

Developing workplace critical thinking

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“Critical thinking is the art of making clear, reasoned judgements based on interpreting, understanding, applying and synthesising evidence gathered from observation, reading and experimentation.” - Burns, T., & Sinfield, S. (2016) Essential Study Skills: The Complete Guide to Success at University (4th ed.) London: SAGE, p94.

Being critical does not simply mean locating faults or errors. It entails evaluating evidence obtained from a number of different places and coming to conclusions based on sound reasoning. You may determine, as a result of your analysis, that a particular piece of evidence is not robust or that you disagree with the conclusion; however, you should be able to state why you have come to this view and incorporate this into a larger picture of the literature. In other words, you should be able to explain why you disagree with the conclusion.

Being critical involves more than simply recounting what you have learned in classes or what you have read. In order to build your own argument or perspective, it requires you to synthesise, analyse, and evaluate the information you have received.

The ability to think critically is essential in all fields of study, including the arts and humanities in addition to the hard sciences and engineering. Although the types of evidence that are used to generate arguments can be extremely diverse from one another, the methods and tactics that are used to develop arguments are relatively similar. Both the undergraduate and graduate levels of education demand students to demonstrate their ability to think critically.

Travel and aviation were the first industries to be hit by the pandemic in 2020, and probably the most affected ones. From one day to another things went down and businesses closed as the first measure governments put in place to stop the spreading of COVID 19, was to restrict travel, eventually we have all been locked down.

Fello Travel is a travel management company thriving to make every aspect of business travel as smooth and stress-free as possible, to understand that the traveller is the most valuable asset of any company, and is on client side every step of the way, guaranteeing an exceptional experience. In March 2020, business was hit very hard so that the turnover dropped 90% from one day to another, 40+ employees started to be unsettled fearing for their jobs. Management decided to cut 20% of the salary starting April 2020, to try save the company, to then government introduce the furlough scheme for all businesses affected by the lockdown.

Mid 2021, travel started to pick up easily, to boom at the end of the year, so the management had to find solutions to bring back employees from furlough to fit the restrictions in place and also have control over the punctuality and productivity of the teams.

NELSON Worldwide(<https://www.nelsonworldwide.com/>) show five behavioural and mental changes they consider would have the biggest impact on the corporate workplace and comes with recommendations to overcome these challenges.

- 1) People will have a newly heightened consciousness of space, surfaces and each other.

Since restrictions were in place and people begin awareness on needing to have personal space to stop spreading the virus, employees had to have larger desks, or even alternating presence at the office to create more space.

- 2) Personal safety will be a more conscious and constant concern.

The importance of safety should be ingrained in the culture of every business and every employee. It can protect against mishaps and blunders that might otherwise cost a lot of money because of carelessness. Safety awareness must be the result of a concerted, ongoing effort to build a culture of safety.

3) Needs around mental health and well-being will increase.

Because of long time isolation and uncertain times people are more likely to get depressed and anxious, one of the measures was hiring a personal coach and there is an application that all employees have premium access to, that monitor their well-being.

4) Social distance will make the desire for community and connection even stronger.

Humans are social beings (Aristotle), the need of interacting, communicating and exchanging opinions and ideas is real, and therefore naturally seek the companionship of others as part of their well-being.

At Fello, management, with employees agreement, decided to move the entire activity at home, however, to build and maintain the team spirit, there is a pattern in place where the entire company gather together every six weeks to work from the office 4 days

5) People will no longer view flexibility as an amenity, but as a must-have in their jobs going forward.

Creating the possibility of working from home, Workplace flexibility is a strategy that emphasizes being able and willing to adapt to changing circumstances when it comes to how work gets done. This meets the needs of both the business and its workers, improve employees' ability to focus on their personal lives while still meeting professional obligations.

Critical thinking involves questioning rather than simply accepting information that you hear or read.

It enables you to identify different points of view, put together arguments, and evaluate the arguments made by others.

