

Critical Thinking

Introduction

According to Scriven and Paul (1987), critical thinking is the process of analysing and evaluating information extracted from various sources such as personal experience and communication with others.

Comparing this to the thoughts of Linda Elder (2007) who describes critical thinking as being the highest level quality of thinking as it involves being self guided and self disciplined leading to a more open mind.

It could be argued that Scriven's definition of critical thinking focus' on what the process of critical thinking actually is whereas Elders explanation defines what needs to be done to be able to think critically.

Everyone thinks critically and it is crucial at every age and in all aspects of life. This is according to Cottrell (2017) who gives examples of how they apply critical thinking in to every day life. For example, when people think critically they pay more attention to the world around them. They are also aware of the consequences that they will face according to their actions and of those around them.

Time Management

Mind Tools, describes time management as being an organisation tool to determine how much time is spent on certain activities.

There are many benefits of managing time effectively. For example, by planning their time accordingly they will reduce the amount of stress that they will experience. This is vitally important as it will lead to a happier life.

Time management is extremely important for students and there are many strategies available to help them. There are often times where a student is finding it difficult to organise a time to study as they are trying to fit in their other commitments such as work, social life, family. Students can undertake different methods to make it easier such as practicing their time management and focusing on what is most important.

Cottrell (2010 p.120) explains three effective tools that are beneficial when planning time effectively. These are; action plans where they are able to create deadlines. Schedules to enable them to put all of their tasks in order of completion. Lastly, a diary where they are able to see more clearly what tasks that they have approaching within the next week/days.

Plagiarism

When somebody presents their work and ideas as their own without consent, which are not theirs, this is known as plagiarism. When a student uses somebody else's work and ideas in their work they need to give the original person full acknowledgment. Sometimes plagiarism is unintentional but many of cases it is intentional however, both cases are disciplinary offences.

There could be a number of different reasons why a student may intentionally plagiarise. For example, they may have poor time management so they have copied work from somewhere else as they have had no time to complete it themselves. Another reason could be that the student did not listen or understand what was being taught in the lecture.

To avoid any unintentional plagiarism, it is best to create own notes in lectures and not copy the lecturers notes word for word. It is extremely important that when information is being gathered, whether from a book or online, it is important to make a note of the sources as they are going along in their reference list.

Critical Reading

When reading critically people become more inquisitive by investigating the evidence and arguments that they have read. Learning to read critically will reduce the amount of time that they spend reading unnecessary information as they develop the skills to skim, scan and close read.

Skim reading allows students to retrieve a summary of what they are reading without reading the text word for word. They glance over the text and quickly gather information such as dates, names, places to get a general idea of what it is about and whether it is relevant to what they need.

When scan reading, they know the specific key words that they need to be looking for so they are able to scan over the entire text from top to bottom and find these key words.

Close reading allows them to read the text attentively word for word with purpose. Close reading is the most vital skill during studying as they are not just reading but reading the text carefully with purpose, engaging in what they have read.

Note Taking

Note taking is described as being annotated to aid with preparation and planning. It is the process of writing down and recording the key points of information (Merriam Webster 1828).

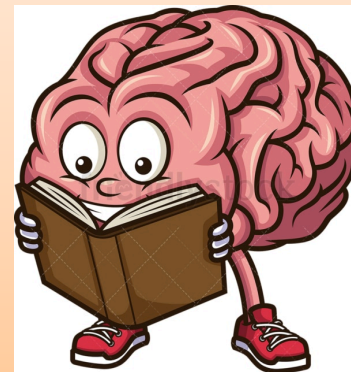
There are many different ways of how to make notes and each technique is unique among different individuals. When notes are being made, whether they are in a lecture, a meeting or watching a video, they are retrieving the important information that they will need. To do this they need to select the relevant information that they have read/heard and analyse it before summerising and organising it.

Oxford Learning (2017) gives examples of different methods that are effective when taking notes. The mapping method is where they branch ideas off on to subtopics. This method is more beneficial to students who find it difficult to take notes. Research carried out by Toi (2009) demonstrates how mind mapping works best for children as they are able to recall words more effectively from a diagram in comparison to writing and reading lists.

The sentencing method is noting down the main and important parts of the information that you have been given. This way they are able to gain a sustainable amount of information rapidly in a simplified manner.

Conclusion

Note taking, time management and critical reading falls in line to sustain the quality of your critical thinking. Critical thinking is not just important for students, it is important and used in every day life as it enables them to find and understand the connections between ideas resulting in them making a positive change on their life, professionally and personally.



(Source: Friendly Stock 2021)

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