

Critical Thinking

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What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is a cognitive skill used in everyday life. Haber (2020) claims that Critical thinking is a thought process to analyse information before forming judgement as well as having the ability to discover if the information given is valid and justified.

Critical thinking is a skill that occurs at a young age as Nicoll (1996) states " from a developmental perspective, the process of growing towards being a critical thinker occurs very early in life. A necessary characteristic of critical thinkers is autonomy. As infants move into the autonomous stage of toddlerhood the seeds of critical thinking have the potential to grow." An individual would benefit from developing their critical thinking skills throughout their lifetime as like The University of Edinburgh (2021) states being a critical thinker can help navigate an individual through a world that is rich with information. This poster will explore three skills that can improve and help develop an individuals critical thinking. These three skills are time management, the ability to evaluate arguments and critical writing.

Time Management

Time management is the ability to plan, control and organise an individual's own time. An individual would do this to ensure they succeed in meeting their deadlines. An example of this would be an individual giving themselves time slots, therefore the individual would try and get each activity done in the time frame given.

Time management can be the route to an individual's success if done correctly. As Cottrell (2019) believes that the time set aside to research and learn about a topic, plays a factor in the success of the individual. Cottrell also states that an individual's success comes down to how well the individual uses their time. If an individual set aside the time to research and learn but then used that time to day dream and procrastinate then there was no real reason to set that time aside in the first place. Cottrell's study shows that when using time management quality is better than quantity. It would be better to do one hour of solid research for five days rather than setting aside five hours of research all at once as it becomes too overwhelming and quality of the research will then be affected. You would get more done over five days with a shorter research time frame.

Cottrell (2015) believes that using waiting time to get things done is an effective strategy in time management, for example while waiting on a train or on a lunch break an individual has time to reply to emails or research for an assignment. Doing little but often will eventually lead to getting everything you need to do done.

Another time management strategy that could help lead an individual to success is prioritising the least favourite task that needs to be done; by doing this dreaded task it will give the individual the motivation to do the rest of the tasks as the worst has already been done. The last time management strategy that this poster is going to explore is distractions. An individual should know their strengths and weaknesses regarding time management and should try their best to avoid all distractions, for example putting their mobile phone in a draw until the task is complete.

Time management goes hand in hand with Critical thinking as an individual needs time to be a critical thinker, for instance an individual would need to find time to do research on a topic before they could form judgement or a decision on the topic. A critical thinker could benefit from using the time management strategies mentioned in this poster to become a successful critical thinker.

Evaluating Arguments

Evaluating an argument means investigating what makes a successful or unsuccessful argument. Evaluating an argument helps develop an individuals critical thinking skills as an individual has to use the critical thinking process to evaluate an argument. If an individual was to evaluate an argument they should look for strong evidence on how they got to their conclusion however the evidence should be up to date and relevant as well as non-biased as stated by the University of Sussex (2021). An individual may also look at the author of the arguments use of language. A successful argument would use formal writing and would not include any slang. The structure of the argument would also have a clear introduction, middle and a conclusion to finish. An unsuccessful argument may contain errors or be outdated. It may also be hard to follow with no clear structure.

An individual who uses their critical thinking skills to evaluate an argument needs to identify the key point the argument is trying to make for example if an argument claims that pigs can fly, as a critical thinker the issue would be; can pigs really fly? The author of the argument would then need to provide their evidence that pigs can fly and try and convince the reader that their claim is true. A critical thinker would then research other arguments and read other claims regarding whether pigs can fly. The individual would then come to a conclusion which is likely to be that pigs can't fly as there is no evidence to suggest that they can. Evaluating arguments

Critical thinkers could benefit from evaluating arguments as it gives them the ability and the skills to produces strong and persuasive arguments. As well as having the ability to evaluate other authors arguments.



(source: workshop4me, 2020).

Critical Writing

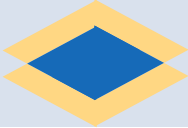
Critical writing needs critical thinking, critical writing is showing in words that an individual can think critically. Critical writing can be successful provided an individual has the skills to critically think and critically read. Hull University (2017) discusses that to be a critical writer it is important to have a good judgement on how appropriate a source is, for example; sources from wikipedia can be unreliable as it can be edited and changed by anyone. Reliable sources are usually found on university websites or government websites.

It would benefit an individual to be fair when critically writing as it is important to show the strengths and weaknesses of different arguments as stated by Leicester University (2020). Even if an individual doesn't particularly agree with another individuals argument, showing in writing the strengths that the argument may have but providing evidence that a different idea may work better shows efficient critical thinking and writing. It also shows that you are respecting the other arguments. According to Day (2018), drawing to your own opinion on an argument is an important part to critical writing. It shows that an individual researched arguments regarding that topic and reviewed different strengths and weaknesses. Then the individual whom now has all this knowledge can come to their own opinion on the argument. Once you have come to your own opinion on an argument. An individual could use their critical writing skills to tell the reader their position. To do this an individual should make sure that their argument is strong and they can justify every point.

The importance of critical writing is that an individual like a student has the opportunity to share ideas and opinions. Critical writing improves your critical thinking skill and deepens your knowledge of different topics.

Conclusion

In conclusion critical thinking can benefit an individuals academic life in many ways, for example it can help you to manage your time better. Time management, Evaluating arguments and critical writing can help improve an individuals critical thinking skills. An individual whom regularly works on these skills will progress in critical thinking and have the ability to produce successful arguments.



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