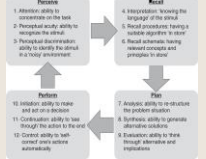


Critical thinking skills  
in student learning

Introduction

To explore what is meant by Critical thinking is to mostly question all information researched by theorists and not accept these findings without analysing first. Having said this, there are often barriers from doing so, due to personal and emotional reasons and it can become difficult.

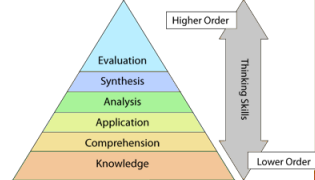
It is a useful skill to be able to critically think and manage our own views and argue those points convincingly, without developing a passionate response. These are all essential skills and qualities for students during higher education, as it will build our own self confidence to continue to discuss and engage in these questions and arguments. By continuing to apply opinions and raise them for debate, they will give plenty of opportunities for further alternatives and conclusions. Several researchers have provided examples and descriptions of the processes in critical thinking. Below show two theorists' descriptions on how cognitive methods can be a process of knowledge.



Source :Romiszowski's skill-cycle (1981)

Romiszowski's investigation into cognitive processing methods, were heavily influenced by Bloom's Taxonomy as seen below .

Source: Blooms Taxonomy (1956)



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Time management

Time management is something we all practice and if done well it can have a positive effect on what specific activity we need carried out. It demands self-discipline which can take time to contend with but reinforce this with good habits it will get a lot easier. When prepared it ensures a well-organised approach. With the right motivation it will improve a student's time management utilising the hours and days effectively. Therefore, gaining more time on research and completing assignments in a timely manner.

As stated, and researched by Ron Ritchard (2015, p. 88) one of the 8 cultural forces needed in every learning situation.

Time [tīm] noun: The “containers,” consisting of measurable periods, that we allocate, assign or use to accomplish tasks of our choosing. An entity through which we recall, sequence, and make sense of our experience. A qualitative dimension through which our experiences flow, allowing us to speak of good times, time dragging by, losing track of time, and so on in order to mark its value. As a culture shaper, all of these conceptions of time are in play. Our allocations of periods of time reflect our values. Our sequencing of events, construction of moments, and reflections on actions allow us to scaffold and draw a connecting thread through learning occasions to create a unity. Finally, our ability to generate, sustain, and capitalize on periods of total engagement allow us to create the energy needed for learning and thinking.

Other good strategies to minimize disruptions are establishing routines, value time given, and learning to prioritise. If students use these strategies in higher education to help guide with managing their time and appreciate this early on in their studies. They will ultimately achieve their best. Giving a feeling of better coping strategies and a sense of being in charge. Juggling many tasks and demands in personal life alongside studies can become overwhelming. It can become hard and stressful to fit everything in. (Cottrell , 2019) believes when identifying priorities, it can be effective to set a plan using diaries or planners to keep everything in order thus avoiding becoming overwhelmed.

10 steps to good time management

- **Be systematic** in time management
- **Find out** your time requirements
- **Clarify** how you use your time currently
- **Decide** how you want to spend your time
- **Prioritise** what is most important
- **Plan** what you will do when
- **Do it** keeping to your plan
- **Apply** time management techniques
- **Manage distractions** and procrastination
- **Monitor** keep checking it is all working

(Cottrell , 2019, p. 127)

Note taking

Taking notes is a useful way to remember key points in a lecture. It helps with any of the main points and ideas needed for assignments. Strategic note taking can help with processing information and involves active listening to write content given. It is a skill and can improve a learner's performance. (Prince, 2004) suggests that poor note taking by students are likely to struggle during their course and their performance may suffer as a result. Further research implies strategic note taking, overall improving students learning.

It is seen as a tool for cognitive processing. When writing things down students feel better equipped to remember information given during lectures. (Boyle , 2011) reiterates this by saying that actively listening and through lots of engagement all whilst writing down important information, allows students a better understanding of what they are learning. Using this skill, he implies that if not used strategically students will not benefit from note taking. Students should avoid large written pieces of information. Rather use abbreviations, key points and bullet points. Take clues given from the lecturer , such as theorists names or helpful resources to use but also resources not to use. The more effective notes' students take from a lecture the more they will take away to begin their research with a broader understanding.

Conclusion

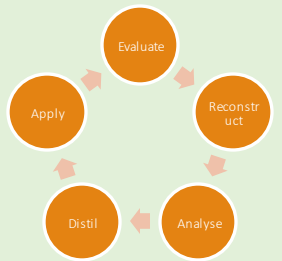
The three study skills highlighted are fundamental areas to influence critical thinking. They all support in developing the skills and qualities needed to help with progression and self-management. Creative thinking has been described by many theorists as 'the active use of our creative imaginations'. Swartz *et al* (1998, p.167) It should explore realms of possibilities and involve an independence to not conform to others' views. Expressing ideas in a way that will have a meaningful 'fresh' outcome.

Reflective learning

Reflective learning or critical reflection is a means of focusing our attention back to our own experience in students' academic learning. It can help support a student's learning and understanding in a particular way that led to change and transformation, recognising what was significant and important. Any issues that arise can help to identify patterns in their actions and over time. Even small changes can transform aspects , such that the way they see and act going forward.

Developing critical reflection gradually brings diverse and often unexpected benefits. Creating a routine for reflection gains in-depth analysis which can be helpful in terms of self-management and enriching professional practice. (Cottrell , 2011) states that deciding what you want to achieve from undertaking reflection is a good start. Some things to look at would be to ask - Why something went well? Why certain contributions aren't as effective as you would wish?

Once being clear on the purpose of your reflection in terms of performance, understanding and knowledge. It can be easier in what approach and appropriate action to focus on. By examining these it can show multiple perspectives.



Source: Stella Cottrell (2010)

Cottrell's core model consists of 5 stages. Adapt or delete any of these stages for own purpose or benefit. By thinking back over the experience, use of a journal or log to record findings gives opportunities to privately analyse, and for any effort needed to progress in future.

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