



College and career readiness are the latest educational buzzwords, but what do they mean and how do they apply to ALL teachers? The idea of focusing on college readiness in the K-5 setting may seem daunting or even inappropriate, but through engaging students in critical thinking activities, all students and teachers can begin to climb the ladder to a successful post-secondary life. Colleges and businesses have stated time and again that students are not prepared for graduating with the necessary critical thinking abilities (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014).

Be **READY to support student success by including critical thinking into your instruction.**

- In a time of high stakes multiple choice testing, how do we, as k-12 teachers, find the time to integrate true critical thinking into our already tight pacing guides? But more importantly, how can we not find the time? Our students and parents trust and depend on us to provide a solid foundation for life after k-12 education. Being cognizant about including critical thinking into our daily routine is the first step in the right direction.

Get **SET to build critical thinking skills into your teaching repertoire.**

- Edward deBono's PMI model is one method that can be easily incorporated into the classroom. This is a brainstorming model based on the categories of plus, minus, and interesting. Check out Todd Finley's *Student Engagement* blogpost, [Three Steps to Critical Thinking](#) for teaching scenarios and implementation ideas of the PMI approach.
- This sounds great but I don't have the time. Sound familiar? Learn how to teach critical thinking skills by infusing questioning strategies. The video, [Training Teachers to Teach Critical Thinking](#) will model how to ask the right questions.
- Brainstorming is a great simple strategy to get you started on your critical thinking journey. Check out the article, [Critical Thinking Toolbox: How to Brainstorm](#), to help you facilitate the perfect brainstorm session in your classroom.

For more information, ideas, resources, and tools, **GO to:**

- [The Foundation for Critical Thinking](#), affiliated with Sonoma State University in northern California, conducts advanced research and disseminates information on critical thinking.

- [“Critical and Creative Thinking”](#) discusses critical thinking habits and critical thinking skills.
- [A Quick Guide to 21st Century Critical Thinking Skills for Educators.](#)
- Teacher Leadership: Critical Thinking: [A Necessary Skill in the Age of Spin.](#)
- Educational Technology and Mobile Learning: [25 Ways to Develop 21st Century Thinkers](#)

References

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). *Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education.

Finley, Todd. (2012). [Three steps to critical thinking](#). *Edutopia*. Retrieved from

This news brief is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education Training and Technical Assistance Centers at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff of the VDOE TTAC at James Madison University. For questions about content, please contact Cherish Skinker at skinkecr@jmu.edu, Kandy Grant at grantkb@jmu.edu, or John McNaught at mcnaugjt@jmu.edu, or call 540.568.6746.