



## Critical Thinking

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### What is critical thinking?

According to Judge, Jones and McCreery (2009) critical thinking is a way of analysing knowledge by questioning and challenging what you know. Critical thinking allows you to examine ideas and information, questioning that information then allows you to be open minded and honest about your own biases. To have a good critical thinking mindset you need to be able to use reason and produce evidence to support your findings. There are many study skills you can use to support critical thinking as follows:

### Conclusion

The three study skills identified within this poster are essential to critical thinking, they each bring qualities to assist in developing a critical mind. Managing your time allows you to study with meaningful purpose analysing what you read, questioning it ensuring there is sufficient evidence to accompany the information. To be able to do this effectively quality note taking is essential. Reflecting on what has been read and the work produced allows you to develop and improve skills looking deeper into what is done, questioning and analysing this allowing the next steps to be more meaningful and leading to views being formed that are based on evidence and not on personal opinions and experiences.

### Note taking

Note making is important as Godfrey (2013) suggests that such practice helps an individual to understand what they are reading, think about its content and reflect on what they have learnt. This then enables your own thoughts and ideas to develop. It is suggested that if notes are not taken you could be missing out the key elements of critical thinking therefore hindering your studies. This could lead to you struggling to establish your own understanding of the text. Note taking also helps you to use your own words reducing the risk of plagiarism. According to Cottrell (2008) note taking is an individual process with no set way however there are important things to consider when taking notes such as: is this information relevant? If so what parts? How and when will you use this information? Do you already have similar notes taken? What questions do you plan on answering with these notes? Everyone will have their own style of taking notes and it is important to make sure the notes you take are useful, with space left for additional information to be added, to only have one set of notes for easy access and to number your notes so they are easier to arrange.

### Reflection

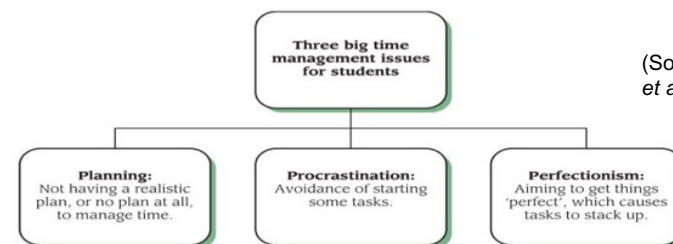
Reflection is key to improvement as suggested by Cottrell (2008). It is essential to develop a habit of giving time to reflect on how you learn and identify strategies to enhance your learning. Doing this will help you develop your skills, identify your strengths and where improvements are needed. Some ways to develop adequate reflective skills is to keep a learning journal, use self evaluation questionnaires, and make use of the feedback given by tutors. According to Ramsey (2006) reflective learning is a purposeful process, when something is done and then reflected upon, what happens next may then be done differently to improve the learning experience. This allows you focus on future goals and how best to achieve them.

### Researching sources and references

Researching is a key part of academic studies by reading and analysing the work and theories of others. It is good practice to use various sources when researching a subject, using what you find to develop your own thinking and ideas. According to Day (2018) researching is an individual process but it is important to be strategic in how you do this. You need to be able to quickly identify where you plan on gaining the information you seek, how it relates to your task and whether it is a valuable resource. You could potentially waste time gathering irrelevant information. Changing your study direction and seeking information from alternative sources will help your assignment take shape. An essential step in researching is referencing. It is important to reference to maintain academic integrity. You need to fully and correctly acknowledge the source of your facts, arguments and ideas. This is done to acknowledge the author and others contribution and avoid plagiarism. To reference correctly the Harvard referencing handbook is a useful guide.

### Time Management

Moore *et al* (2010) states that managing time is a huge challenge for students. There could be many contributing factors to this such as studying for the first time, first experience of living away from home and needing to learn to manage the newfound independence, family and work commitments. There are ways to optimise your time management such as making lists and keeping a diary or planner that sets out deadlines putting priorities in order. Creating a visual timetable can be beneficial where you can see what is happening throughout the day. This will help you to become more of a critical thinker as your study time will be organized and meaningful allowing you the time to examine ideas effectively.



(Source: Moore *et al*, 2010)

## Reference List

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