

**Teaching Higher Level Critical Thinking Skills in an Online Occupation-based Theory Course**

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Critical thinking, defined as the ability to analyze and evaluate (Dee Fink, 2003), is an important concept in higher education and central to occupational therapy education. Teaching critical thinking requires a creative and thoughtful course design that provides students the opportunity to process information beyond acquisition of knowledge to making inferences, questioning, challenging assumptions, and critiquing ideas (Paul & Elder, 2006). This skill development is further complicated when using innovative teaching platforms such as online learning. The Foundations of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy course, the occupation-based theory course, was designed using a critical thinking model that promotes concepts and tools of critical thinking. These concepts were used to evaluate the progression of "thinkers" from the unreflective thinker to the beginning thinker, the level expected of a first semester occupational therapy student.

The objective of this poster is to present the design of an online occupational therapy theory course that fosters higher level critical thinking based on the Paul and Elder (2006) Critical Thinking model. The online course was designed around seven learning activities that were repeated with each theory and progressed from a summary description of the theory through self application, application to real and contrived cases, critiquing the theory in literature, arguing the theory, and engaging in a scholarly discourse of the theory. The culmination of the course was comparing and contrasting theories. The concepts selected from the Paul and Elder model to measure critical thinking included intellectual standards (clarity, precision, accuracy, logical breadth and depth), elements of reasoning (purposes, inferences, questioning, points of view, implications, assumptions), and intellectual traits (confidence in reasoning, courage, humility). Evaluation of the course design included a student focus group, student rating of perception of critical thinking instruction, and a grading rubric for the seven learning activities that rated the key concepts of the model. Occupational therapy education must continue to focus on critical thinking skill development as teaching platforms evolve technologically.

This poster will be presented in Spanish along with English/Spanish translated materials for distribution (theory course design document, description of learning activities, and evaluation tools).