



BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

Teacher Education Department

3rd European Summit of Critical Thinking for Education

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



11–13 October 2026

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Preamble

The 3rd European Summit of Critical Thinking for Education, hosted by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE) through its Teacher Education Department between 11 and 13 October 2026, brings together researchers, educators, doctoral students and practitioners from Europe and the United States who share a commitment to cultivating critical thinking in higher education and adult learning.

The Summit builds on the results of three Erasmus+ projects in which ASE has been a partner: CRITHINKEDU – Critical Thinking Across European Higher Education Curricula (2016–2019), THINK4JOBS – Critical Thinking for Successful Jobs (2020–2023), and MIND – Critical Theory in Adult Education Practice: Empowerment for Critical Actions (2023–2025). Together, these projects have produced a shared understanding of how critical thinking can be taught, assessed and connected to the demands of the labour market and of democratic life.

This edition pays particular attention to the challenges and opportunities that artificial intelligence assistants bring to teaching and learning. The contributions gathered in this volume address, among other topics, cognitive autonomy in AI-mediated environments, the role of philosophy and argumentation in developing AI literacy, metacognitive competence, assessment in technology-enhanced learning, critical thinking in public policy and professional banking education, and reflective practice in university language teaching.

We thank all authors, keynote speakers, workshop leaders and members of the Scientific Committee for their contributions, and we hope that this Book of Abstracts will serve as a useful record of the Summit and as a starting point for further collaboration.

The Organizing Committee

Scientific Committee

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Conference Programme

Sunday, 11 October 2026

19.00 **Gala Concert**
Romanian Athenaeum

Monday, 12 October 2026

Aula Magna, Piața Romană no. 6

09.00 **Registration**

09.30 – 10.00 **Opening address**

10.00 – 11.00 **Keynote speech: John Casey and Scott Aikin**
Critical Thinking: The Triumph and the Tragedy
Q&A

11.00 **Coffee break**

11.40 – 12.20 **Keynote speech: Laurențiu Gheorghe**
Embodied Critical Thinking
Q&A

12.20 – 13.00 **Keynote speech: Paula Tomi**
The Myth of the Unbiased Thinker: An Epistemic View of Critical Thinking
Q&A

13.00 **Lunch**

14.00 – 15.30 **Workshops and practical courses**

Beyond the Illusion of De-biasing: Practicing Critical Thinking in Higher Education
Trainer: Paula Tomi · Room Virgil Madgearu, ground floor

Critical Thinking Made Fun: Hands-On Learning Methods
Trainers: Daniela Dumitru & Mihaela Minciu · Room Periodice, first floor

15.30 – 16.30 **Paper presentation session**

Session chair: Dominic-Ștefan Georgescu, PhD · Room Virgil Madgearu, ground floor

Braving New Assessment Strategies in Technology-Enhanced Learning Environments for Lasting Education

Elena Railean, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chișinău, Republic of Moldova

Developing Critical Thinking Tools for Public Policy Students

Dragoș Bigu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

From Socratic Questioning to AI Literacy: The Role of Philosophy in Developing Critical Thinking in Higher Education

