CRITICAL THINKING STYLES OF INTERNATIONAL FACULTY

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Purpose

■ Enhancing Teaching and Student Learning
■ 5-day intensive professional development training for faculty
■ King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
■ Separate Female and Male Groups
■ Seminar Topics included:
  - Creating a Course that Meets Student Needs: Start with the End in Mind
  - Inquiry-based Learning, Motivating and Engaging Students
  - *Improving Student Learning (Participants engaged in Critical Thinking, UFCTI )
  - Utilizing a Problem Solving Approach
  - 21st Century Teaching, Mentoring Faculty
Overview

■ Students need skills in the content area, in reasoning, in problem-solving, and in thinking.
■ Faculty need an understanding of the importance of those skills.
■ Critical thinking skills can be assessed as a “style” – not a right or wrong way to think. (Lamm & Irani, 2011)
■ Faculty critical thinking style may influence teaching style.
■ Students must be directed to higher levels of cognition. (Whittington, 1995)
■ Instructors must address critical thinking. (Whittington, 1991)
■ An important first step – faculty knowing their own critical thinking style.
Related Research

- Previous work focused on student critical thinking and relationships with teaching strategies and attributes

- Teachers can influence their students’ critical thinking
  - Burbach, et al., 2012

- Agriculture instructors need to provide critical thinking opportunities
  - Burbach, et al., 2012

- Educators need to be aware of critical thinking attributes
  - Lamm, et al., 2012
Critical Thinking – Reasonable and reflective thinking that is purposeful and goal directed (Lamm & Irani, 2011)

UF Critical Thinking Inventory (UFCTI)
- Developed and validated by researchers at University of Florida
- Identifies Critical Thinking style via a 20-item inventory
- Continuum: Seekers ↔ Engagers

Seekers: high tendency to seek information, open to others’ opinions, consistently looking for new knowledge

Engagers: anticipate situations needing good reasoning, confident in reasoning, problem-solving and decision-making skills
Methods

- UFCTI instrument administered to faculty at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
  - Participants in faculty development workshops (self-selected)
  - Administered separately to female and male faculty
- 22 females and 39 males completed the inventory
- Results tabulated utilizing UFCTI guidelines
- Possible score range: 26 – 130
- Seekers: score of 78.4 and lower
- Engagers: score of 78.5 and higher
Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SEEKER</th>
<th>ENGAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Possible score range: 26 – 130
**Seekers:** score of 78.4 and lower
**Engagers:** score of 78.5 and higher
Findings

- Female faculty (n = 22)
  - Average slight tendency toward seeking style
  - Range of scores: 73.8 – 89.7
  - 64% (n = 14) indicated a Seeking style; 36% (n = 8) indicated an Engaging style

- Male faculty (n = 39)
  - Average slight tendency toward engaging style
  - Range of scores: 66.6 – 90.9
  - 54% (n = 21) indicated an Engaging style; 46% (n = 18) indicated a Seeking style

*Note: Possible score range: 26 – 130

- **Seekers:** score of 78.4 and lower
- **Engagers:** score of 78.5 and higher
Conclusions, Recommendations, and Implications

- Female and Male faculty groups were similar in their CT styles
- Overall mean scores for each group were near the dividing line between Seeking and Engaging
- Male faculty scores were more varied than female faculty scores
- The UFCTI should be utilized more broadly in the U.S. and in international settings
- U.S. educators should be aware of potentially different CT styles among faculty as they engage in international activities
- More information is needed for relationships among faculty CT style, student CT style, and teaching strategies
Questions?

Thank you!

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