

Enhancing Critical Thinking Abilities in Accounting Education: Strategies and Best Practices Enhancing Students' Capacity to Engage in Ethical Decision-Making by Placing an Emphasis on Core Values in Accounting

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Abstract: This project aims to improve accounting education by incorporating and encouraging critical thinking skills and best practices. Accountants must have excellent thinking abilities to examine complex financial data and correctly draw correct conclusions. This research aims to find and evaluate practical methods for teaching critical thinking in the accounting field that can be included in the existing curriculum. We analysed the literature on the topic and looked at case examples of practical educational efforts to figure out how to get students thinking critically about accounting. The findings suggest that problem-based learning, case analysis, and collaborative learning might help students improve their critical thinking skills in the context of their accounting classes. To support their students in acquiring essential thinking skills, accounting instructors should use active learning strategies, open debate, and examples from real-world scenarios. In conclusion, if accounting professors use efficient methods and best practices to improve their students' capacity for critical thinking, such students may be better prepared to deal with the challenges they will face upon entering the field. Taking this action is crucial for becoming ready.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Accounting Education, Strategies, and Best Practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking skills are necessary for accountants to assess financial facts, grasp complex material, and arrive at logical conclusions (Varenina et al., 2021). Studying accounting is an excellent way to enhance your critical thinking abilities, which is a skill that may be very useful in many other fields (Rebele & Pierre, 2019). Although many studies have shown the importance of critical thinking in general, further investigation is required to find the most effective methods for teaching this ability within the context of accounting classes (Arumugam et al., 2015). Students of accounting need to be taught how to think critically for them to be able to handle the obstacles that they will face once they enter the profession (Rahmatullah et al., 2022). Even though there is general agreement on the need to educate students to think critically, there is a paucity of information about the strategies that work (Simamora, 2020). In addition, due to the one-of-a-kind nature of accounting education, it may be necessary to use specialist approaches to cultivate critical thinking (AL-Hashimy, 2019, 2022b, 2022c, 2022d). Learning about the challenges in encouraging critical thinking in accounting classes may also aid in developing instructional techniques and curricular plans. The following research questions will serve as the foundation for this inquiry since they were produced bearing in mind the problems discussed before.

1. How can educators increase their students' prospects of success in accounting by educating them to think critically?
2. How exactly can the critical thinking abilities of accounting students be strengthened, and which strategies have shown to be the most successful?
3. How, in contrast to education in other professions, can accounting education distinguish itself in its ability to encourage critical thinking?
4. How can we get around our challenges when trying to teach critical thinking within the realm of accounting?

The ability for critical thinking among accounting students is the central focus of this study, the primary purpose of which is to build techniques and practices to increase students' abilities in this area. To be more explicit, the researchers expect that this study will:

1. Investigate the correlation between teaching students how to think critically and the subsequent success such students have in the field of accounting.
2. Find out what has worked successfully in the past to increase the critical thinking abilities of accounting students, then do more of that.
3. Examine the impact of studying accounting on the development of sound judgment and how this area of study is unique from other academic disciplines.
4. Get to the bottom of the issues derailing efforts to teach accounting students to think critically.

This research aims to shed light on why critical thinking is so crucial in the accounting classroom, to give helpful advice to instructors, and to assist students in developing the necessary thinking skills they'll need for a successful accounting career.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The results of prior research on how to teach critical thinking skills to accountants are broken down, assessed, and reviewed in the section of the paper titled "Literature Review (Tsiligiris & Bowyer, 2021)." This section offers a condensed summary of the research that has been carried out in this field, concentrating on the results and insights that have been determined to be the most important as a direct result of the studies that have been carried out (Al-Hashimy, 2022a; Al-Hashimy et al., 2022; Hussein et al., 2023). The purpose of this research is twofold: first, to determine the present state of research on critical thinking in accounting classrooms, and second, to synthesise what is currently known about the importance of supporting critical thinking in accounting classes.

- What Does It Mean to Engage in Critical Thinking in the Accounting Classroom, and What Are the Components of Critical Thinking?
- What Does Engaging in Critical Thinking in the Accounting Classroom Mean?