Diana-Georgiana Ghinea, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

Tuesday, 13 October 2026

Aula Magna, Piața Romană no. 6

09.30 – 10.10	Keynote speech: Dragoș Iliescu <i>Borrowed Psychometrics: An Audit of Adaptation Evidence in the Global Measurement of Critical Thinking</i> Q&A
10.10 – 10.50	Keynote speech: Daiva Penkauskienė <i>Who Teaches Critical Thinking at University, and How?</i> Q&A
10.50	Coffee break
11.20 – 12.00	Discussant panel. Presenter: Antonella Poce <i>AI and Critical Thinking for Higher Education</i> Commentators: Radu Uszkai and Mihail Valentin Cernea
12.00 – 13.00	Paper presentation session Session chair: Radu Uszkai, PhD · Aula Magna Cognitive Autonomy in the Universities of the Future from the Perspective of Cosmist and Transhumanist Thinkers <i>Denis Chiriac, Moldova State University, Republic of Moldova</i> Strengthening Critical Thinking and Argumentation in Professional Banking Education: A MIND-Based Approach in the Era of AI Assistants <i>Eliza Vaseliu (Ionică), University of Bucharest, Romania</i> Critical Thinking Under Uncertainty in Higher Education: Toward an Affective–Epistemic Framework for Learning with AI Assistants <i>Ana Voichița Tebeanu, Teodora Daniela Chicioreanu, Nicoleta Litoiu, National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Romania</i>
13.00	Lunch
14.00 – 15.30	Workshops and practical courses Critical Thinking by Design: Practical Steps for AI-Aware Learning Activities <i>Trainer: Lai Jiang, Institute of Tropical Medicine / KU Leuven · Room Periodice, first floor</i>
14.00 – 15.00	Paper presentation session Session chair: Mihail Valentin Cernea, PhD · Room Virgil Madgearu, ground floor Developing Critical Thinking through Reflective Practice in Scenario-based EAP and Research <i>Loreta Zavadskienė, Vilnius University, Lithuania</i> Metacognitive Competence in Educational Contexts <i>Gabriela-Florina Nicoară, University of Bucharest, Romania</i> AI Assistants and Critical Thinking in Accounting Education: Opportunities, Risks and a Framework for Responsible Use <i>Luminița-Mihaela Dumitrașcu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania</i>

Keynote Speeches

Critical Thinking: The Triumph and the Tragedy

John CASEY

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, USA

Scott AIKIN

Vanderbilt University, Nashville, USA

ABSTRACT

In this talk we comment on the mixed fortunes of the Critical Thinking Program in philosophy departments in the United States. This is most clearly seen by analogy with Ethics, another normative and applied discipline with a large presence in undergraduate philosophy curricula. Unlike Ethics, however, there are few highly ranked (by H-Index) journals in Critical Thinking, few Philosophy departments even offer advanced undergraduate courses, and there are few prospects for employment for specialists in Critical Thinking. The problem, we argue, stems from the peculiar challenges of thinking about our thinking. We offer some suggestions for a way forward.

Embodied Critical Thinking

Laurențiu GHEORGHE

University of Bucharest, Romania

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Laurențiu Gheorghe is Lecturer and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Bucharest, where he teaches political philosophy, philosophy of law and anthropology. His research interests include political and moral philosophy, Romanian political culture and institutions, and conflict analysis. He is also active in public cultural dialogue, as a radio and television contributor on philosophical topics.

Borrowed Psychometrics: An Audit of Adaptation Evidence in the Global Measurement of Critical Thinking

Dragoş ILIESCU

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is a declared outcome of education systems worldwide, yet its measurement rests on a small set of instruments developed in English, in North America: the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory, the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, and a few others. These instruments now circulate in dozens of languages. Previous reviews have asked which instruments dominate the field and how good they are. We ask a different question: on what evidence do their non-English versions rest? We present an audit of published non-English uses of the major critical thinking instruments. Coding proceeds on two levels. Adaptation studies are coded against the Test Adaptation Reporting Standards (TARES) and the ITC Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests. Studies that simply use a translated version are coded for the provenance of their psychometric claims: whether reliability was estimated in the sample at hand, taken from an earlier local study, or induced from the original manual; whether any evidence of measurement invariance is offered; and whether scores are interpreted against local or source-country norms. On this basis we estimate reliability induction rates by instrument, language, and period, and we trace the citation chains through which a single early validation study comes to underwrite decades of subsequent use. A reliability generalization meta-analysis, with language version as moderator, compares locally estimated coefficients with the values borrowed from test manuals. The results bear on a simple question: how much of the global assessment of critical thinking runs on borrowed psychometrics? We discuss the consequences for the cumulative evidence base, where meta-analyses of interventions routinely pool scores across language versions, and propose minimal reporting requirements for studies using translated instruments.

Who Teaches Critical Thinking at University, and How?

Daiva PENKAUSKIENĖ

Modern Didactics Center; Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking (further – CT) is widely recognized as one of the core missions of higher education and an essential competence for navigating an increasingly complex, information-rich world. Universities consistently present CT as a strategic goal, yet important questions remain regarding how it is taught, learned, and assessed.

