CRITICAL RESPONSE

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola tanqidiy fikrlashni klaster tushunchasi sifatida tushunish taklifiga tanqidiy munosabatni taqdim etadi. Ushbu meta-ta’rifga ko‘ra, tanqidiy fikrlash bilim, ko‘nikma va dispozitsiyalarning geterogen ro‘yxatidan iborat bo‘lib, uning alohida tarkibiy qismlari hech bir fan sohasi uchun universal zaruriy shart emas. Klaster modelining tavsifiy jozibadorligi va fanlararo sezgirligini tan olgan holda, tanqidiy sharh uchta asosiy cheklovni aniqlaydi: sanab o‘tuvchi (ro‘yxatga o‘xshash) ta’riflardan klaster tushunchasining ontologik maqomiga o‘tish tavsifiy to‘liqsizlikni kontseptual qaytarilmaslik bilan tenglashtiradi, chegaraviy mezonlarning yo‘qligi tushunchani cheksiz kengayish va analitik bo‘shliq xavfiga olib keladi, model fan-umumiy kognitiv kompetensiyalarning mavjudligini yetarlicha nazariy jihatdan tushuntirmaydi, bu esa fanlararo sun’iy to‘siqlarni kuchaytirishi mumkin. Xulosa qilib aytganda, muallif asosli fanlararo o‘zgaruvchanlikni saqlagan holda minimal invariant cheklovlarni (masalan, dalillarga asoslangan asoslash, refleksiv skeptitsizm va o‘z-o‘zini tuzatish) o‘z ichiga oluvchi malakali (cheklangan) modelni taklif qiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: tanqidiy fikrlash, klaster tushunchasi, meta-ta’rif, sanab o‘tuvchi ta’rif, tarkibiy ta’rif, fan-umumiy kompetensiyalar, fanlararo o‘zgaruvchanlik, epistemik asoslash

Аннотация. В данной работе представлен критический ответ на предложение рассматривать критическое мышление как кластер-концепт - мета-определение, согласно которому данное понятие состоит из гетерогенного перечня знаний, навыков и диспозиций, ни один из которых не является необходимым для всех дисциплин. Признавая описательную привлекательность и дисциплинарную чувствительность кластерной модели, критический ответ выделяет три основных ограничения: вывод от перечислительных (спискообразных) определений к онтологическому статусу кластер-концепта смешивает описательную неполноту с концептуальной несводимостью, отсутствие граничных критериев делает понятие уязвимым для бесконечного расширения и аналитической пустоты, модель недостаточно теоретизирует существование общедисциплинарных когнитивных компетенций, что потенциально усиливает дисциплинарные барьеры. В заключении предлагается квалифицированная (ограниченная) модель, которая сохраняет минимальные инвариантные ограничения (такие как доказательное обоснование, рефлексивный скептицизм и самокоррекция), одновременно допуская легитимную дисциплинарную вариативность.

Ключевые слова: критическое мышление, кластер-концепт, мета-определение, перечислительное определение, конститутивное определение, общедисциплинарные компетенции, дисциплинарная вариативность, эпистемическое обоснование.

Annotation. This article provides a critical response to the proposal that critical thinking should be understood as a cluster concept - a meta-definition according to which the concept comprises a heterogeneous list of knowledge, skills, and dispositions, no single component

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of which is necessary across all disciplines. While acknowledging the descriptive appeal and disciplinary sensitivity of the cluster model, the response identifies three principal limitations: the inference from enumerative (list-like) definitions to the ontological status of a cluster concept conflates descriptive incompleteness with conceptual irreducibility, the absence of boundary criteria renders the concept vulnerable to infinite expansion and analytical vacuity, the model undertheorizes the existence of domain-general cognitive competencies, potentially reinforcing disciplinary silos. The response concludes by advocating for a qualified framework that retains minimal invariant constraints – such as evidentiary justification, reflective skepticism, and self-correction – while accommodating legitimate disciplinary variation.

Keywords: critical thinking, cluster concept, meta-definition, enumerative definition, constitutive definition, domain-general competencies, disciplinary variation, epistemic justification.

