

Introduction to module:

## **THOUGHT – Critical & Creative Thinking**

Module “*THOUGHT – Critical & Creative Thinking*” is focusing on easy adaptable methodology for developing critical and creative thinking in ethical education. In the world of contemporary global society where information is numerous and readily available, the problem is no longer - how to find an information but *how to understand it and put it in a worldview context and ethical value*. So, the focus of this model is how to think, to be precise – how to think quality, not what to think. For that we need critical and creative thinking!

Even though critical and creative thinking can be distinct from one another, their connection and mutuality cannot be separate in thinking process.

“Some proponents of the dichotomy between critical thinking and creative thinking accept the idea that both critical and creative thinking are necessary to all complex thought, but maintain that they are distinct and take place at different stages of the thinking process. An individual first researches a problem in a logical, analytical way (critical thinking), then suspends critical judgement and generates large numbers of ideas (creative thinking), then reactivates critical judgement to evaluate the proposed solutions (critical thinking).” (Nigel Blake, Paul Smeyers, Richard Smith & Paul Standish (eds.), 2003 p.187). In this quote, we can see what is creative and what is critical thinking and how we can use these two dimensions of thinking in one thinking process.

Developing critical thinking, we develop the creative thinking. While critical thinking will lead us to doubt, questioning and process of finding a problem, the creative thinking will enable us to see the problem from different angles in order to find the most suitable solution for the problem.

Without these two dimensions of thinking we cannot tackle with ethical dilemmas, social and individual questions or embars ourselves in decision making process in our everyday life.

In this webinar we will present different methods and educational materials that stimulate natural curiosity and accustom students towards critical and creative thinking which will lead them towards developing their own opinion.

In last 50 years’ educators, psychologists and philosophers start to discuss about critical thinking. Of course, they discuss about critical thinking before, but not with this intensity. From pre-socratic philosophers, Socrates, St. Tomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon to John Dewey philosophers discuss about critical thinking. Like Alec Fisher claim; »In fact, people have been thinking about 'critical thinking' and have been researching how to teach it for about a hundred years. In a way, Socrates began this approach to learning over 2,000 years ago, but John Dewey, the American philosopher, psychologist and educator, is widely regarded as the 'father' of the modern critical thinking tradition. « John Dewey is some kind turning point for researching of critical thinking. Dewey discuss about reflective thinking, this is what we today call critical thinking. He argues that main aim of the school is to teach students how to think, not what to think. Lot of different scholars after Dewey start to research critical thinking.