Research demonstrates that CT can be effectively developed through active learning, dialogue, problem-solving, reflection, and authentic learning tasks. Meta-analyses show that purposeful instruction has a significant positive impact on students' abilities to make reasoned judgments and reflect on their own thinking. At the same time, the competence of university teachers is one of the strongest predictors of successful CT development among students. Teachers foster CT not only through instructional design but also by modelling inquiry, reflection, and intellectual openness.

However, several challenges remain. Evidence suggests that CT is often developed implicitly rather than as an explicit and systematically planned educational objective. Both teachers and students frequently describe experiences that support CT, yet neither group typically perceives it as a consciously structured pedagogical process. Furthermore, university teachers rarely receive specialised training in CT and tend to practise professional dialogue, self-directed learning and reflection.

Research also reveals a persistent paradox: while teachers value CT and claim to foster it, they often encounter difficulties in assessing whether students genuinely demonstrate CT skills. Assessment tends to focus on final products rather than thinking processes, and the use of validated assessment instruments remains limited. Consequently, relatively little is known about the long-term sustainability of CT outcomes beyond graduation.

The presentation argues that universities must move beyond promoting CT as an institutional aspiration and embrace it as a visible, systematic, and shared educational practice. This requires educators to continuously examine their own teaching, make their thinking processes explicit, and actively cultivate communities committed to inquiry, reflection, truth-seeking, and responsible action.

KEYWORDS *higher education mission; university teachers; development of critical thinking*

AI and Critical Thinking for Higher Education. From Cognitive Offloading to Human–AI Critical Engagement

Antonella POCE

University of Rome Tor Vergata, Italy

ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into higher education is challenging universities to reconsider how students learn and what it means to think critically in AI-mediated environments. While GenAI can provide feedback, generate alternative perspectives and support problem-solving, improved task performance does not necessarily correspond to deeper understanding, independent judgement or transferable critical-thinking skills. The distinction between AI-assisted performance and actual learning therefore represents a central pedagogical challenge.

This paper proposes a human-centred approach in which AI is conceptualized not as a substitute for cognitive effort but as an epistemic interlocutor supporting questioning, comparison, verification, argumentation and reflection. Critical thinking is reframed as the capacity to engage deliberately with human- and machine-generated knowledge by evaluating evidence, identifying assumptions and bias, comparing alternative explanations, verifying information and making reasoned judgements.

Building on research on AI in higher education, AI literacy and the AI Assessment Scale (AIAS), the paper proposes a Human–AI Critical Learning Cycle: Human First → AI Dialogue → Compare → Verify → Revise → Reflect and Disclose → Demonstrate. Students first formulate an independent response, then use AI to explore alternatives and counterarguments, compare and verify outputs, revise their reasoning, explicitly reflect on their interaction with AI, and finally demonstrate the acquired competence independently.

The framework also has implications for assessment. Rather than evaluating only AI-supported products, universities should assess the process of critical engagement and distinguish between baseline competence, AI-supported performance and independent transfer. This allows educators to differentiate a performance gain produced by AI from a genuine learning gain and to identify potential dependency on AI support.

The educational question should therefore move beyond whether students should use AI to consider which cognitive activities may be delegated to AI, which should be scaffolded through AI, and which must remain demonstrably human. The ultimate goal is not to produce students who generate better answers with AI, but graduates who can question AI-generated outputs, evaluate their reliability, justify their decisions and demonstrate independent critical thinking.

Human–AI Critical Learning Cycle

Human First → AI Dialogue → Compare → Verify → Revise → Reflect and Disclose → Demonstrate

KEYWORDS: *Generative Artificial Intelligence; Critical Thinking; Higher Education; AI Literacy; Assessment; Human–AI Interaction; AIAS; Metacognition.*

The Myth of the Unbiased Thinker: An Epistemic View of Critical Thinking

Paula TOMI

National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the theoretical limits of cognitive objectivity, arguing that the ideal of the fully ‘unbiased thinker’ is an epistemic impossibility. Grounded in the analytic tradition's critique of the God's Eye View, the main aim of the study is to demonstrate that all reasoning is inevitably situated within prior conceptual schemes and background beliefs, in a word, within a perspective.

To bridge this epistemological premise with the practice of critical thinking, the analysis shifts focus to the process of de-biasing itself. It outlines how, while de-biasing can systematically reduce cognitive distortion, it remains a process that can never reach absolute neutrality.

