

Since its founder John Dewey introduced the term into the educational setting in 1910. Hitchcock, (2020.) It is apparent that the topic of Critical Thinking has been subject to research worldwide for decades. Researchers, Theorists and Authors record sources identifying some of the essential skills said to be required to enable a more dynamic and purposeful way of thinking. In depth study into just a few of these sources suggest that practicing critical thinking methods can lead to an enhanced and efficient way of using the mind, applicable not just in the learning environment but in everyday circumstances. This presentation highlights some relevant sources suggesting that the knowledge of how to think critically can expand the mind and the way it is used, enriching productive academic study.

Managing Time

According to Cottrell (2013, p. 1) People are not born with a set of built-in study skills. The art of finding the most successful study skills set, is gained over time through self-discovery, self-reflection, practice, learning from mistakes and utilising the appropriate feedback. Cottrell (2013, p.1) refers to these as “basic approaches” to strengthen a person's unique ability to study successfully and get the most from the individuals learning experience.

Tracey and Leinberger (2021, p.19-22) share their strategy to deal with the largest of the day's obstacles/demands first at any given time. When faced with a list of challenges and responsibilities these researchers believe in always digesting the most challenging item first, resisting the easier option every time.

Cottrell's (2013) theory points more towards the student identifying the best moments to carry out the more challenging tasks, suggesting that people have specific times during the day when the more difficult tasks are easier to complete productively.

Tracey (2021, p.17) uses the term “Waves of the Ocean” to describe the sometimes-overwhelming daily tasks and responsibilities that are relentless and distracting. Cottrell (2013, p. 132) address's similar in her ‘10 Steps to Effective Time Management’ suggesting that managing distractions and procrastination is key.

In the opinion of Cottrell (2013) she believes this can be eased by creating to do lists to reduce distraction and fear of unfinished tasks.

While sharing varied points of view, the combined theories from both authors appear to compel the reader to face tasks with focus and planning using strategies to avoid moving off topic when faced with inevitable interruptions.

What skills and qualities influence the development of critical thinking?

Research and Critical Reading

Eales-Reynolds, L.J. et al. (2013, p.51) Writes regarding the need to practice the skills to become an established critical thinker. The Authors refer to the practice of “exercising the brain” to improve the thinking skills required for both critical reading and writing success. This chapter continues to suggest how reading for a purpose is an important strategy to employ, along with the desired need to identify and analyse information obtained, question validity, and explore source origins. The chapter urges the reader to question and reflect on the information found during research, to explore the abstract and more importantly, be thorough when sourcing reputable knowledge.

Cottrell (2013, p. 154-155) believes an important skill in Critical Reading is to recognise the highest quality material when searching through sources, linking these directly to the subject specified. Having a firm understanding of where to look and how to look is also a crucial skill in line with Cottrell's, (2013) study. One of the key points identified in this chapter refers to sources provided by the University or College. Cottrell (2013) believes that accessing resources throughout the course in which each student is studying, for example, handbooks, virtual lessons, and refined knowledge delivered by teaching staff, is a supreme place to begin with reading and research.

Both books discuss the dangers of Plagiarism in detail and recognising through scrutiny the quality and nature of each source, while constantly considering the purpose. Making sure information used for further study is well cited, appropriate and in keeping with the question posed.

To conclude: It appears that researchers such as Cottrell (2013) and Eales-Reynolds, L.J. et al. (2013) Believe Critical thinking skills, developed over time can become an invaluable way of expanding the mind. Utilising these skills and looking at theories and techniques evident to becoming a critical thinker can by all accounts, improve the caliber of work produced. The knowledge presented by quality sources who have studied the art of Critical thinking and its categories has molded this topic to develop into a skill set that can be used both in academic and everyday life. Managing time, research, critical reading and academic writing are just some of the skills identified through evidence researched that influence the subject of Critical Thinking.

Academic Writing

On the topic of Academic writing Cottrell (2013, p. 278) Suggests a few activities described as 'useful' when writing at university level. An example being, to quickly jot down ideas and relevant specifics that enter the mind during reading and discussion. Cottrell (2013) advises that once written these points and details can be organised and re-written concisely. She also states the importance and benefits of developing drafts, from a rough outline to the final finished piece. Another suggestion Cottrell (2013) makes in this chapter is to record voice memos to return to scribe later which the Author suggests can highlight interesting facts that may have been initially overlooked.

According to a video recorded by Southern Cross University. (2020) Successful academic writing is based on evidence not on opinion. Key points mentioned; To only take the position of building on knowledge and information that already clearly exists, casting no assumptions.

Construct arguments methodically while being able to back them up with credible substantial sources. The subject of Critical Referencing appears at the center of both resources in relation to critical writing.

Each source presents concise guidance which is visually relative to the other in its context. Both, directing the reader to carefully select how to present the information they accumulate from the appropriate resources, enabling them to have a deeper understanding and develop a written piece that meets the requirements of the assignment.

(Source: Own background image. 2021)

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