

STATEMENT OF INTENT: NYU NETWORK SUMMER SEMINAR APPROACHES TO CRITICAL/CREATIVE THINKING

Critical and creative thinking should be encouraged and celebrated in all. It should especially be part of every teacher's practice. On the first day of class I ask students to write their definition of teaching. Too many of them see teaching as simply the "transmission of knowledge". As a teacher of future teachers one of my responsibilities is to get students to think critically; to question what they read, what they hear, to question their own beliefs; to understand teaching as much more than the transmission of knowledge; to embrace the pleasure of a creative teaching practice. I intend to use the experience/s of the Critical Thinking seminar to "think critically" about my own teaching practice and to implement practices that promote critical and creative thinking in my students. I am interested in integrating teaching/learning experiences that help future teachers to internalize critical and creative thinking in their academic and personal lives for their own benefit and the benefit of their future students and communities. My work is primarily with future special education teachers who definitely need to be creative and use critical thinking if they are to be effective in teaching students with disabilities. Being able to determine and design appropriate modifications and accommodations to learning experiences so as to meet the special learning needs of all students requires critical and creative problem solving. Many see special education as involved in "teaching" basic skills to students with diverse learning disabilities. Others feel that special education should help learners "learn to learn". Of course, learning to learn and developing and using critical and creative thinking can best be promoted within all academic areas including those considered basic skills. I know this seminar will help me be better prepared to integrate these two apparently conflicting views of special education.

As a member of the Department of Education's Curriculum Committee I am involved in reviewing and revising foundation education courses. I am sure that the revision of these courses will benefit from my attending this seminar. Furthermore, as a member of our Department's NCATE committee, I envision using the experiences gained during to seminar to contribute to assuring that our courses and field experiences, in other words, the learning experiences that we provide our students, are experiences that help them develop critical and creative thinking abilities that manifest throughout their student life and future experiences as teachers.