The paper does not aim to redefine critical thinking or objectivity; rather, it affirms their traditional goals while establishing a clear epistemic limit to the de-biasing process. The analysis also explores the practical consequences of this intrinsic limit, arguing that attempts to engineer a fully ‘unbiased construct’ are conceptually flawed.

KEYWORDS *bias, de-biasing, perspectivism, critical thinking*

Abstracts

Developing Critical Thinking Tools for Public Policy Students

Dragoş BÎGU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

Public policy decisions are made in complex, high-stakes environments where flawed reasoning can lead to costly and far-reaching consequences. This paper argues that critical thinking is not merely an academic skill but an essential professional competency for public policy students. Drawing on Dunn's (2012) work on policy argumentation and public discourse and Kraft and Furlong's (2018) framework for evaluating policy alternatives and questioning analysts' assumptions, the paper examines five core areas where critical thinking tools directly enhance policy analysis: causal reasoning, which helps distinguish correlation from causation when evaluating policy interventions; source and evidence evaluation, crucial for assessing conflicting data and politically motivated research; awareness of cognitive biases, such as confirmation bias and groupthink; probabilistic and risk-based thinking, necessary for decision-making under uncertainty; and the process of defining key policy terms, essential for avoiding conceptual confusion and ensuring shared understanding among stakeholders. Rather than treating critical thinking as an abstract philosophical exercise, this paper positions it as a practical toolkit that public policy students can apply throughout their careers—from drafting proposals to evaluating implementation results. The paper concludes with recommendations for integrating critical thinking instruction more explicitly into public policy curricula.

Cognitive Autonomy in the Universities of the Future from the Perspective of Cosmist and Transhumanist Thinkers

Denis CHIRIAC

Moldova State University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

ABSTRACT

The accelerated integration of artificial intelligence assistants into higher education reopens a fundamental anthropological debate regarding the future of cognitive autonomy and the learning process. This paper proposes a comparative analysis between the perspectives of reference thinkers in Russian cosmism (Fedorov, Vernadsky, Florensky) and contemporary transhumanism (Bostrom, More, Sorgner) on redefining the mission of the university of the future. On one hand, the cosmist perspective warns that outsourcing reason to a predictive algorithm does not expand consciousness but mechanizes it, transforming the living Noosphere into a syntactic simulacrum. On the other hand, the transhumanist discourse celebrates AI assistants as optimization prostheses, redefining cognitive autonomy as an emergent property of a hybrid human-machine network, where the student partially delegates reflective effort to achieve exponential augmentation. The confrontation between these theoretical camps highlights a central pedagogical paradox: while cosmism reclaims the necessity of

inner effort and critical sobriety (*trezvie*) as existential imperatives, transhumanism views AI utilization as a liberation from the burden of linear processing. Through this conceptual mapping, the research provides today's university with an essential analytical tool to decide whether the future of academic didactics belongs to an assumed cosmic responsibility or to algorithmic subservience.

KEYWORDS *Cognitive autonomy, universities of the future, AI assistants, Russian cosmism, transhumanism, Noosphere*

AI Assistants and Critical Thinking in Accounting Education: Opportunities, Risks and a Framework for Responsible Use

Luminița-Mihaela DUMITRAȘCU

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The rapid diffusion of generative artificial intelligence is reshaping higher education, yet its implications for the development of critical thinking in accounting education remain insufficiently theorized. While AI assistants can provide personalized explanations, generate alternative solutions and support formative learning, their capacity to produce plausible, but inaccurate outputs may also encourage cognitive offloading, weaken independent reasoning, and create new challenges for accounting judgement and academic integrity. This paper addresses this tension by examining how AI assistants can be integrated into accounting education, without displacing the cognitive processes that underpin critical and professional judgement. A structured scoping review of the emerging literature on artificial intelligence in education, accounting education, critical thinking and responsible AI use is undertaken to identify recurrent opportunities, risks, pedagogical mechanisms and conditions associated with AI-supported learning. The findings are synthesized thematically and used to develop a conceptual framework for responsible AI-assisted critical thinking in accounting education. The framework is intended to integrate the roles of AI literacy, accounting domain knowledge, evidence verification, critical evaluation and independent professional judgement, subject to the patterns identified in the reviewed literature. The study contributes to the emerging literature by synthesising insights on GenAI, critical thinking and accounting-specific professional judgement into a conceptual framework for responsible AI use in accounting education. The resulting propositions provide a basis for future empirical research examining the conditions under which AI-supported learning can complement, rather than substitute for, students' independent reasoning.

