

Critical Thinking as Curriculum: Designing Schools for Independent Minds

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Abstract: *Critical thinking has emerged as a fundamental competency for 21st-century education, yet its integration into school curricula remains fragmented and inconsistent. This review examines the theoretical foundations, pedagogical approaches, and implementation challenges of designing educational systems that prioritize critical thinking as a core curriculum component. Through analysis of contemporary research and educational frameworks, this paper argues for a systematic approach to curriculum redesign that positions critical thinking not merely as an additional skill but as the foundational framework through which all learning occurs. The findings suggest that successful implementation requires comprehensive teacher preparation, institutional support, and assessment methodologies that align with critical thinking objectives. This paper contributes to the discourse on educational reform by providing a roadmap for institutions seeking to cultivate independent, analytical minds capable of navigating an increasingly complex global landscape*

Keywords: critical thinking, curriculum design, educational reform, 21st-century skills, independent learning