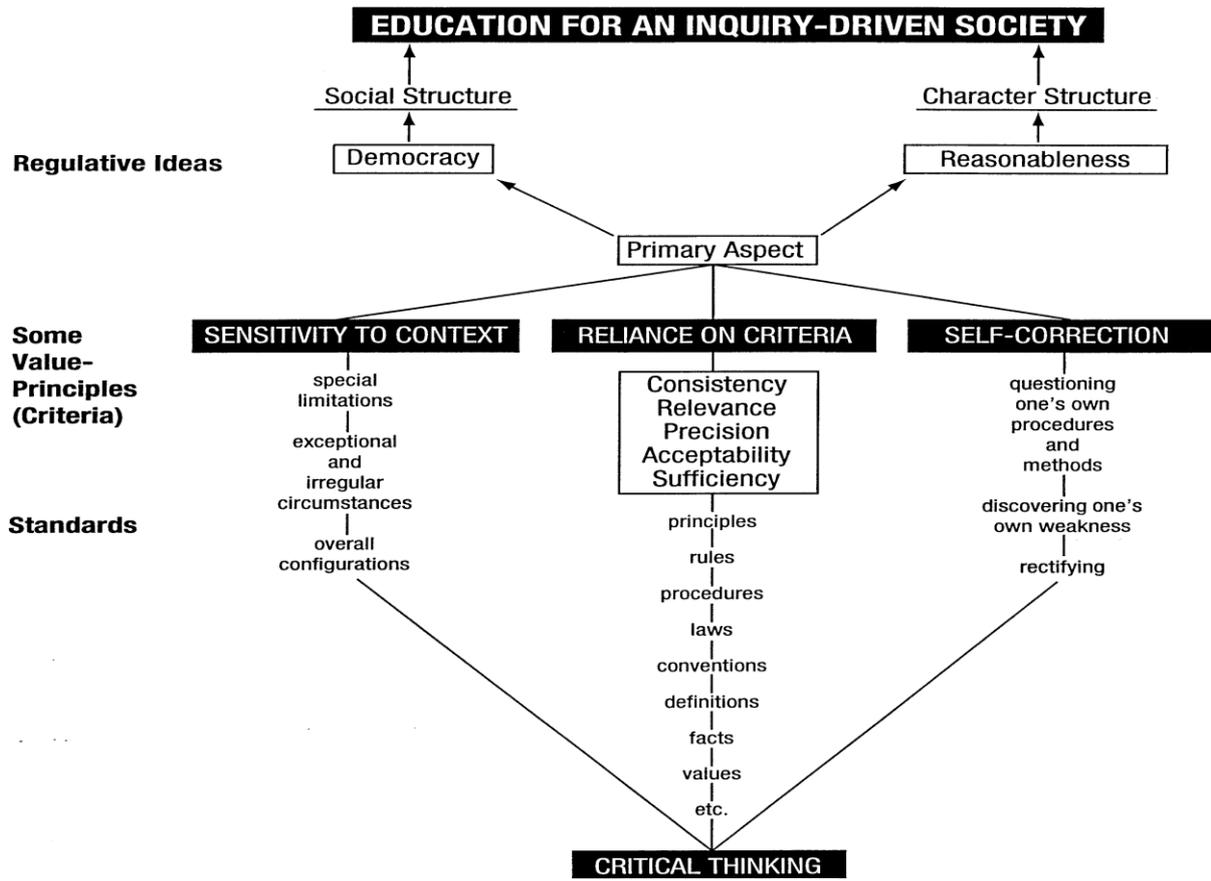
Now that learning critical thinking has reappeared as an important issue as the purpose of education, we have to think back on what critical thinking is and look for the origins of critical thinking among a variety of thinkers. Recent literature offers many definitions of critical thinking. Some of the crucial aspects of critical thinking are present in Richard Paul and Linda Elder's definition: "Critical thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content, or problem – in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them" (Paul and Elder, 2002).

With critical thinking, that is, a light version of philosophy, we improve the quality of our thinking and thought processes. Critical thinking allows us to view things and events in and around our lives from all sides and find solutions to our problems more easily. The only rules that can be true for critical thinking are the rules of formal and informal logic. In all periods of human history, critical thinking was a desirable human trait. Naturally, thinking critically can be dangerous sometimes, if we remember Socrates and how he had to drink poison to carry out his own death sentence.