KEYWORDS *critical thinking; professional judgement; generative artificial intelligence; accounting education*

From Socratic Questioning to AI Literacy: The Role of Philosophy in Developing Critical Thinking in Higher Education

Diana-Georgiana GHINEA

Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence into higher education has transformed the ways in which students search for information, write academic texts, solve problems, and make decisions. While AI assistants may support learning by providing immediate feedback, explanations, and personalized content, their widespread use also creates significant educational challenges. Students may accept plausible but inaccurate answers, reproduce biased assumptions, rely on AI-generated arguments without verification, or gradually transfer intellectual responsibility to automated systems. In this context, critical thinking cannot be reduced to a set of technical skills for checking information; it must also involve intellectual autonomy, reflective judgement, ethical responsibility, and the capacity to question the assumptions underlying both human and machine-generated claims.

This paper examines the role of philosophy in developing these dimensions of critical thinking in higher education. Drawing on the Socratic tradition of questioning, informal logic, argumentation theory, epistemology, and ethics, the paper argues that philosophical education can provide students with conceptual tools for engaging critically and responsibly with AI-generated content. Philosophy encourages learners to distinguish between assertion and justification, evidence and opinion, coherence and truth, persuasion and valid reasoning. It also invites them to ask fundamental questions about knowledge, authority, bias, agency, and responsibility in AI-mediated learning environments.

The paper proposes an educational framework in which philosophical inquiry complements AI literacy. Through activities such as reconstructing AI-generated arguments, identifying hidden premises, evaluating the credibility of sources, comparing alternative answers, detecting fallacies, and discussing ethical dilemmas, students can develop a more active and reflective relationship with AI tools. Rather than treating AI either as a threat to academic integrity or as a neutral instrument of efficiency, the proposed approach frames it as an opportunity to practice judgement.

The paper concludes that philosophy has a renewed and practical role in contemporary education: it can help students become not only competent users of AI, but also autonomous, ethically aware, and critically responsible participants in a technologically mediated society.

KEYWORDS *critical thinking; philosophy education; artificial intelligence; AI literacy; higher education; argumentation; intellectual autonomy; ethics*

Metacognitive Competence in Educational Contexts

Gabriela-Florina NICOARĂ

University of Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

Societal evolution has resulted in a professional environment markedly different from previous norms, with technology now executing a substantial portion of formerly human roles. Consequently, human capital must continually adapt, and the cultivation of transversal competencies is crucial for individuals to navigate change and maintain meaningful, productive lives (Rubene et al., 2024). One of the skills that has been relatively overlooked in recent educational discourse and may provide a stabilizing foundation for future professional endeavors is metacognitive skill. This skill is recognized as a transversal competence (O'Neill et al., 2026) and becomes a valuable target for educational programs, with the potential to significantly impact learning (Gutierrez de Blume, 2022).

The present study seeks to examine the scientific literature to define and explain the concept of metacognitive competence from an educational perspective. Accordingly, it addresses the research question: How is metacognitive competence explained within the educational context?

The approach adopted is qualitative, employing a scoping review design to investigate the concept of metacognitive competence. A search of the Web of Science database was conducted using a specific search string. Subsequently, using the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria yielded a corpus of 21 articles. These articles were analyzed using a pre-established algorithm. The data collected during the analysis were coded inductively, leading to the identification of subcategories and categories that elucidate the concept of metacognitive competence. Furthermore, a conceptual model of metacognitive competence was framed. It has four main components and facilitates explaining what this competence is.

The results of this study may prove useful in future educational research. Moreover, it offers a practical model that can improve educator design capacity and enhance student learning, while targeting a learning outcome with high potential impact.