Critical thinking as a process

Critical thinking is thought-out procedure that calls for a variety of abilities and mindsets. It contains:

- Identifying everyone's positions
- evaluating the evidence
- weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly
- being able to read between the lines, observing what is behind the surface and spotting unfounded or unjust assumptions
- recognising techniques made to produce some arguments more convincing than others, such as flawed logic and persuasion techniques
- reflecting on issues systematically applying reason and understanding
- drawing conclusions on whether arguments supported by reliable evidence and reasonable assumptions are credible and justifiable
- synthesising information: combining your evaluations of the evidence and synthesizing them to create your new position
- presenting a point of view in a methodical, understandable, and convincing manner

Identifying everyone's positions.

It was important for management to understand what everyone wanted, what each employee was comfortable with, it was a big change, although it was over one year when everyone was mainly at home and they were all willing to go back to the life as it was before, the comfort gained from homeworking was priceless. But since people are different, same solution doesn't satisfy everyone.

Evaluating the evidence

Making more informed judgements that lead to effective action is at the heart of evidence-based practise. The finest available evidence, along with analytical rigour, form the basis of a "evidence-based strategy." It reduces the weight that is placed on unreliable sources like hearsay, conventional wisdom, and individual experience by those making decisions. The enormous influence that management decisions have on the working life and well-being of people in all kinds of organisations globally makes it crucial that people professionals embrace this approach.

Weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly

Evaluate opposing arguments and show how they fail to hold up under close inspection or, if they do, how much weight they are given in the new scale.

Being able to read between the lines

Observing what is behind the surface and spotting unfounded or unjust assumptions, understanding what you've read and drawing conclusions from it are examples of reading between the lines. Critical thinking involves reading outside the lines. Having this skill is a valuable tool regardless of your desired vocation or destiny in life.

Recognising misleading techniques

Recognising techniques made to produce some arguments more convincing than others, such as flawed logic and persuasion techniques.

Reflecting on issues

Reflecting on the Issue, Problem, or Task Reflection is an important early step in critical thinking. There are various kinds of reflection that promote deeper levels of critical thinking

Drawing Conclusions

Drawing conclusions is a suitable expression since, when critically thinking, concluding frequently entails mapping out material and making it visible. You evaluate and consider the facts, details, and sources available to you to support your subjective judgments before acting.

Synthesising information

Synthesising information: combining your evaluations of the evidence and synthesizing them to create your new position. Synthesizing information involves mixing concepts from various sources to produce a fresh perspective or insight.

Presenting a point of view

Presenting a point of view in a methodical, understandable, and convincing manner

According to studies, companies place a great priority on individuals who have the ability to think critically.