This article analyses the concept of critical thinking and how it applies to the discipline of accounting within the framework of the study of accounting. To completely comprehend what critical thinking comprises, we investigate several different conceptual frameworks and meanings of the term. Analytical reasoning, the ability to solve issues, the capacity to assess evidence, and the ability to make sound judgments are a few examples of critical thinking abilities covered in this section (Alam, 2022). This breakdown is essential for knowing more about the skills necessary to think critically in accounting, which is one of my fundamental research interests.

The Absolute Necessity of Acquiring Critical Thinking Skills for Accounting Students and Why It Is Necessary to Learn How to Think Critically

It is impossible to overestimate the significance of teaching children critical thinking skills throughout their formative years (Sasan & Rabillas, 2022). This highlights how important it is for accountants to have abilities in critical thinking since these skills help accountants analyse and evaluate a wide variety of financial data sources, arrive at reliable conclusions, and adapt to changing circumstances. The following debate will emphasise not only the relevance of critical thinking in the accounting profession concerning the promotion of ethical conduct and professional judgment but also the practical ramifications of this notion (Wolcott & Sargent, 2021). This discussion will begin by examining the significance of critical thinking in the accounting profession and promoting ethical conduct and professional judgment.

Implementing Problem-Based Learning, often known as PBL, in the classroom is an excellent way to foster critical thinking among students.

This portion of the essay will focus on studies investigating how problem-based learning might be used in accounting to enhance students' capacity for critical thinking and problem-solving (Anggraeni et al., 2023). Particular weight will be given to the results of the American probe. Based on the research that was looked at, using case studies and scenarios based on real-world situations may help students become more engaged, develop their critical thinking skills, and better apply what they learn in the classroom.

Asking Questions in the Style of Socrates

In this study, we will examine the Socratic method of questioning and discuss how it may be used to foster critical thinking in an accounting classroom setting (Yip, 2021). According to the findings of the study that was evaluated, teaching students to use Socratic questioning to think critically about accounting issues, assess data, and ask relevant questions may be beneficial (Girinziio et al., 2023). The use of Socratic questioning has the potential to assist accounting students in developing their higher-order thinking abilities. Because of this, students are encouraged to participate in higher-level thinking and dialogue, which is one of the benefits.

Education Obtained Through Collaborative Efforts

In this section, we will look at research that evaluates the effectiveness of teaching strategies that enable students to work with their classmates and learn from one another (Ritonga et al., 2022). The research that was looked at revealed that students' analytical skills increased when they engaged in collaborative learning activities (Qureshi et al., 2021). This was one of the conclusions drawn from the investigation (AL-HASHIMY, 2017; AL-HASHIMY, 2018; Hasan et al., 2015; Hussein et al., 2015). Students in classrooms that are set up to foster collaborative learning settings develop their capacity for independent thought by working together to find solutions to challenges that are related to accounting (Tan, 2019).

Instructional Materials and Tools for Teaching That Make Use of Information and Communication Technology

In this part, we study how digital technologies could improve analytical thinking among those pursuing careers in accounting and finance (Kroon et al., 2021). The research that was analysed provides evidence that virtual case studies, online discussion forums, and computer simulations may be used to develop educational environments that are engaging and engaging to students (Huang et al., 2023). Students can use these technology tools to participate in a critical thinking exercise inside a virtual environment, research brutal financial facts, and arrive at well-informed judgements. We look at prospective future study goals and gaps in the current body of research (Pang, 2022). Even though we have come a long way in understanding and cultivating critical thinking in accounting education, there are still holes in the current body of research (de Lima et al., 2023). This is the case despite our tremendous progress (Al-HASHIMY & Al-hashimy, 2019; HUSSAIN, 2017). This section calls attention to the gaps in our knowledge and suggests possible future lines of inquiry that might fill those gaps. An investigation into how the influence of students' cultural backgrounds manifests itself in their critical thinking abilities in the classroom is one of the research areas that might be explored (Al-Hashmy et al., 2022; Hussain, Alabdullah, Ahmed, et al., 2023; Hussain, Alabdullah, & Kanaan Abdulkarim, 2023). Studies on these subjects, investigations into how unique teaching practices may be evaluated, the development of reliable and accurate evaluation methods for critical thinking in accounting, and similar lines of inquiry are further examples of feasible research domains. The last piece of the puzzle is provided by the literature review section, which provides a summary of the most critical findings and concepts from the research that were examined (Williams Jr et al., 2021). It accomplishes this goal by emphasising the need to educate students to think critically within the accounting education framework and by thoroughly examining the strategies employed up to this point to develop students' analytical skills (Al-Hashimy et al., 2023). This introduction portion will prepare the reader for the succeeding chapters, which will offer and assess fresh ways and concepts for encouraging critical thinking in the classroom setting of accountants.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed research approach, focusing on both an exhaustive examination of the previously published research and in-depth case studies of educational programs that are successful. In the context of the accounting industry, the purpose of the approach is to identify and evaluate the most effective methods that may be used to foster critical thinking abilities in students. To collect relevant information on critical thinking in accounting education, in-depth research studies are carried

