

What is Critical Thinking?

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Skill #1 Reasoning

According to Cottrell (2005a, p. xiii) “reasons are the contributing arguments put forward to support the overall argument or line of reasoning”.

- We need to find the propositions and premises to help find the reasons.
- Identify the reasons to find the argument.
- Finding these will further help us with other skills needed in critical thinking.
- Once reasons have been identified they need to be evaluated.

Skill #2 Evaluating Evidence

- Evidence must be researched to support propositions and premises.
- This is to conclude whether they are true or false.
- Critical thinking require us to be able to evaluate evidence to determine if it is accurate.
- Evidence can be split into primary and secondary sources. According to Cottrell (2005b, p. 126) “most types of evidence can be split into two groups, primary and secondary sources”.
- It is imperative to be able to thoroughly evaluate all types of sources in order to make a reasoned factual opinion without bias.

Introduction

Critical thinking has varying definitions. In higher education becoming an accomplished critical thinker is important. Developing the right skills and improving how we work. Beyer (1995) cited in The University Of Essex summaries critical thinking as “making clear, reasoned judgments”. Here are some important skills that form part of proactive critical thinking. These skills can all be developed in order to become a better critical thinker.



(Source: The Peak Performance Centre, no date).

Skill #3 Bias

- In The Cambridge dictionary (2020) bias is defined as “the action of supporting or opposing a particular person or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal opinions to influence your judgement”.
- Bias is being for or against something.
- Bias should only be formed after evaluating the evidence.
- Research and reading should be undertaken in order to form a reasoned factual opinion rather than personal projector.

What? Where? When?
Who? Why? How?

Conclusion

From the different skills outlined it is clear to see that critical thinking is a combination of skills that pull together to make us more accomplished critical thinkers.

In order to be successful in academia being able to identify these skills and develop them will in turn allow us to become better in our subject. Being able to quickly identify the argument, evaluate the evidence and make a factual observation to form knowledge and better understanding of the subject we need to study.

(Source: TinyBuddha, no date).

Reference List

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