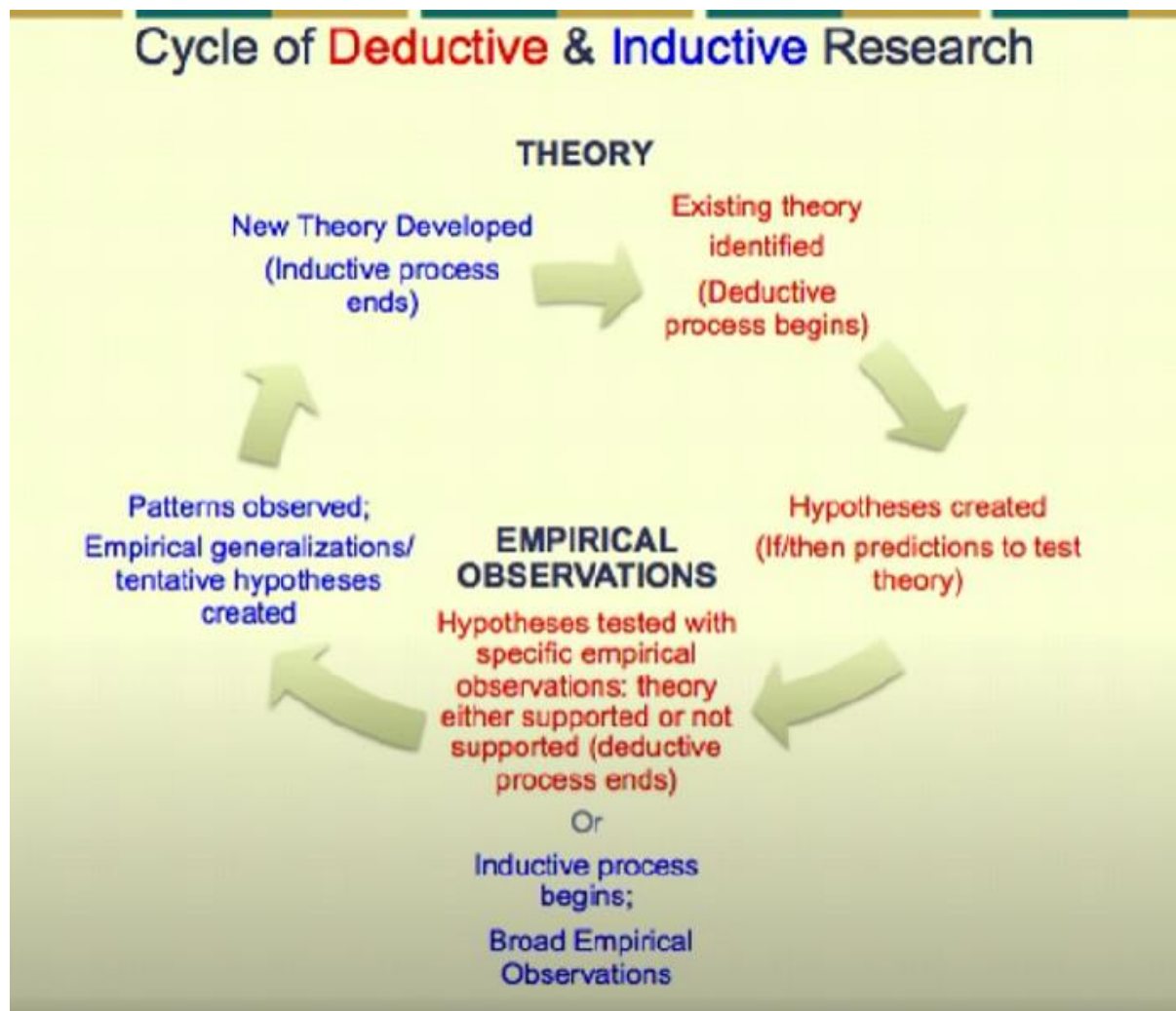
Critical thinking is a crucial talent for everyone trying to change the world for the better. In this essay, we'll look at 5 abilities that can turn you into a brilliant thinker.

Understanding what critical thinking is the first step in learning these skills. The deliberate and logical evaluation of arguments, assertions, and statements with the intention of evaluating their honesty and accuracy" is how critical thinking is defined.

So to be clear, critical thinking is more than just picking a fight with someone you disagree with. It's about developing a deeper grasp of how to effectively defend your own opinions while also being able to see areas where different points of view might be advantageous for improving our planet.

It will take some time before you can use critical thinking effectively because it is a difficult talent to learn. The good news is that it can be learnt, and once it is, it will enable you to make a lot more informed judgements throughout your life.

Being a brilliant thinker doesn't need critical thinking, although it does take some getting accustomed to. Yet, it doesn't harm to attempt using critical thinking if you have to make a difficult choice.



The 5 critical thinking skills are:

1) Analysis

Adopting a more analytical outlook on life is a terrific method to enhance your critical thinking abilities. Consider everything you see critically rather than accepting it as it is.

Most people find it difficult to think analytically, but with practise and effort, it can be learnt and developed through time. Consider approaching the topic from several (one- and two-sided) angles, and attempt coming up with arguments for and against various solutions.

2) Integrity

One of the most significant character qualities you can acquire in life is integrity. Integrity, when combined with critical thinking, results in improved decision-making since your personal principles will guide you rather than outside pressures or impulses.