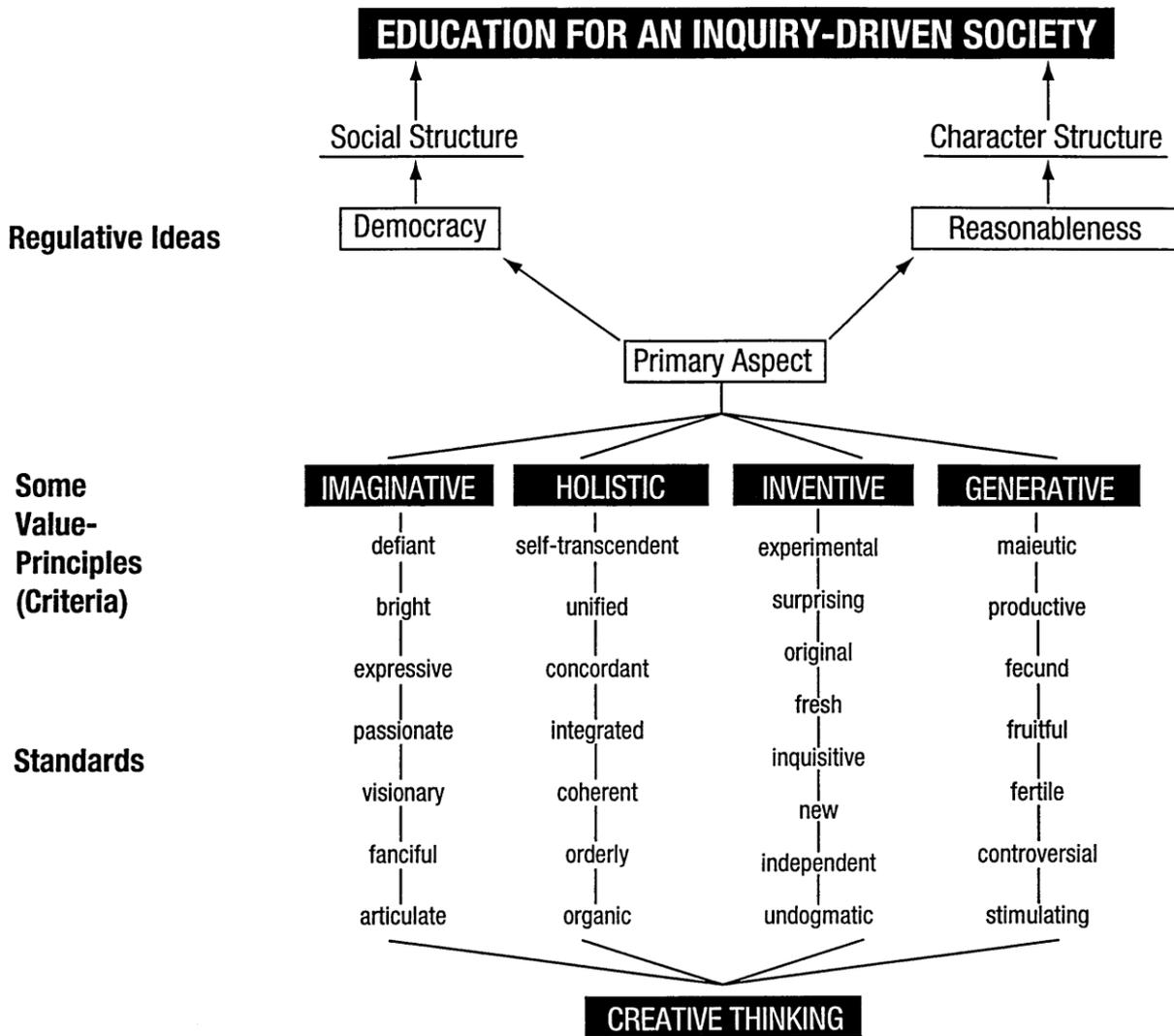
Critical thinking does not hold any concrete values or principles that could be imposed by teaching critical thinking. It is a way of thinking that avoids emotional content and arbitrary principles. Critical thinking needs to be impartial and has to rely on common sense and consistent argumentation, according to the rules of formal and informal logic, as mentioned before. The need to practice critical thinking in modern-day society has become stronger due to the fact that we are permanently exposed to different means of manipulation. Along with standard manipulation, such as, political and economic, there is media manipulation that has reached every segment of our lives. In part, media manipulation is so obvious that it does not even call for critical thinking. However, critical thinking is an exceptionally adequate tool for uncovering media manipulation on a larger scale. It encourages people to think about the messages received on a daily basis from the media and, by doing so, notices how people are being manipulated by the media.

One of the Dewey continuator is Mathew Lipman, grandfather of Philosophy for children. He starts to talk about multidimensional thinking: critical, creative and caring thinking. (In the 3th part of webinar "Creative thinking" you can find his explanation about creative thinking).

Basically, Lipman describes critical thinking with this tables:



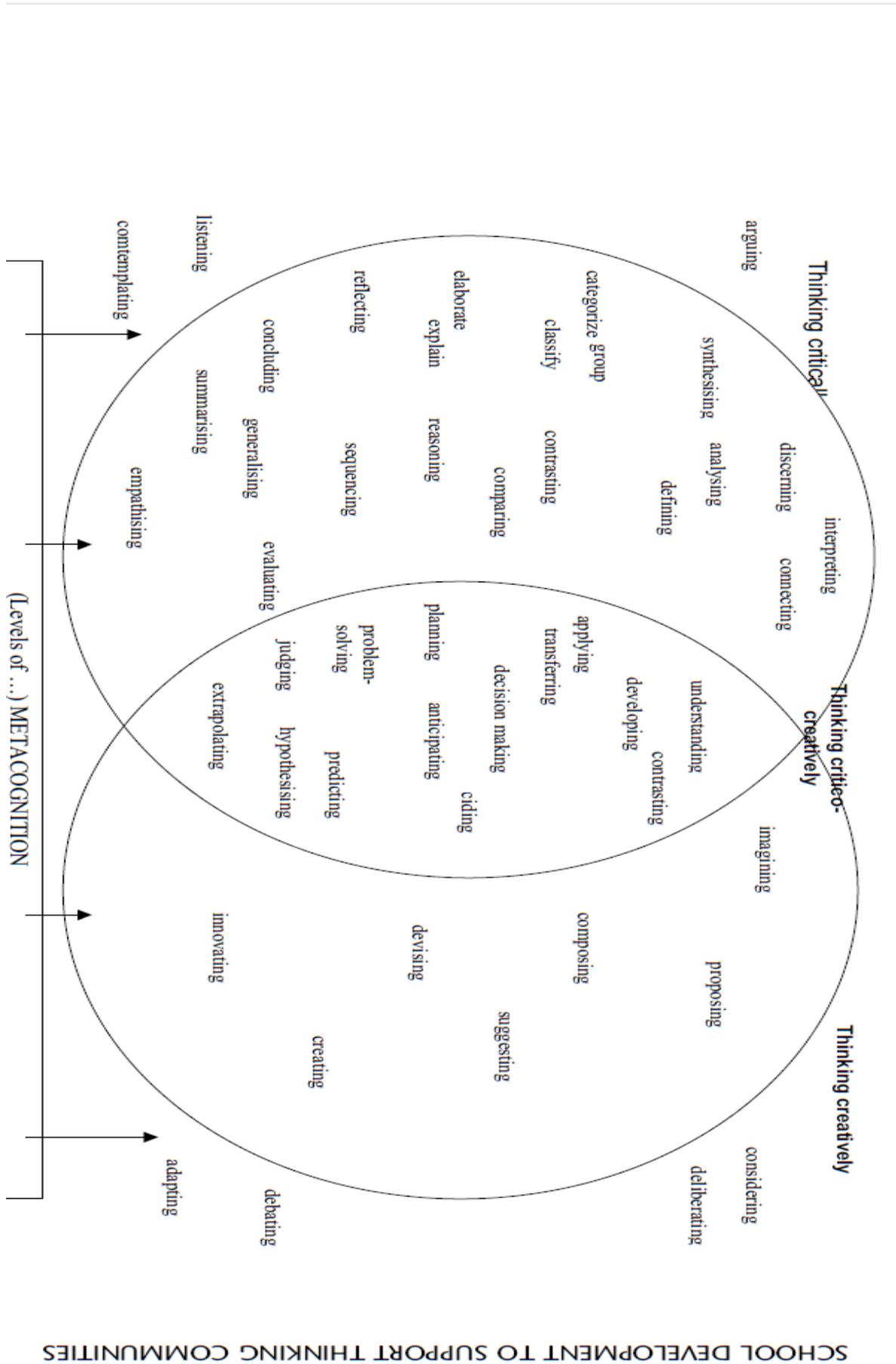
In similar way Lipman describes Creative thinking:



From these two pictures, you can see the differences between critical and creative thinking. But, like you can see, critical and creative thinking are connected. Maybe the best presentation of this connection we can find in Debra McGregor diagrams. In her Venn diagram, you can see what critical and creative thinking have common, what concepts they share, what concepts connecting critical and creative thinking: understanding, contrasting, developing, applying, transferring, decision making, ciding, anticipating, planning, problem solving, predicting, judging, hypothesizing and extrapolating (concepts that are together in the common middle circle. On the left, critical thinking side (circle) you can see concept that are strongly connected with critical thinking: interpreting, connecting, discerning, analyzing, synthesizing, defining, categorize, classify, contrasting, comparing, elaborate, explain,

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reasoning, reflecting, sequencing, concluding, generalizing, summarizing and empathizing. Concepts that are out of circles in the side of critical thinking are: arguing, listening and contemplating – these are concepts that we need to know how to do to have critical thinking. In the right circle, part with concept strongly connected with Creative thinking you can find: imagining, proposing, composing, suggesting, devising, creating and innovating. Also, there are concepts outside of circle that represent what you need to do for creative thinking are: considering, deliberating, debating and adapting.



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Hope this help you to understand what is critical and creative thinking. In the other parts of webinar (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> ) you will get more information about critical and creative thinking, but also you can see how workshops for developing critical and creative thinking looks like with detail instructions how to implement.