

What is Critical Thinking?

According to Cottrell (2019, p254) to think critically it is necessary for us to:

- Examine and re-examine an idea or argument.
- Gain information, asking the right questions.
- Identify the reasons behind the information.
- Reflect, on what is to be achieved by the result.

To think critically 'is about questioning and learning with an open mind' (University of Leeds, 2020, Critical Thinking).

Problem Solving

University of Bradford (2020) suggests that:

- Problem solving is something we all use daily, in our personal and professional lives.
- To identify the best approach to solve a problem, it calls for either: a methodical, logical, or creative response.

In practice when working on activities such as, numeracy. To achieve a learning outcome, you may:

- Extend the learning by progressing onto next steps.
- Re-examine the learning approach and provide support to achieve a more realistic outcome.

As a result, showing a level of differentiation within the classroom.

Questioning

LSME (2019) describes Bloom's Taxonomy, as a hierarchy of learning behaviours. These skills can be applied to teaching and assessing children's progress, while developing their own critical thinking skills, such as:

- Comprehension.
- Finding solutions.
- Coming to a sensible conclusion.

Bloom's Taxonomy can benefit lesson plans and be applied in the classroom, for instance:

- During discussions, enabling extended thinking.
- Asking the right questions. What is...? How many...? What would you ask...?

Unbiased Analysis

When taking an unbiased approach to critical thinking, you would need to push aside your personal feelings and focus on the facts alone (Agoos, 2019). However, Richard and Rudinow (1988) suggests that you can never truly be unbiased:

- Past life experiences and friendships will shape your views.
- To overcome biases acknowledgement is required.

Richard and Rudinow continue suggesting 'bias distorts our thinking and thereby obstructs the pursuit of truth' (Richard and Rudinow, 1988, p.126).

Experience has shown that bias can exist in practice. Two children from different social backgrounds. Both had worn an unacceptable article of clothing, which led to:

- Two different outcomes.
- A professional dialogue between colleagues.
- Reflection, on own biases within our practices.

Critical Thinking Skills



(APASS Educational group, 2009-2019)

In Summary

Presented with the idea of critical thinking, it generated feelings of negativity and unpleasantness. However, after conducting a literature research, I discovered a wealth of ideas and knowledge, which developed my understanding. I believe in the past I may have taken information on face value, rather than actively learning. I have learnt the importance of critical thinking and as a result, I intend to continue to apply these skills to my practice and education.

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(Depositphotos, 2009-2002)

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