

Critical Thinking in Pre-Service Marketing and Business Teacher Education

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Study Overview

The development of critical thinking skills needs to be a priority in all educational settings and for all types of learners (Broadbear, 2003; McCollister & Saylor, 2010; Rudd, 2007). "Individuals who can think critically are invaluable as employees, leaders and members of society" (Rudd, 2007, p. 49).

In order to develop critical thinking skills in our primary and secondary settings, critical thinking must remain a priority for pre-service teachers. Not only do pre-service teachers need to be able to personally demonstrate the skill, they need to understand critical thinking from a conceptual perspective as they prepare lessons to develop their future students' critical thinking skills and abilities.

Assumptions are made about how critical thinking skills are taught, demonstrated, and assessed throughout PK-12 and post-secondary education. It is difficult to have confidence that our future teachers will be able to assessing students' critical thinking skills without first having conceptual and technical skills in critically thinking themselves.

Research Questions

- How does incrementally and systematically implementing critical thinking assignments impact future teacher's self-efficacy for critical thinking?
- How does incrementally and systematically implementing critical thinking assignments impact future teacher's ability to define critical thinking?
- How does incrementally and systematically implementing critical thinking assignments impact future teacher's ability explain their cross-curricula experiences with critical thinking?

Process

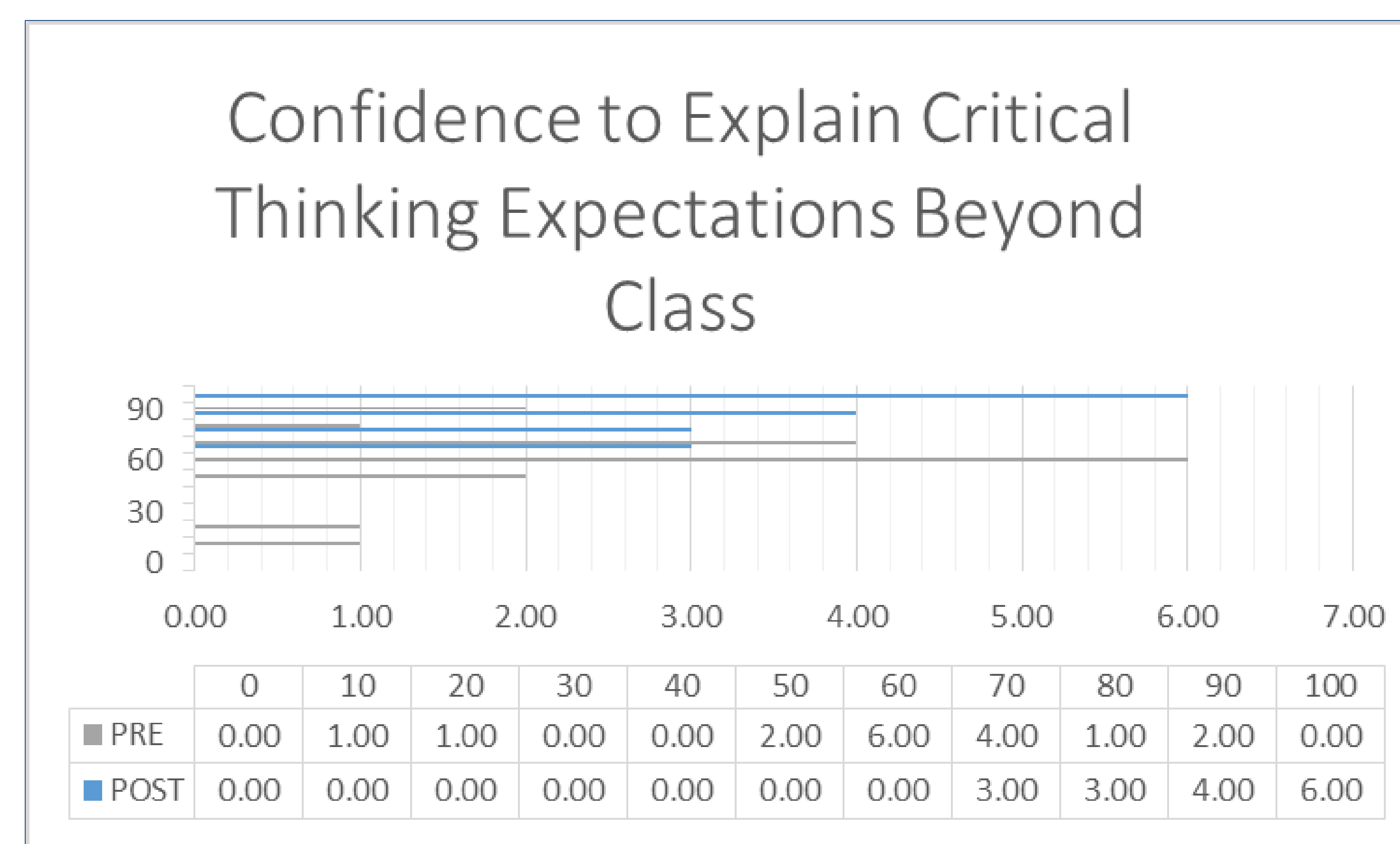
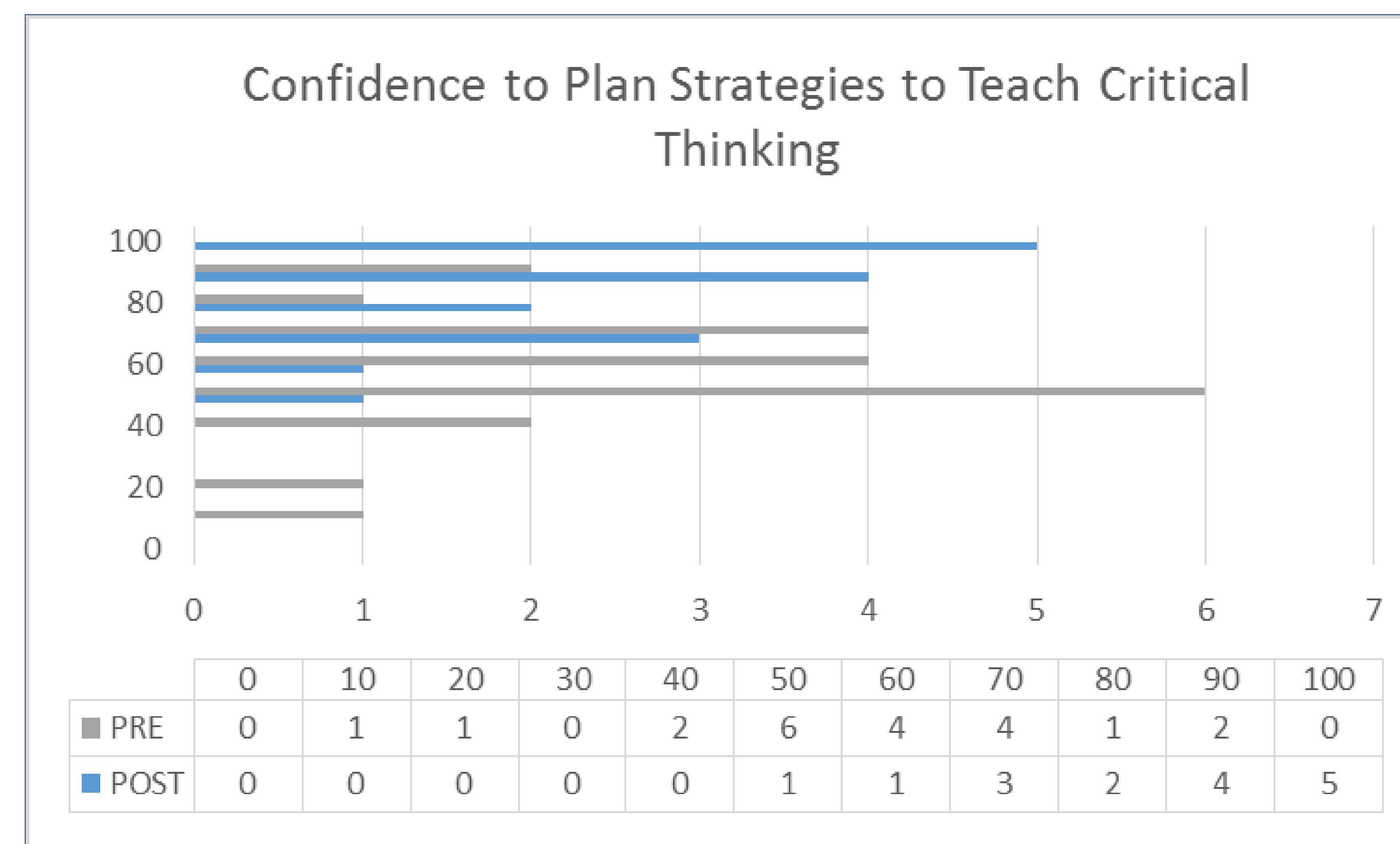
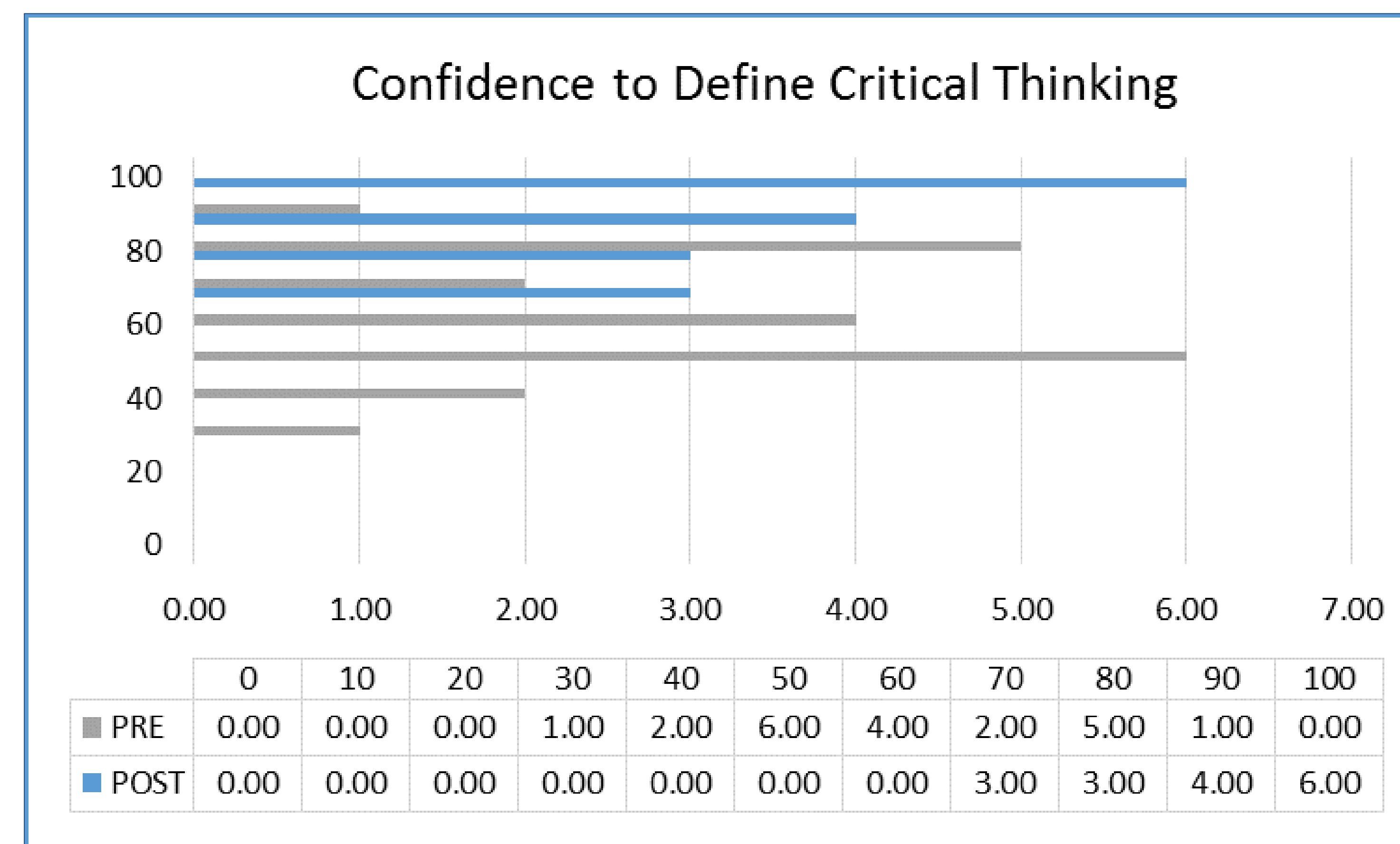
One section of Introduction to Marketing and Business Education – Fall 2017.

