**Week 1 Assignment**

**Tonya Estes**

**a.**Write a brief summary answering the question, “What is critical thinking?” As you write your summary, you may wish to return to any or all of the resources above as needed.

I appreciated Richard Paul’s introduction at the conference, when he said the critical thinking allows us to (and I paraphrase):

Purposefully interfacing with our thinking – bringing our habits, thoughts, assumptions, perspectives out in the open.

I’m always looking for the most succinct way to describe something, before really diving in. So, I will leave this as a starter definition.

**b.**Write a brief summary answering the question, “How is the conception of critical thinking presented here different from conceptions of critical thinking that I have previously encountered?”

The biggest differences that strike me about the Paul-Elder framework is its thoroughness, practicality, and inclusion of virtues.

There is no other framework that is as thorough – and it seems that the framework continues to expand.

My favorite part of their framework is the intent to be practical. Because I teach so many disciplines and work with other instructors across our campus, I appreciate how they make it applicable to any discipline and allow for each discipline to explore thinking within its own context.

Finally, most other frameworks ignore the virtues. In my experience, virtues/traits are essential for personal and academic development, and critical thinking is a life-long developmental practice in becoming more virtuous.

**c.**Write briefly about how you can begin to apply this module’s content to your daily life.

Although I have been learning about the Paul-Elder framework for a few years now, I haven’t really explored the 3 purposes of thought: thinking, feelings, desires/wanting. I like to take concepts new to me and swish them around as I move through the day. Applying them to my life helps the concepts stick.

**d.**Write a little about yourself: your name, title, school or professional affiliation, your motivation for taking this course, and what you hope to learn in it. We want to be on a first-name basis throughout the course.

Greetings!

My name is Tonya (Tah-nyah). I am a full professor at Bellevue College in Bellevue, Washington. My field is Adult Basic Education, including Teaching to Speakers of Other Languages and high school completion. I have been teaching literature, composition, math, science, social studies, basic computer skills, and more for over 30 years.

For the past 6 years, I was the Chair of our Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Center at my college. Critical thinking is one of the topics I championed and have learned a great deal about, especially working with my colleagues from across the campus. I’m currently on sabbatical and will be going to back to the classroom this fall. One of my goals for taking this course is to consider ways to intentionally embed critical thinking throughout our ABE program, to help our traditionally underserved build their critical thinking skills for both their personal and academic development.