3) Logical Thinking

Critical thinking needs rational thought because it distinguishes between the true and the untrue. While many will argue that reasoning is not very important, I vehemently disagree. Logic is crucial to

critical thinking because it enables you to identify the weaknesses in arguments and suggestions. It assists you in recognising logical fallacies so you can steer clear of them on your own.

The more you exercise your logical reasoning abilities, the better you'll get at spotting false arguments in both yourself and other people.

4) Empathy

Understanding other people's point of view is empathy. Consider it to be "Serendipity" from the film "Good Will Hunting." It's about having the capacity to consider things from the perspectives of others, which can aid you in making wiser decisions in your life.

You can think about other views that were previously ignored or unavailable by improving your empathy. You can better understand both sides of a story by recognising outside influences that may be affecting how people believe.

5) Evaluation

Evaluation is the skill of contrasting and comparing a number of available options. It's about being able to recognise where things that now exist may be enhanced, as well as how they could be used in new ways. It's all about approaching things with a critical mindset.

You should never settle for something or rely on it as being sufficient for your needs. Constantly be critical of the things around you and ask yourself why they are the way they are so that you might identify areas in which there may be better alternatives. It may take some time, but once it is established, this ability will assist you in making improvements in any circumstance you find yourself in.

Critical thinking cannot be reduced to a single method. The kind of source you consult and the specifics of the data you seek will determine the way in which you interact with the information. Comprehend the connections that exist between ideas.

Someone with critical thinking skills can:

- Examine the significance and applicability of the concepts and arguments presented.
- Recognize, construct, and evaluate different types of arguments.
- Find the contradictions and logical fallacies in the reasoning.
- Deal with issues in a manner that is both constant and methodical.
- They should think about the evidence that supports their own assumptions, views, and values.

The end goal of using critical thinking in every circumstance is to achieve the most favourable results that may be achieved. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to compile and analyse data derived from as many diverse sources as is humanly possible.

The ability to think critically necessitates an honest and often unsettling evaluation of one's own personal skills, flaws, and preferences considering the potential impact these factors could have on future decisions.

The cultivation and application of foresight, inasmuch as this is feasible, is a prerequisite for critical thinking. "The future is not ours to see", as Doris Day sung in one of her songs.

When putting into action the conclusions that have been reached as a result of critical thinking, it is necessary to consider an analysis of the prospective outcomes as well as methods for avoiding or at least mitigating the impact of possibly unfavourable results.

The process of critical thinking entails analysing the outcomes of the application of decisions and, where appropriate, bringing about necessary adjustments.

It is possible that our expectations of critical thinking are too high if we believe that it can assist in the construction of focused meaning. Rather than analysing the information provided and the knowledge that we have obtained, our focus should be on determining whether or not we can, if necessary, construct a meaning that will be acceptable and useful.

After all, almost none of the information that we have at our disposal, either from outside sources or from within our own organisation, comes with any kind of warranty regarding how current or relevant it is. The provision of clear, step-by-step instructions may serve as a trellis for the growth of our fundamental understanding of critical thinking, but this does not, and cannot, in any way guarantee certainty, utility, or longevity.

Kinds of Reflection	Prompts	Demands	Criteria?
Narrative Reflection <i>Return to an event and describe what happened</i>	• What took place? When and Where? • Who was involved? • What was done/said? • What background information is relevant?	<i>Recall observations</i> <i>Select and communicate</i> <i>Consider the overall context</i>	Make purposeful observations and communicate them effectively Identify relevant context(s)
Percipient Reflection <i>Think about the perceptions and reactions involved</i>	• What were your responses? • What were you thinking and feeling and why? • How did others respond? • Can you identify different viewpoints, needs or preferences? • How do these effect the situation?	<i>Be aware of own perceptions and habits</i> <i>Be aware of others (their needs and characteristics)</i> <i>Be aware of the impact of feelings, preferences or prejudices</i> <i>Be aware of the interpretive nature of experience</i>	Demonstrate self-awareness Appreciate the effect of feelings, preferences and prejudices on a situation Identify and respond to different viewpoints, needs and contributions Understand the interpretive nature of experience
Analytical Reflection <i>Think about the situation analytically</i>	• What stages, processes or roles were involved? • What skills and knowledge did you and others employ or develop? • Does the experience relate to what you have read, seen or heard about, or learned before? How? • Is the experience relevant to other areas of your practice or your everyday experience?	<i>Explain the process by which something is achieved</i> <i>Identify and relate significant elements or components of practice</i> <i>Relate diverse experiences & knowledge</i> <i>Synthesize theory and practice; scholarly and personal</i>	Identify and explain process Relate (or integrate) ideas, knowledge and experience (theory and practice) Investigate, apply and/or develop theory and/or practice