Pre-test and post-test to assess students:

- Self-efficacy for critical thinking. Self-efficacy questions utilizing a revised version of Bandura's (2006) Teacher Self Efficacy Scale which asks respondents to rank their confidence to prompts on a 100 point scale (from 0 = "Can't Do at All" to 100 = "Highly Certain Can Do")
- Ability to define critical thinking. Open ended question asking participants to provide definition.
- Ability to explain expectations for critical thinking in their cross-curricula experiences. Open ended question asking participants to provide example and explain why it was critical thinking.

Post-test open ended reflective questions on growth and areas for growth in critical thinking.

Intervention included systematic and incremental critical thinking activities between pre-test and post-test.



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Sample Pre and Post Definition of Critical Thinking

Student 1: Pre-Test Definition

"Critical thinking is when someone thinks deep into something."

Student 1 Post-Test Definition

"Ability to examine multiple perspectives while thinking about their relationship and investigating further before coming to a conclusion, making a judgement developing a product or taking action. It is also being able to defend the conclusion, judgement or product of action"

Qualitative Examples of Reflections on Greatest Growth in Critical Thinking:

"My greatest growth was examining the multiple perspectives. Before I would rarely look at situations from multiple viewpoints and now I can't help but to constantly do that. It helps me when talking to other people and to get a full understanding of what is happening in certain situations."

"I believe that my greatest growth in critical thinking this semester would be being able to consider multiple perspectives in the most un-biased way that I can. I have gained a more open mind to be able to do so."

Qualitative Examples of Greatest Areas for Future Growth in Critical Thinking

"I believe that my greatest areas of growth are including more data or thinking to find more data instead of just talking about my previous experiences. could really help my cases when I am trying to defend a decision."

"My area that I need growth in would be being able to defend a conclusion. I sometimes have a hard time finding the right words to defend my final judgement that it would rarely convince other people I may be right."

Preliminary Findings

- Participants did demonstrate growth in their ability to define critical thinking.
- Not all participants demonstrated growth in all areas of the definition of critical thinking relative to giving examples of critical thinking expectations beyond the class.
- Participants did self-report having higher confidence levels in their ability to define critical thinking, explain critical thinking expectations beyond the class, and plan strategies to teach critical thinking after the interventions.