out. We research academic databases, journals, and books using the appropriate keywords and criteria. This literature review focuses on research investigating the impact of critical thinking teaching on student accomplishment in accounting. Specifically, the study looks at how accounting students perform on standardised tests. In addition to a review of the relevant literature, successful educational initiatives are investigated via the use of case studies. The development of critical thinking may take place in a classroom context via the study of accounting, as shown by these case studies. We investigate various educational programs, institutions, and instructional methods to present a comprehensive picture of what is effective.

To collect data, researchers read papers and examine case studies related to their topic. In the context of this investigation, some examples of data items that are pertinent are teaching strategies, course organisation, learning results, and comments from both the instructor and the students. Researchers gather qualitative and quantitative data about the topic at hand to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Analyses such as comparison analysis and theme analysis are used to make sense of the data gathered. Through thematic analysis, significant themes, patterns, and trends may be retrieved from the body of published literature and case studies. The objective of doing a comparative study is to ascertain the parallels and dissimilarities between several effective educational methods.

4. RESULTS

According to the results of this study, there are several best practices and ways of education that have the potential to increase students' critical thinking abilities in accounting. The following is a list of the most significant findings:

- PBL, or project-based learning, is an excellent method that can be used in the classroom to enable students to think critically about accounting difficulties. Students are more likely to be engaged in and gain more knowledge from case studies and events in the real world because these types of activities demand that students think critically, creatively, and realistically.
- Asking after the Socratic Model Employing techniques of asking after the Socratic model enables students to ask perceptive questions, investigate evidence, and think analytically about accounting concerns. This strategy helps students become more capable of engaging in higher-order thinking and analysing complex material about the financial world.
- Fostering an environment favorable to higher-order thinking and problem-solving might be accomplished, for example, by instructing students in accounting to work together to find solutions to difficulties. Accounting issues are an excellent way for students to work together to improve their critical thinking, expand their vocabularies, and widen their perspectives on the world.

It has been shown that using ICT resources, including online discussion forums, computer simulations, and virtual case studies, may increase students' ability to think critically. Using these tools in the instructional setting promotes curiosity, analysis, and evaluation on the part of the students.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study highlight the need to place an increased focus on critical thinking within the accounting profession. If teachers use tried-and-true instructional strategies and industry-standard best practices, they may be able to perform a better job of preparing students for the complexities of the accounting profession. The discussion will focus on how the practical applications of these discoveries might be found in accounting education. To teach children to think critically, it is necessary to place a focus not just on open conversation and relevant examples but also on collaborative group work. It is strongly suggested that more research be carried out to fill in the gaps in our current level of comprehension. In the future, the study may concentrate on how students' cultural backgrounds influence their critical thinking abilities, how effective new teaching techniques are, how thoroughly they are evaluated, and how we can enhance both aspects of these topics.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight how important it is for students to strengthen their critical thinking abilities for the whole of their time while participating in accounting courses. A comprehensive review of the relevant literature and case studies has led to the discovery of practical teaching approaches and best practices. It has been established that students who study accounting may benefit from using problem-based learning, Socratic questioning, collaborative learning, and information and communication technology (ICT) tools to strengthen their ability to think critically. It is possible that accounting instructors could think about incorporating these strategies into their lesson plans to better prepare their students to meet the challenges posed by the accounting profession. Increase the quality of accounting education and the number of qualified accountants produced by placing a greater focus on developing critical thinking abilities in students.

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