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## CRITICAL THINKING AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** In this paper, the authors are dealing with the issue of developing critical thinking in higher education, more specifically in the case of tourism management students. The four-phase inquiry model – each with its descriptor, indicator(s) and specific sociocognitive processes and the five main rules of critical thinking – is highlighted from the perspective of the impact of critical thinking on the development and improvement of critical thinking skills and dispositions and student achievement, from the perspective of the considerable impact on students' total scores and from the perspective of critical thinking skills and habits depending on the level of students.

### • Introduction

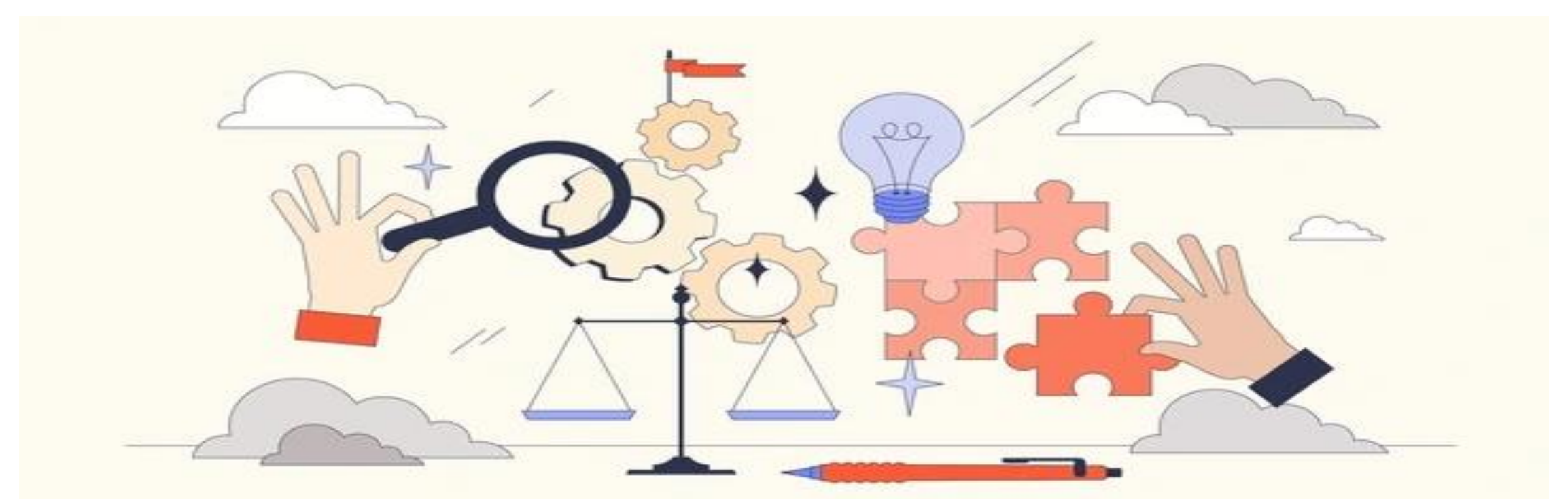
The development of critical thinking in higher education aims to shape individuals capable of analyzing reality rationally and objectively by cultivating reasoning, reflection, and intellectual independence. Critical thinking involves the rational use of reflection to interpret the world, maintaining an impartial attitude, and collaborating with peers and professors to develop cognitive competencies. In the field of tourism management, it is essential for fostering creativity, problem-solving, intuition, and analytical skills. The process of developing critical thinking unfolds in four stages: identifying the problem (initiation), exploring ideas and relevant information (exploration), integrating and synthesizing ideas to formulate solutions (integration), followed by their practical application (resolution). This model supports the development of strong cognitive presence and the formation of autonomous, rational thinkers among students.



critical thinking

### • Material and method

The material used in this study consists of articles and books about critical thinking in particular (tourism management), and the research method consists of analyzing the content of the results presented in this research.



### • Results and discussions

Abrami et al. (2015) demonstrated that effective strategies—such as dialogue, authentic problem-solving, and mentoring—enhance critical thinking skills across educational levels. Slameto (2017) found that teachers' instructional methods, students' prior knowledge, motivation, and technological readiness significantly influence the development of critical thinking habits. Stone et al. (2017) defined these skills as analytical, inferential, evaluative, deductive, and inductive abilities. Benitez (2019) showed that inference, interpretation, and argumentation strongly correlate with performance among hospitality and tourism students, while deduction and assumption are less influential. Zuluage, Duque, and Narváez (2020) highlighted the role of career profile, motivation, and engagement in shaping critical thinking, though many students lack such skills. Co (2024) found differences between teachers' and students' evaluations, indicating inconsistent criteria or students' overestimation of their abilities.

### • Conclusions

- The development of critical thinking in higher education is important because it forms intellectuals with a critical spirit;
- critical thinking it is required for tourism management students (full-time and distance learning courses);
- critical thinking is based on a four-phase inquiry model each with its descriptor, indicator(s) and specific sociocognitive processes;
- critical thinking requires compliance with five main rules;
- numerous researchers have emphasized the impact of critical thinking on the development and improvement of critical thinking skills and dispositions and student achievement, and have developed instruments for measuring the habit of critical thinking in students;
- critical thinking in hospitality and tourism students it has a considerable impact on students' total scores;
- Critical thinking skills differ depending on the level of students (1st, 2nd, 3rd year, master's degree).