Introduction

The question of how to define critical thinking has long occupied a contentious position within educational philosophy, cognitive psychology, and epistemology. Despite decades of inquiry, no single definition has achieved universal acceptance. Instead, the literature presents a proliferation of competing conceptions, each emphasizing different constellations of skills, dispositions, and outcomes. The passage under examination belongs to those theorists who embrace this diversity, proposing a "meta-definition" of critical thinking as a cluster concept. The author argues that because different disciplines employ distinct methodologies and pursue divergent epistemic goals, no unique set of knowledge, skills, or dispositions can be necessary or sufficient for critical thinking across all contexts. Instead, the concept should be understood as an extensible list of qualities, where at least one proper subset of that list is sufficient for excellence in any given domain, with overlapping sets occurring in proportion to the degree of similarity between fields.

This proposal is intuitively appealing. It accounts for the observable fact that definitions of critical thinking tend to take enumerative or list-like forms without offering a principled criterion for why particular items belong together. Moreover, the framework resonates with broader philosophical movements that have rejected essentialism in favor of family resemblance or prototype-based categorization. From this perspective, critical thinking may be less like gold (definable by a unique structure) and more like "vegetable" – a category held together by loose, overlapping similarities rather than necessary and sufficient conditions.

Nevertheless, the cluster conception raises several theoretical and practical challenges that merit critical examination. The present response undertakes such an examination, arguing that while the cluster model offers descriptive adequacy, it is less successful as a normative framework for educational practice or assessment design. The argument proceeds through three interrelated lines of critique.

First, the distinction between enumerative and constitutive definitions, which the author employs as evidence for the cluster thesis, is less decisive than it appears. The fact that many existing definitions are presented as lists does not necessarily imply that critical thinking is, in its essence, a cluster concept. An alternative explanation is that scholars have thus far produced incomplete definitions, and that a fully adequate constitutive definition remains to be discovered. The history of science shows that concepts initially appearing list-like – such as “planet” or “metal” – later yielded to unifying principles. Thus, inferring ontological structure from current definitional practice may commit a category error.

Second, the cluster conception faces a well-known problem of boundary demarcation. If critical thinking is merely a loose collection of qualities with no necessary components, then what prevents the inclusion of manifestly irrelevant attributes? The author's formulation – that “at least one proper subset” of the cluster is sufficient for excellence – implies that some domains might require only a very narrow range of qualities, potentially omitting features that many educators would consider core to the concept. Without minimal constraints, the cluster threatens to become infinitely expandable, losing distinctive meaning.

Third, the relationship between disciplinary specificity and generalizable cognitive competencies remains undertheorized. While the author correctly notes that methodologies differ, this does not entail that no domain-general skills exist. Research in cognitive science suggests that certain metacognitive strategies – such as hypothesis testing and error detection – can function across diverse content domains. The cluster model's emphasis on heterogeneity risks obscuring these commonalities, potentially reinforcing disciplinary silos rather than facilitating integration.

In light of these concerns, the present response does not reject the cluster concept outright. Rather, it advocates for a qualified framework that preserves the author’s insights about disciplinary variability while imposing minimal but necessary constraints on what can legitimately count as critical thinking. Such constraints might include a commitment to evidentiary justification, a disposition toward reflective skepticism, and an orientation toward self-correction. These invariants would delineate a boundary within which legitimate cluster variation occurs. Ultimately, while the author has made a valuable contribution by challenging essentialist orthodoxies, the cluster concept as currently formulated requires refinement before it can serve as a robust meta-definition guiding either theory or practice.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposal to treat critical thinking as a cluster concept offers a compelling corrective to overly rigid, essentialist definitions that fail to account for legitimate disciplinary variation. The author’s recognition that the content, methodologies, and epistemic goals of different fields shape the specific critical thinking qualities required for excellence is both empirically defensible and pedagogically prudent. A more robust framework would integrate the cluster insight with a minimal set of domain-general invariants-such as justification, reflection, and self-correction-that constrain the permissible variation across disciplines. Without such integration, the cluster concept, while descriptively accurate, risks becoming normatively inert. Future scholarship should therefore focus not merely on cataloguing the diversity of critical thinking attributes but on specifying the boundary conditions under which that diversity is coherently constrained.

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