

Introduction.

Critical thinking is a skill that is universal. Students will need and use critical thinking, to varying degrees, in their day to day lives, in work and at home. It is about using a variety of skills to analyse different facts and situations. It is also about what they decide to do with those facts and how they will affect any decision making that follows.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cum3k-WgIfw>

"Critical thinking includes the component skills of analyzing arguments, making inferences using inductive or deductive reasoning, judging or evaluating, and making decisions or solving problems." (Lai, 2011)

Researching.

According to Cottrell (2017, p. 5) research benefits student's critical thinking skills by expanding their knowledge and understanding of the subject to help make an informed decision about whether or not there are other facts that may have an impact on their decision making such as personal beliefs. They then carry the knowledge and skills forward and use them in many different ways, from bettering their critical thinking skills to aiding them in their day to day lives.

It is suggested that there is a metaphorical structure when it comes to educational research. Structures need a good, solid foundation to base it's self upon and to support the structure (Newton Sutor, 2012, p. 1) Simply by researching, students are developing and using analytical reasoning to determine whether a source is credible or not. This is incredibly important as there are many different sources to use. These can include; the internet, vlogs, social media, podcasts, newspapers, radio, television, books, e-books, journals, articles and lectures. With so many different sources available to them it is important that they can differentiate between what is a reliable source and what is not. Research does not need to be limited to their study subjects but can be a range of different subjects about their personal lives or careers. The idea of what to research can come from unexpected sources. Heath (Heath, 2018, p. 10) describes the simplicity of how the idea of research can begin from any thought. Heath describes how any thought such as noticing how often someone uses their mobile phone, then wondering how common it is for people to spend so long on their mobile phones. Following this thought with searching on the internet to see how many other people spend this long on their mobile phones. This is how simply a research idea can begin.

As demonstrated by Bloom's Model of Learning Hierarchies (Bloom 1956).

Important Skills for Critical Thinking.



This diagram demonstrates key ideas to help with time management. (The Balance, 2019)

Time management.

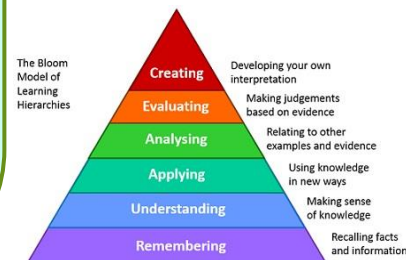
Cottrell (2019, p. 21) states that time management is the skill of managing time efficiently to ensure students have enough time to complete assignments, attend lectures and research thoroughly. By creating a list of activities that need to be completed and noting the deadline, it will enable students to prioritise areas of their lives in a way that will benefit their studies but also their mental health. Work, placement, study, family all take up time but with correct time management it can have a positive impact on their life.

Stress is something most students will feel at some point and by practicing time management it should help alleviate some aspects of stress. "Time management training is of great value in relieving negative emotions and improving subjective well-being."

(Wang and Wang, 2018)

As Cottrell states students need to work out when and how they learn best (2019, p. 13). Some students may find that they study best in the morning after a good night's sleep, or some may find that they can focus better in the evenings.

There are many different tools available to help manage time. Students may prefer an academic diary that begins in September and ends in August. These often have different sections to help organise and manage their activities. Some have sections to help students manage their life outside of education as well. As each student has different needs and lives there are also electronic diaries to help manage activities whilst away from home. (Cottrell, 2019, p. 137)



Phoebe Taylor

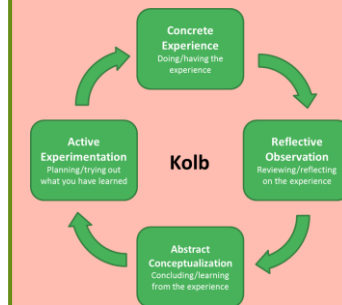
2105067

ECGE4003P

Reflective learning.

Reflective learning is the process of recording experiences, learning from them and noting what experiences were had. Then revisiting them and learning from them (University of Kent, 2012).

Cottrell suggests that keeping a journal or a diary helps with the process of reflective learning. It helps to look back over some of the first pieces of work that were completed at the beginning of the course and how the assignments have improved. This shows any progress that has been made. Look at what has improved and how this was achieved. Was tutor feedback one of the reasons for this? In which case always taking note of tutor feedback is something that would be of great benefit to you. (2019, p. 99).



Cambridge Assessment International Education (date unknown)

This diagram is of Kolb's Learning Model 1984. it is referred to as "Experiential Learning". The model is based on the idea that students can practice reflective learning by firstly having an experience, then reflecting on that experience. Proceeding this with new ideas and lastly to carry out the new experience using the new ideas learnt from the previous experience. Each time this process is made, the student is practicing reflective learning. McLeod (2017) states that this is effective learning.

Brown (2021) suggests that practicing reflection is a form of providing support for yourself. It is proof that you are learning effectively. Keeping a journal about your experience's will also help with your reflective learning. This idea is also shared with Day (2018, p. 95). According to Day (2018, p. 95) it is important to reflective on both negative and positive experiences and outcomes. Noting these experiences down will enable the student to reflect on what worked well that particular time, why and how and what could be improved on.

Conclusion.

Therefore the skills of researching, time management and reflective learning are all important counterparts of critical thinking. They are cogs in the critical thinking mechanics.

Cottrell (2017, p. 16) believes that critical thinking "improves with practice" and it may involve altering your behaviour when processing information. By being more aware of any barriers that you may have (being bias about a certain topic) or assumptions you quickly make then this can stop you from practicing effective thinking.

I practice critical thinking everyday as an LSA and in other aspects of my life.

Brown, N. (2021) *Reflective journaling for the PhD Process with Nicole Brown*. [Podcast]. 15th of March 2021. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38pDTamhrnU> (Accessed: 18th of September 2021)

Cambridge Assessment International Education (date unknown) *Getting started with Reflective Practice*, <https://www.cambridge-community.org.uk/professional-development/gswrp/index.html> [Accessed: 18th of September 2021]

Cottrell, S. (2017) *Critical Thinking Skills Effective Analysis, Argument and Reflection*. 3rd edn. London: Palgrave.

Cottrell, S. (2019) *The Study Skills Handbook*. 5th edn. London: Red Globe Press.

Day, T (2018) *Success in Academic Writing*. 2nd edn. London: Palgrave

Heath, W. (2018) *Psychology Research Methods: Connecting Research to Students' Lives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lai, Emily R. (2011) *Critical Thinking: A Literature Review*. Always Learning, Pearson

McLeod, S. A. (2017, Oct 24). Kolb - learning styles. Available at: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html> (Accessed: 18th of September 2021)

Newton Suter, W. (2012) *Introduction to Educational Research A Critical Thinking Approach*. 2nd edn. London: Sage

The Balance Careers (2019). *Important Time Management Skills For Workplace Success*. <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/time-management-skills-2063776>
[Accessed: 16th of September 2021]

University of Sheffield (2021) *Critical Thinking and Writing*, <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/everyday-skills/critical-thinking>
[Accessed: 16th of September 2021]

University of Kent (2012) *Reflective Learning*. Available at: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/learning/PDP-and-employability/pdp/reflective.html>
(Accessed: 16th of September 2021)

Wang, P and Wang, X. (2018) 'Effect of Time Management Training on Anxiety, Depression, and Sleep Quality', *Iranian Journal of Public Health*, 47(12). Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6379615/> (Accessed:2021)

Wireless Philosophy (2014) *Critical Thinking – Fundamentals: Introduction to Critical Thinking* [Online video]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cum3k-Wglfw> (Accessed: 16th of September 2021)