

Understanding critical thinking and skills that accompany

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What is critical thinking?

Critical thinking is being able to both analyse and evaluate information to then come to an objective conclusion. It is also the ability to look at other perspectives not only ones personal opinion and therefore being able to build an argument. It takes time to learn how to successfully think critically (Alexander street 2019). Cottrell (2019) also states that critical thinking is taking a piece of information and both evaluating and understanding the meaning and reasoning behind it. Whilst investigating it is important to remain self-aware to ensure that findings remain objective.

According to Wireless Philosophy(2014) critical thinking is understanding and examining the strength of an argument and there for presenting with a conclusion. It is key to distinguish between good and bad reasons as to why an argument would be either deductive or ampliative. A deductive argument is an argument that is factual, fundamentally true with a guaranteed conclusion whereas an ampliative argument makes a conclusion probable but not guaranteed.

Note taking

According to Cottrell(2019) note-taking is an essential part of being a student. Notes can be taken from many different sources such as lectures, books or articles. Making notes is very useful to work off while completing assignments and also to remind you if there is something that needs to be researched further. It is important to ensure that the notes are clear in order for you to understand them when you look back at a later date. Ensuring that the notes that are taken are correct and relevant to the topic is also key to ensure that when they are used to complete an assignment the correct research is there to support your work.

When note taking during a lecture it would help to only note down key points or words instead of complete sentences as doing so could cause you to then miss out on other important information or examples the lecturer is sharing.

According to Chandles(2017) it takes time and patience for a new student to be able to take notes effectively. There are many ways to take notes not only using a notepad and pen but technology such as an ipad or the notes app on a mobile device could also be a favoured In order to help keep note taking interesting and also organised some may choose to make notes using sticky notes or flashcards .

Researching skill

Whilst carrying out research on set topics for assignments it is important that as a student you are able to evaluate information and ensure that the information is reliable and from a reputable source. There are many factors to consider when carrying out research the age of the source could mean that the information is outdated and there may be more up to date information to be found. It is also important to be able to recognise if a piece of information is factual or written based on a personal opinion (Day 2018).

Moore (2010) states that research is a large part of all students preparation for assignments. Whilst carrying out research students are developing their knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic area. The research can be taken from several different sources such as articles, books, surveys or questionnaires or many other sources. It is important to ensure that the information found is factual and from a credible source. Both Wilson and Bedford (2009) state that research can be daunting at the beginning but it is very similar to writing an assignment, there is a planning section followed by the implementation and the conclusion. Meaning determining what to research, choosing research methods that best suit ones self, planning and carrying out the research and lastly analysing the findings and using the findings to write and complete the assignment.

Time management

Whilst studying at university time management is a key skill to have. Learning to manage time efficiently and effectively throughout a degree can be challenging although it is possible once one has been able to identify the skills and tools that work best for themselves as individuals. According to Cottrell(2019) the more time that is put into all aspects of a degree such as research, preparation for exams and assignments the more likely a student would be to do well. Being able to effectively manage time is key to a successful university degree.

Both Macmillan and Weyers (2012) believe that people who manage their time to their greatest ability tend to be more successful. It is a skill that is developed over time and there are many different tools that can be used to assist in effective time management. Such as diaries, wall planners, lists or creating a timetable with deadlines.

Whilst working on time management prioritization is important in order to be able to identify all tasks that need completing and then being able to prioritize those that are most important.



Conclusion

Alone these skills would not be strong enough to enable a student to be a critical thinker. Over the duration of a degree these skills could be developed together in order to get a clear understanding of critical thinking.

(Source: Building children's critical and analytical skills 2021)

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