Braving New Assessment Strategies in Technology-Enhanced Learning Environments for Lasting Education

Elena RAILEAN

Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Chişinău, Republic of Moldova

ABSTRACT

Although standardized paper-and-pencil tests have demonstrated good affordability for checking and evaluating knowledge and practical skills, digital technology opens the door for new assessment, measurement, and testing strategies. In this opinion paper, we adopt the educational meta-systemology perspective to emphasize the need for novel assessment strategies for technology-learner-centered learning environments and distinguish them from testing strategies in teacher-centered learning environments. Innovative assessment strategies are represented as learning strategies that are associated with variables of lasting education (i.e., capacity to self-regulate learning, reflective thinking, insight, curiosity, and action). The article describes thinking beyond traditional standardized intelligence testing and shows the need for and the specific features of metacognitive assessment strategies following global trends: assessment of learning, assessment as learning, and assessment for learning. It asks what is representationally new about digital assessment strategies the role of interest and curiosity in the technology of inclusive learning environments, and on this basis, how emergent assessment strategies might be the foundation for lasting education.

Critical Thinking Under Uncertainty in Higher Education: Toward an Affective–Epistemic Framework for Learning with AI Assistants

Ana Voichița TEBEANU

Teodora Daniela CHICIOREANU

Nicoleta LITOIU

National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is widely recognised as a central outcome of higher education, yet current discussions increasingly focus on whether AI assistants strengthen or weaken students' critical-thinking skills. This conceptual paper proposes a different starting point: critical thinking may depend not only on cognitive competence, but also on students' capacity to remain engaged when knowledge is incomplete, ambiguous, or contested. Drawing on an integrative synthesis of literature on critical thinking, intolerance of uncertainty, need for cognitive closure, epistemic vigilance, and metacognitive regulation, we propose an affective–epistemic framework for understanding critical-thinking enactment in AI-supported learning. The framework distinguishes between critical-thinking competence and its actual deployment under conditions of epistemic uncertainty. We argue that AI assistants may operate in two contrasting ways: by promoting premature epistemic closure through rapid, fluent, and apparently confident answers, or by sustaining productive uncertainty through counterarguments, alternative explanations, source evaluation, and explicit examination of assumptions. AI is therefore conceptualised not simply as a cognitive tool, but as a potential regulator of epistemic uncertainty. The framework offers implications for designing higher-education learning activities that support sustained inquiry, epistemic vigilance, and appropriately calibrated judgment.

KEYWORDS *critical thinking; higher education; epistemic uncertainty; cognitive closure; artificial intelligence*

Strengthening Critical Thinking and Argumentation in Professional Banking Education: A MIND-Based Approach in the Era of AI Assistants

Eliza VASELIU (IONICĂ)

Doctoral School of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Bucharest, Romania

ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistants in the financial sector has transformed professional practices, making critical thinking (CT) and robust argumentation more essential than ever for banking professionals. Grounded in the theoretical framework of the MIND project (Critical Theory in Adult Education Practice), this ongoing PhD research investigates how CT and argumentation manifest in the educational and professional discourse of the banking system. While AI tools can streamline operations and training, they also necessitate a higher level of cognitive vigilance to mitigate biases and ensure transparent, responsible decision-making.

Adopting a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm, this study employs a mixed-methods design. The qualitative phase involves a multiple case study to analyze banking educational discourse, focusing on how cognitive biases (System 1 vs. System 2 thinking) are managed when arguing complex financial products. The quantitative phase aims to assess employees' CT competencies using tools adapted for the financial context, such as the Iterative Argumentation Task (IAT) and Think4Jobs instruments. As a first-year doctoral progress milestone, a conceptual framework has been consolidated, and a prototype evaluation tool based on professional scenarios has been developed.

Ultimately, this research will design and test a pilot educational intervention aimed at strengthening CT among adult learners in the banking sector. By aligning with the conference themes of employability and adult-education practice, this study provides actionable insights into modernizing professional training curricula, empowering financial educators and practitioners to leverage AI assistants critically and responsibly.

