

ABSTRACT

UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS' ABILITY TO TRANSFER CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Critical thinking is an important skill for college students to master. One of the greatest challenges educators face is promoting the transfer of thinking skills from the classroom into the “real world.” This study examined critical thinking ability and transfer ability in 257 undergraduate students from California State University, Fresno. Participants were divided into groups by experience level: those who had not yet taken a research methods course and those who had. Two questions, both with a psychology and non-psychology version, were created to measure two of the most basic and non-technical concepts in psychological research methodology. Overall, while students who had already completed the research methods course performed significantly better than those who had not on both psychology and transfer items, post-methods students answered incorrectly more than half the time. The implications of these results suggest that students are not learning basic critical thinking skills as they relate to research methods and led the researcher to believe that meaningful transfer did not take place.

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