Evaluative Reflection <i>Evaluate the experience</i>	• What seemed to go well and what seemed to go badly? • What criteria are you applying and what evidence have you considered? • What were the outcomes (anticipated or unanticipated)? • Was the experience positive or negative: useful or unhelpful?	<i>Assess the experience</i> <i>Identify and apply criteria</i> <i>Recognize value/s</i> <i>Identify outcomes (anticipated and unanticipated)</i> <i>Make judgments</i>	Formulate and/or apply criteria Collect and evaluate evidence Judge evidence against criteria
Critical Reflection <i>Consider implications for the future</i>	• Why did you do what you did? • What else might you have done? • Does the experience tell you anything about yourself? Your practice? Your values? • What questions or new knowledge do you now have? • What do you need to consider or do as a result?	<i>Examine assumptions and methods</i> <i>Seek out contradictions and alternatives</i> <i>Identify abilities & weaknesses; learning & learning needs</i> <i>Plan and reframe</i>	Identify and investigate the basis of practice Demonstrate learning Monitor progress Develop plans for active experimentation

According to The World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC), yearly studies, the travel and tourism industry not only contributes over 10% of the global GDP, but also one in ten employment worldwide and one in every four new jobs generated globally in the previous five years. Life as we know it has been significantly impacted by COVID-19, and the travel and tourism industry is particularly vulnerable. We understand that the effects of the crisis could significantly change how the travel agency industry operates in the future.

At Fello Travel, we all hoped that everything will last for a couple of months and that everything will go back to normal. Sadly, as we all know, our lives we had before never return to pre-pandemic, and changes occurred then are still in place nowadays.

Every day, we make countless judgements, and whether we know it or not, we are all critical thinkers.

Every time we consider our options, organise our obligations, or consider the consequences of our choices, we are engaging in critical thinking. It's an essential ability that enables us to weed out false information and make informed choices. We're not always particularly good at it, which is the problem.

The first impact, that affected all of us, was the lockdown, and since everyone had to stay at home, isolated, management had to find a way to keep the team together and also entertained. We all decided to set one meeting of approximately one hour to see and catch up. Initially the talks were about the work activity, lately when we all realized that the situation will last the meetings became social: dressing code, drinks and funny games.

Secondly, since the company turnover dropped by 90% from one day to another, without any cashflow, the managers decided to reduce the salary by 20%, ultimately government stepped in and helped the affected companies, introducing the furlough scheme.

While we are all trying to find our way through the various problems that have come to define the year 2020, the one thing that we all agree on is that the power of human connection has never been more important. The long-term outlook for the travel agency industry is bright, with an emphasis placed on the advisers who know their clients well and provide expert guidance and support, thereby making travel simpler, more pleasurable, and more accessible.

Last and the hardest decision taken was reducing the number of the employees, when 80% of us were made redundant by September 2020.

Being critical entails more than merely pointing out errors. It entails evaluating data from various sources and drawing logical conclusions. Your analysis may lead you to believe that a single piece of evidence is not reliable or that the conclusion is incorrect, but you should be able to explain how and why you came to this decision and how it fits into the larger context of the literature.

Being critical involves more than just summarising what you've read or heard in lectures. To create your own argument or stance, you must synthesise, analyse, and evaluate what you have studied.