KEYWORDS *Critical Thinking, Adult Education, Banking System, Argumentation, Employability, Artificial Intelligence*

Developing Critical Thinking through Reflective Practice in Scenario-based EAP and Research

Loreta ZAVADSKIENĖ

Vilnius University, Lithuania

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking is increasingly recognised as essential for university graduates navigating professional and civic environments shaped by economic, technological, political, and social change (Council of the European Union, 2018; OECD, 2022). In what Barnett (2000, 2012) conceptualises as an age of supercomplexity and an “unknown future”, higher education faces the challenge of preparing students to engage thoughtfully with uncertainty, competing perspectives, and changing frames of understanding. This raises the question of how university foreign language education can create meaningful conditions for developing critical thinking and reflective practice alongside advanced academic language competence. The aim of this presentation is to reveal how a scenario-based university course, English for Academic Purposes and Research (C1), creates opportunities for developing students’ critical thinking and reflective practice. The course integrates task-based and action-oriented approaches, engaging learners as social agents in purposeful activities embedded in a semester-long scenario (Piccardo & North, 2019). Acting as young entrepreneurs developing a start-up, students engage in scholarly source analysis, evaluation of business ideas and alternative solutions, case studies, market research, research proposal writing and peer review, collaborative decision-making, and research communication. Critical thinking and reflective practice are viewed as closely interconnected rather than parallel processes. Ennis (2015) conceptualises critical thinking as reasonable reflective thinking directed towards deciding what to believe or do. Reflective practice extends this reflective dimension through iterative engagement with experience, dialogue, feedback, and subsequent action (Farrell, 2022). The presentation argues that scenario-based task- and action-oriented learning creates opportunities for an iterative movement through inquiry, judgement, action, reflection, and reconsidered judgement/action. Such learning can connect advanced language competence with students’ capacity to make and revisit reasoned decisions in complex academic, professional, economic, political, and social contexts.

KEYWORDS *critical thinking; reflective practice; action-oriented approach; scenario-based learning; English for Academic Purposes and Research*

Workshops

Critical Thinking Made Fun: Hands-On Learning Methods

Daniela DUMITRU

Mihaela MINCIU

Teacher Education Department, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This workshop invites participants to experience, rather than merely discuss, a set of playful, game-based methods for developing critical thinking in higher and adult education. It draws on Module 5, “Value of Critical Thinking for a Society: Culture and Power”, of the MIND Erasmus+ training programme (Critical Theory in Adult Education Practice).

The session opens with two evocation activities. Participants first pick a DIY fortune cookie, a low-stakes prompt that elicits spontaneous associations. They then consult a magnetic pendulum “decision maker” and reflect on how everyday decisions are actually made: by chance, by intuition, or by deliberate reasoning. This induction moment is later revisited through Kahneman’s distinction between fast, intuitive System 1 and slow, analytical System 2 thinking.

In the main phase, participants analyse a real public controversy, a contemporary mural on the wall of a school in Riga, by reading in roles (artist, parent, art expert, city council representative), building arguments from each perspective, and taking a personal stance through “voting by feet”. The session ends with a free-writing reflection on how the playful format shaped their own judgements, and on how these methods can be transferred to their own teaching.

KEYWORDS *critical thinking; game-based learning; decision-making; dual-process theory; adult education*

Beyond the Illusion of De-biasing: Practicing Critical Thinking in Higher Education

Paula TOMI

National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Romania

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Despite the fact that critical thinking is widely understood as a core objective of higher education, many perspectives treat biases as a mere operational error that can be neatly eliminated. However, from an epistemological perspective, complete de-biasing is an impossibility: all our knowledge is strongly linked to conceptual frameworks, including implicit assumptions. Rather than pursuing an unachievable ideal of absolute neutrality, educators must learn to identify, anticipate, and constructively navigate these perspective-bound limitations.

This workshop invites educators to step into the role of epistemic observers. Participants will analyse how different biases can shape different academic settings. Through text-based problem solving and real-time debate analysis, participants will experience how subtle fallacies and biases can emerge under argumentation pressure.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Uncover implicit assumptions and perspective-bound biases operating across individual, disciplinary, and institutional levels.
- Design inquiry-based tasks to reveal the limits of students' conceptual frameworks.
- Detect argumentation fallacies and framing shortcuts as they happen in real-time academic discussions.
- Formulate non-leading, reflexive questions for student discussions that test reasoning without signalling a single 'correct' answer.