

Academic Skills-LCBB4012

Component1:Coursework Individual Written Report

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1. Introduction

Critical thinking is a skill that has recently been incorporated into the study process at university. With its help, students can get a better understanding of the subject, evaluate the obtained information and form a well-founded position. In addition, the development of this skill enables one to process a large amount of information in the modern world, as well as to reflect on different points of view and come to logical conclusions. The report is aimed at demonstrating the importance of the development of critical thinking for academic success, at giving a clear definition of the concept, and at showing one of the effective strategies for the development of critical thinking in academic contexts.

2. Definition of Critical Thinking

First of all, it is important to give a general definition of the concept of critical thinking. A wide definition of critical thinking will be as follows: it is the process of active, skillful, and effective interpretation of information, in a form that is creative, disciplined, and based on the objectives set (Facione, 2015). Another explanation of the concept was given by Ennis (2018), who stated that this “reasonable and reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do” (p. 165). The definition of critical thinking in academic contexts will be as follows: the process of learning where a student analyses information, asks questions and supports his position with relevant evidence.

3. Importance of Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is of great importance for academic success as it allows the learner to analyse information effectively and find connections. Also, by means of this skill, it is possible to find the evidence for one’s own position and form logical arguments. There are several reasons why critical thinking is essential for the student’s success. The first reason is that this skill gives an opportunity to get knowledge better. For example, by using one’s critical thinking skills, a student of psychology can more effectively assess a text (a journal article or a textbook). One of the first steps in the interpretation of this or that scientific text is to evaluate it. In this process, students should review the information about the author’s name and affiliation, the year of publication, the references, the relevance of the material for the curriculum, etc. Without the skills of critical thinking, such an analysis would be very shallow.

The second reason is that this set of skills and abilities help a student to be an independent learner. The reason is that critical thinkers are more likely to be self-directed and open-minded. In other words, such students do not take into account their own prejudices when drawing conclusions (Paul & Elder, 2019). In addition, the autonomy of the learner is also encouraged by critical thinking. This, in turn, is one of the main goals of university education. It should also be added that critical thinking can greatly help the student in his academic writing tasks.

For example, by using their critical thinking skills, students will be able to better present their position, showing both sides of the issue. It is necessary to take into account that such work as essay writing, the use of critical thinking will help to give full consideration to the arguments that are both in favour and against. . The third reason for the essentiality of critical thinking is that with its help, the student is able to improve his decision-making and problem-solving skills in many different areas.

For instance, critical thinking will help with proper data interpretation in science or with a deep understanding of some specific philosophical or ethical issue in

humanities. The practical importance of critical thinking for many areas of study is also shown by its wide application in business schools, where this set of skills and abilities helps students with managerial decision-making and ethical aspects. In general, critical thinking, as a particular set of skills and abilities, is one of the keys to academic success.

4. Critical Thinking Strategy

One of the most important critical thinking strategies is Bloom's Taxonomy. This well-known educational strategy was introduced by Bloom (1956) and later revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The general idea of Bloom's Taxonomy is that in the process of learning it is necessary to move from simple understanding to more complex.

If this strategy is applied to the student's academic activity, this can mean that at the very first stage it is required to understand the information. At the second stage, it is necessary to be able to analyse it, while the third is the process of the evaluation of the data that the student obtained. Finally, the highest stage is the level of creation, when a learner comes up with some new, on his own.

In terms of the student's independent learning, this educational strategy can be very useful, because by using it the learning process itself will become an intellectual challenge. For example, while reading an academic article, one can use the four steps described above: at the first one, one should make sure that one understands the key points of the article in question, at the second stage, it is necessary to properly analyse the point of view of the authors and their argumentation. At the third level, the student should also find the weak spots in the authors' conclusions. Finally, at the fourth stage, one should be able to offer one's own insights, related to the subject of the article, that have not been offered by its authors. The final recommendation is to use the levels of Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide during one's own study.

When a student takes notes, draws up an essay plan, or reads an article, he can ask himself questions that allow him to rise to one of the levels described above. For example, at the very first stage, the student might want to ask himself a question, such as "Do I understand this?" At the next stage, the question "What evidence is provided by the authors to support their argument?" will be appropriate, while the question "What are the weaknesses of the authors' argument?" can be used at the third level. At the fourth level, the student can work with the question "What else can I suggest, which is not in the text?"

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is possible to state that critical thinking is one of the main skills that every student is required to develop, if he or she wants to achieve success in the university. Critical thinking is a set of skills and abilities, thanks to which a student can interpret the information he or she has received in an objective way, to consider both sides of the question and to build one's own, well-grounded arguments. The possibility to carry out one's own, independent work on the development of critical thinking is provided by the application of the principles of Bloom's Taxonomy.

6. References

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