In both science and engineering as well as the arts and humanities, critical thinking is crucial in all courses and fields. Despite the fact that the types of evidence used to create arguments might vary greatly, the procedures and methods are generally the same. Both undergraduate and graduate levels of education demand critical thinking.

The development of efficient vaccinations and the efficacy of governments and regulators, who on a worldwide scale need to establish the threshold minimum criteria and resolve quarantine restrictions and travel barriers to promote the return of travel, are both absolutely necessary.

There have been several difficulties for travel advisers and consultants, such as the first attempt to deal with cancellations, refunds, and rebooking, frequently for little to no compensation, all of which were further impacted by an intensified crisis that goes far beyond the travel industry.

Consumers are nervous about travelling again and are seeking to professional travel advisors for information on what is safe, what is open, which hotels have implemented better hygienic measures, and they want an advocate there for them if something happens before, during, or after their trip. Moreover, consumers are looking for information on what is open. At the same time, passengers are eager to accept new techniques. For instance, in a recent poll carried out by Global Rescue, over 90% of respondents indicated that when they fly, they are willing to submit themselves to COVID-19 screening and testing.

When it comes to opportunities, the most important value proposition that travel agencies and travel advisers offer is good communication with their clients. This is not something that is particularly novel for certain agencies. However, for the majority of people, the crisis has increased the urgency of the need for these efforts to be stepped up and intensified. In the early days of COVID-19, when advisors made great efforts to get their clients home and have worked throughout the year to assist travellers in adjusting plans as travel suspensions have been implemented and extended, the true value of having a professional travel advisor has never been more evident than it was at that time.

Travel agents have been required to continue openly promoting their worth during the previous few months and will continue to do so in the years to come.

As we re-imagine the role of the travel agent in the future, we anticipate that the following three trends will steer the industry through the recovery and beyond:

1. The Traveller Behaviour

COVID-19 and country-specific procedures make some consumers wary of travelling again. According to an IATA survey^[iv], over 80% of travellers were as frightened about quarantine limitations as they were about contracting the illness.

Consumers need knowledge and credible assistance. An experienced travel advocate can help meet expectations. Travel advisers can highlight their value as a trusted resource at this time. To assist tourists move confidently, the personal connection becomes increasingly important, and a higher level of service is needed.

Safety comes first, and travellers' health and hygiene knowledge will continue to develop, affecting their travel expectations. Even with a vaccine, travellers will be more health conscious.

Travellers will worry about future outbreaks and their ability to return home if there is a shutdown.

Though the permanence of these transformations is unknown, the travel and tourism sector has a rare chance to rethink business models and consider its most valuable asset: its people.

We started a sector social impact campaign recently. Travelling is more than we realise, and our recollections are better than we recall. Travel and tourism benefit our lives and the local community more than people realise. Share your #togetherintravel #aworldofdifference travel stories.

2. The New Experience

Travellers increasingly value online customer confidence. Businesses should guarantee their own promotion and messaging is available, improve access to information through new forms, and clarify cancellation procedures since most information is gathered online[v].

Health, data, and travel insurance rules must be updated for travellers. By providing current materials and guiding travellers, travel agencies add value.

In a July 2020 Virtuoso global advisor survey, 43% expected travel to recover slowly, with more than half expecting it to take six months or longer, but 53% saw the pandemic as an opportunity to reimagine products and services. 83% felt that flexible cancellation and rebooking rules were essential to regaining consumer confidence, especially for foreign travel.

3. Innovation & Technology

Stay-at-home orders are driving digital adoption and consumption, and customers now anticipate contactless technology and others for safe and easy travel. Our business is automating “not just its online platforms but also its processes.” As remote work and digital identities become common, cybersecurity is becoming increasingly crucial.

Stay-at-home orders have accelerated digitalization in the Travel & Tourism business, with more consumers adopting technology for online buying and virtual meetings. With contact tracing tools, travellers remain concerned about cyber dangers and data privacy.

The travel industry needs both innovation and human interaction.

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