DEPLOYMENT OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING STUDENTS´ CRITICAL THINKING AT UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS, PRAGUE

E. Jarošová, H. Lorencová, T. Králová

University of Economics, Prague (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Abstract

Research study has been stimulated by a participation of the authors in the CRITHINKEDU project (Critical Thinking across the European Higher Education Curricula), funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Programme. One of the project’s aims is to support higher education institutions in fostering students´ critical thinking (CT) during their university studies.

The poster presents initiatives aiming students’ critical thinking development within three courses offered by Managerial Psychology and Sociology Department at the University of Economics, Prague. In these three courses (namely Organizational Behavior, Managerial Psychology, and Leadership) immersion approach has been implemented. Immersion approach integrates CT in subject-matter instruction without making general CT principles explicit, although instruction is thought-provoking (Ennis, 1985).

Data were collected via survey questionnaire with open-ended questions in the three mentioned courses in 2018 (N=103). The survey results reveal that student respondents understand as vehicles for developing their CT teaching activities of all four categories of Abrami’s et al. (2015) typology: self-learning, dialogue/discussion, authentic or anchored instruction and mentoring. On the other hand, respondents have difficulties in linking these teaching activities with specific aspects of CT, i.e. CT skills or CT dispositions. Content analysis of their answers shows that student respondents have only a very general idea of critical thinking. These results suggest a desirable direction for further development of critical thinking support in these courses. The point is to change the overall strategy from the existing immersion approach to infusion, in which CT remains integrated in subject-matter instruction, but general principles of CT are made explicit as well.

This change also entails the need to incorporate critical thinking into the learning outcomes and into the formative assessment tools used throughout the course. In general, our analysis indicates some weaknesses of immersion approach, which still remains the prevailing CT instructional strategy in European higher education institutions (Dominguez et al., 2018).

Keywords: Critical thinking, critical thinking skills and dispositions, University students, teaching activities.