about the science of art - with images, etc. rather than data. I found that to be a really intriguing concept and would love to hear more about that idea.

Joey: great point about the need to understand your own way of thinking in order to achieve your goals and understand how you can help both through work and as an activist. I think its really important to understand your own way of thinking before trying to help someone else with theirs.

Mare: Love the idea of leveraging critical thinking with the Intro to Philosophy course. And as someone also trying to make some career and life changes, I can empathize with you.

Phil: I can empathize with having to be the middleman between those putting projects forward and the ultimate decision makers. It can be a difficult position to have to educate or guide others when their thinking doesn't match what you believe might be a better option.

Stephan: While not nearly as well traveled as Stephan, I have found that the time I've spent abroad and the relationships I've made have had a big impact on how I think and how I interact with others. One of the best learning tools there is, in my opinion.

Yami: Loved that you made the choice to attend college with a different demographic than you grew up with so you could see the difference in how people think. Similar to how we can learn new things via travel and interacting with different cultures, you did a similar thing by changing the racial demographic. Would love to know more about the insight you gained from the experience.

### **Mare Ambrose**

Peter: I like what you said about thinking for yourself. That's what always concerned me about teaching young people; they were primarily interested in giving the right answer, doing what was expected. Of course that is what was expected, not only from them but from the teaching establishment. Of course that was in the old days. I think things have improved in recent years - at least I hope so. Students are now urged to think for themselves. But then again, unless they are given opportunities to do so, it is an empty invitation.

When I read an article in the text you recommended - Developing Minds- I was a bit put off by Richard Paul's attitude in his 2001 article "Dialogical and Dialectical Thinking." It seemed almost like an indictment of teachers. And perhaps this was true back in the 1990s. But I think now there is more awareness of the benefit of CT across the curriculum; at least there has been a lot of work toward integrating it into all school subjects. Not to say that it is now a widespread practice especially in the atmosphere of high stakes testing. But I think there have been many gains in that area.

Stanja: you realized that exposure to many cultures helps inform your ideas about CT. I'm glad that it will help you make significant changes in your children's school.

Bill: I understand your concern about credentialing in a field that is still relatively unknown or unrecognized especially in higher ed. I laughed when you said CT belongs to the psych guy. Hopefully that has changed as we become more aware of the need for critical thinking across the curriculum.

David: I like your perspective about art being about questioning whether it is the artist himself or the viewer. Also, I am glad you are able to integrate your interest and expertise in art with your work with teenagers.

Amy: it's really great that you can problem solve in an area like financial services which is typically not consider in the purview of CT. I'm not sure if you work directly with consumers, but many can really use the skills of CT to make very important decisions about their own financial state of affairs.

Joey: I think CT is essential for a role as a public university administrator.

Phil: I think it's hysterical that you are a government advisor while at the same time in a band making music. I think the music feeds your soul, but it did seem from your introduction that you also enjoy your work in the cabinet department. The CT that is required for each is what connects the two seemingly incongruous things.

Stephan: It is almost like you were born again into CT from a life of protective custody. Your life so far has been a journey, literally, and in the sense that you see the value of critical thinking in transforming the way we look at sustainability, in particular, and the future of the planet in general.

Yami: I'm sure the courses in philosophy and ethics helped you realize how important CT is to the interpretation of the law.

### **Stephan McGuire**

I like that Peter was inspired by politics and anti war sentiment. I would like to hear more about these motivations.

Stanja - Wonderful. I would like to hear more about how her thinking was actually working... The passions and motivations from her time growing up in Jamaica and how these transpired in her adult years enough to actually want to TEACH.

Bill - I want to hear more of who he is... What drives him.. Not the dry academic outline... but more about what HE thinks Critical Thinking is and why it is important... Why he has dedicated his life to it.

i.e. WHO ARE YOU WILLIAM?

David - I want to hear more about what exactly he wants to do in the future. what will he do with this degree in the field that he is working in? What does he want to achieve now?

Amy - More about what she envisions how critical thinking will enable her to benefit others. How does she feel she will serve in this more advanced capacity?

Joey - Similar to the above. I wan to hear more about future aspirations. What will he do with his new degree? Where will he go? What does he want to do?

Mare - Really near perfect introduction. I feel I know her already. She is lovely.

I want to hear more about how Critical Thinking is involved in recording music. Its not immediately obvious to me so I am curious. I am sure there are many facets as to how it is directly related... from the actual music composition to promotion... But I want to know.

Yami - Wonderful. I want to know more about what you want to do in the future with your Masters degree. How will CCT be involved in your future career focus?

### **Shawna Flaherty**

Peter Taylor- You mentioned that a previous student had questioned as to why you would question previously learned knowledge and facts. I am currently a Director of a Head Start preschool program and in the past few years we have changed our philosophy on curriculum to be much more open ended and student driven. It has been extremely difficult to get staff to even be open to the idea of thinking and planning differently. I can connect with this idea, as I know how difficult it can be to encourage people to try to be open minded.

Stanja- You discussed working for a school that wanted you to 'change for the bigger picture' and a better future. I am also in the education field and can relate to your experience. In the last few years, there has been a huge shift in Early Childhood Education and focusing on teaching how to think critically.

I am quite intrigued by your experience in working in school that are multinational. I can imagine that would be such a rewarding experience.

Bill- I find it fascinating to hear about how 'Critical Thinking' really extends to various types of workplaces. It is fairly new in Early Childhood, which is the field that I am in. I am currently struggling with how to encourage my staff to be more open to teaching/learning in this type of way. It isn't something that can be shown or mandated, it is certainly something to be learned through practice.

David- I really connected with your statement that 'everything you do encourages you to think critically'. I feel as though this is one of the reasons that I was drawn to this program as well. This being my first course, I was very interested because, like yourself, I do like to look at things from all sides and understand them deeper.

I think it is really cool that you got into teaching! I am in the Education field and I can agree that it is very stimulating and rewarding. You mentioned that you now teach Special Education? Do you ever do 'Art Therapy' with your students?

Amy- I connected with YOUR connection to Bill, in that people do not like to change their way of thinking. Currently, at my agency we have a lot of new employees, however, we also have many people who have been here for a very long time. They have developed the nickname of "Veteran Teachers" and seem to have gotten a negative rep because they are so resistant to changes. However, what interested me in this course and program was to try and learn new ways to inspire others to think this way and to be more reflective.

Joey- I am also in the Education field, so of course I connected with you on this. I agree with you completely that it is crucial to a person's development and also equally important for an educator to possess this quality.

VERY good point that people 'clutch their opinions as facts.' Mare- I really related to your experience with finding a love for philosophy. I took my first course in philosophy while pursuing my BA degree and I wasn't too sure about it. However, after completing the course, I was so intrigued by it and really wanted to learn more!

I can also relate to your role as an educator, that students need to learn how to think for themselves and coming up with their own ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

Stephen- I really enjoyed listening to your autobiography! It seems like you have a lot of really great real world experiences that hopefully you are open to sharing with the class! I agree that Critical Thinking is definitely something that is not explored enough!

This is also my first class at UMass Boston in this major as well!

Yamiley- First and foremost I related to you in that we both are the first of our siblings to get a college degree! Nice job! :) However, I also agree with you on the point that it will be very interesting to hear different perspectives from other people! It seems like we already have a great diverse group in our class!

I agree with you that this course will certainly help with your future plans to work in law.