

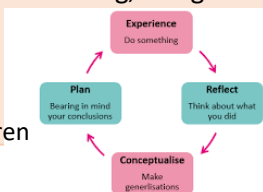
The range of skills and personal qualities that influence the development of critical thinking.

Critical thinking

According to Eales-Reynolds et al (2013), critical thinking is considered one of the most essential skills required whilst studying. Many studies suggests that university students lack the capability to think critically and that the skill is something that is developed and improved during academic studies. (Joynes/Knowledge,evidence and learning development, 2019)

Students during their time in higher education will need to use many of their personal attributes and skills and make good use of these to think critically well. Skills that can influence critical thinking are good time-management, reflecting upon learning, research and note-making, alongside many others.

Source: Leeds
Safeguarding Children
Partnership, 2021)



A learning journal can not only be beneficial to the skill of time-management but also can encourage reflective learning (Moon, 2013). University of Warwick (2015) also agrees that a journal is a great opportunity for learners to reflect on their learning experience and encourage critical and analytical engagement. Reflective pointers students may wish to consider including within their reflective learning journal are-

- Have they any concerns in regards to the work?
- How will they manage studies and general life?
- What new skills have they learnt from their time studying?
- What is working well? What is not working as well and how could they change this?

Reflecting on learning

During a students' time at university, reflecting on performances during assignments and exams is something often done without realization. Students receive feedback on performance after completion from lecturers, this can on occasions be a disappointment for those who have received poor results.

There are a number of reflective models' learners can choose to follow when reflecting upon learning. An example of a reflective model is the theory of Kolbs' (2015) cycle on reflection. This theory to reflecting upon learning, encourages students to focus on four elements. The student should consider the full experience. This could be an assignment, the reviewing and reflecting on the experience, then further considering aspects of the experience and make changes where necessary in order practice the experience again.

Cottrell (2008) suggests, students who take the time to reflect on their performance are more likely to improve, considering factors that worked well, those that did not and things they would change or do differently. Through reflection, students can improve and try a different approach on matters when completing their next piece of work and hopefully learn from their previous mistakes.

Note-making and research

A students' time at university consists of attending many lectures and being taught copious amounts of information. Note-taking during lectures is a crucial skill for students in order to remember the information. As a learner of a higher educational course, it is expected of you to carry out individual research and great note-taking will influence this. In order to carry out the research and further investigate on a topic, they must gather information from different sources. The sources learners may wish to use are websites, journals, news articles and magazines, books, websites and lecture notes. Using many methods of reliable sources during studies, prove that students are gaining a wide range of information and gathering different views on a topic, further improving thinking in a critical manner (New Mexico State Univesity, 2021).

Walkington (2015) suggests, that there are man benefits from students carrying out individual research. It suggests that's students gained independence, motivation to learn more, played active participation with their studies and often wanting to complete extra tasks where interest was shown. Students who engage more from carrying in-depth research are more likely to achieve greater academic outcomes.

Thorough note-taking when carrying out research involves an element of critical thinking. When researching and reading, making crucial notes of information but also personal views or reactions of the topic can help support the discussion within the essay. Critical notes means that a student can annotate questions they may have (Newcastle University, 2021).

Conclusion

Concluding the topics discussed within this poster. I agree that the skills discussed are of great importance whilst learning to think in a critical manner and that the three influence one another. From using each one of these skills, they enable learners to gather information on a subject and ask questions on topics one may not have even thought of before.

Time Management

One of the many non-academic skills that can have an influence on thinking critically during studies, is time management. According to Adams and Blair (2019), students managing time affectively are those who achieve greater academic performances and have found that time-management reduces levels of anxiety. Although, time-management can be difficult whilst trying to balance studies with day-to-day life and possibly work commitments. Being poor at managing study time can lead to issues including, poor sleep patterns, high stress levels. (Hardy, 2003)

Kelly (2002), suggests that effective time-management will consist of three primary assumptions: an awareness of time. Being aware of which elements that take up time and good working habits. Developing goals and setting plans of action are a supporting factors that help whilst managing time efficiently. Students who develop work plans are more likely to make use of their time wisely as they tend to begin the task and stay focused on that before moving on to the next work piece. On the other hand Lay (1993) states, that students who believe that creating work plans may be beneficial to them, have the tendency to create the plan but not follow it as their poor habits re-occur as the stress of creating the plan had proven to be demanding, leading to further stress and anxiety.

Cottrell (2008), claims that the use of a journal could be helpful when used correctly in order to manage your time of studies, activities and work. This theory claims that the use of a journal can help develop not only good time-management but also reflective learning. Whilst the journal can help improve time-management, this skill would further influence critical thinking of a student due to encouraging independence and organisation for them to learn how to prioritise tasks in order of date of submission. To conclude, Adams and Blair (2019) states, that good practise of time-management can have a positive impact on students, it could further lead to better results and outcomes at the end of higher educational courses.

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