

# Critical Implementation: Designing for Skills Development

PRME Pedagogy Webinar Series; December 2025

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## Purpose of the Session

The Implement session was designed to support faculty in designing and refining classroom activities that foster critical thinking, aligned with the OECD critical thinking dimensions (Imagining, Inquiring, Doing, Reflecting). The primary outcome of interest was faculty critical thinking impact—both their own dispositions and how they saw these reflected in student-facing activities—alongside teacher self-efficacy.

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faculty members completed the post-session survey. Participants engaged in one of two design pathways:

A “skills development first” pathway, in which they focused on identifying and articulating critical thinking skills before designing a lesson or activity.

An “adapting an existing lesson” pathway, in which they started from a lesson with skills already identified and adapted that design.

## Key Findings

- 1 High Critical Thinking Dispositions:** Participants reported high critical thinking dispositions (mean  $\approx 26.6$  out of 30), indicating a strong baseline orientation toward critical thinking.
- 2 Strong OECD-Aligned Activity Design:** Overall OECD-aligned critical thinking scores were high ( $M \approx 16.5$ , range 13–20), with slightly higher scores for skills-first designs ( $M = 17.0$ ; max 20) than lesson-adapted designs (mean 16.2; max 18).
- 3 Strengths in Doing and Reflecting:** Doing ( $M \approx 4.35$ ) and Reflecting ( $M \approx 4.12$ ) were the strongest dimensions, aligning with the session's emphasis on applied and reflective work.
- 4 Reinforced Critical Thinking During the Webinar:** Most participants reported equal or higher critical thinking during the webinar (median increase = 1), suggesting reinforced or modestly enhanced engagement.
- 5 High Post-Session Teaching Self-Efficacy:** Teaching self-efficacy was high ( $M \approx 94.2$ ), indicating strong confidence and readiness to implement the designs created.

## How Faculty Described Their Designs

Faculty narratives reinforce the quantitative patterns.

Faculty emphasized reflection and self-assessment as central to deep learning, along with relevance and authenticity through connections to students' contexts and values (e.g., alignment with PRME principles). They highlighted collaboration and engagement—often described as “interactive” and “innovative”—and the value of developing multiple skills at once, including critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and self-directed learning, while also noting some design tensions.

Faculty also noted that the activities can be complex and demanding, sometimes “too difficult for some students.” Effective implementation requires strong facilitation, clear staging, and scaffolding, particularly for students less familiar with reflective or open-ended tasks. Equity concerns, logistical and technological constraints (e.g., internet reliability), and emerging reliance on AI tools were identified as potential challenges.

## Implications for Future PPCS Support

Across both pathways, participants are designing rich, reflective, and authentic critical thinking activities and feel confident in their ability to implement them. The “skills development first” pathway appears to yield slightly stronger overall critical thinking scores, suggesting that explicit skill articulation remains a productive starting point. For future PPCS webinars and follow-up:

- **Emphasize practical scaffolding strategies** (e.g., prompts, exemplars, stepwise task design) to make complex tasks accessible and equitable.
- **Provide design heuristics to balance rigor with inclusivity**, especially for quieter or less confident students.
- **Continue to support faculty in navigating AI in student work**, foregrounding critical engagement with sources and transparency in how AI tools are used.
- **Build on the evident strength in Doing and Reflecting** by introducing additional tools to stretch Imagining and Inquiring, helping faculty design for the full OECD critical thinking cycle.