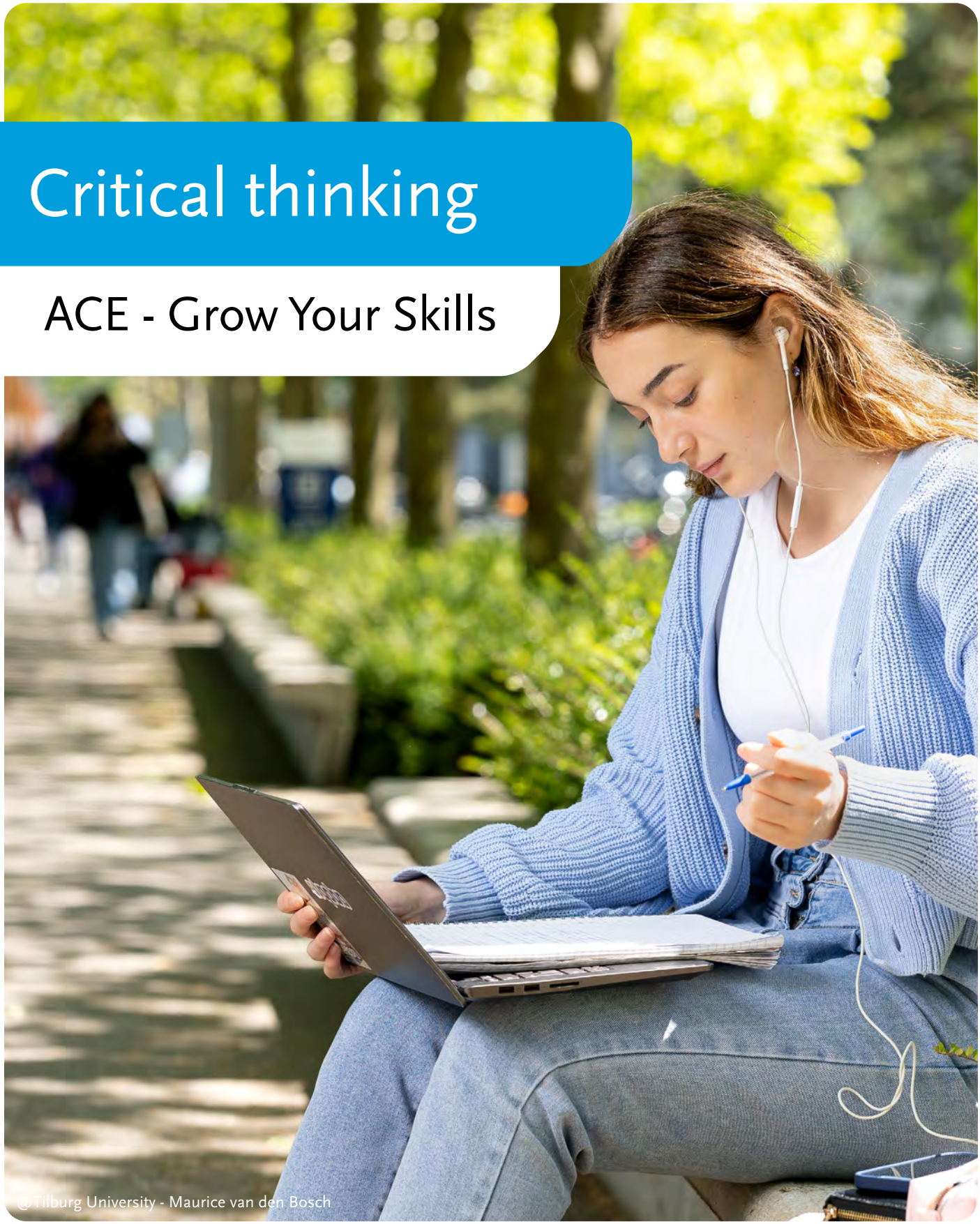
Critical thinking

ACE - Grow Your Skills



Tilburg University

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Critical thinking

Looking at different perspectives and coming to informed deliberations and decisions independently. Not simply taking all information for granted.

Description

When we talk about the skill critical thinking, we refer to the process of looking at a(n) subject/issue/problem from different angles and independently coming to well-considered considerations and decisions. You don't just take all information for granted. You keep asking questions until you understand something and think about different answers and solutions. You are open to opinions, ideas and world views and take these into account to form your own judgment. In doing so, you are aware of your own biases. You check whether the information matches the facts. You choose the most appropriate answers, using sound arguments.

So in critical thinking, thinking skills and a critical attitude go hand in hand. By thinking critically, you produce thoughtful answers and solutions.

You can practice with critical thinking by questioning everything. For example, for every given answer, ask yourself "why is that so?" 5 times. Don't settle for simple answers but read up on it and look at the question from different angles.

Watch this video

Or click HERE to go to YouTube

Tips

The following tips will help you think critically:

- *You are curious and eager to learn.*
- *You want to be well informed.*
- *You are open to other opinions, ideas and different worldviews.*
- *You are not afraid to ask and give information.*
- *You are aware of your biases.*
- *You are willing to reconsider your decisions.*
- *Afterwards you evaluate and reflect on the thinking process.*

Assignment 1 *Working with statements*

How can you learn to think critically?

Step 1: Pair up.

Step 2: In pairs, come up with 5 statements about a topic you know a lot about. This can be sports or music, but also astronomy if you know a lot about that.

For example: Adolescents are obliged to be part of a sports club until age 18.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 3: Now discuss the statements in class. Present the statements to your fellow students.

Step 4: All students provide their opinion on the 5 statements. Write down these opinions below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 5: Do you think these opinions are fair? Why or why not? Write down your arguments below for each answer.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 6: Ask your fellow students the following questions (depending on the statement): "Would you like to explain your answer?", "How did you come up with this answer?", "Is this always the case?" or "Does this apply to everyone?".

Step 7: Give feedback on whether or not their answers make sense to you. Do they need to phrase the answers more clearly?

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