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What is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability to question, analyse and seek all sides of an argument or evidence to make a justifiable independent conclusion using your own knowledge, experience and research.

Paul and Elder (2020) believes that Critical Thinking is a technique students use to evaluate each aspect of an argument and analyse with a view to enhance the classification of thought.

According to Paul and Elder (2020) Critical thinking relies on willpower and willingness to amend ones own personal views and having the ability to think objectively and be intellectually disciplined, using your skills to observe and scrutinize information to form your own independent conclusion.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time Management is a method students are able to use to organize time effectively in order to use time efficiently and to gain the best outcomes. As a student you will benefit greatly from developing your time management skills. You will find that being able to evaluate and organise your time between having a social life, studying, family life and maintaining employment is incredibly beneficial towards achievement in your university education.

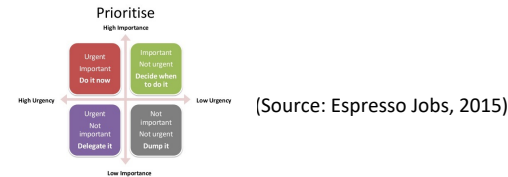
McMillan and Weyers, (2020) believe that people who achieve success have the ability to prioritise tasks, work swiftly and efficiently to meet deadlines and the capability to ensure tasks are completed.

McMillan and Weyers (2020) recommends the use of diaries to note down important dates, for example lectures, classes, sporting events. A daily planner or wall planner can also be used in this way. Creating a time-table of study is another useful way to keep track of daily schedules and timing and creating a list of priorities you have to ensure you understand and know what needs to be completed each day.

Another way to manage time effectively is to assess if activities in your life are taking up useful time that can be delegated elsewhere. To do this (Moore et al. 2010 p 141) recommends using 4 steps to manage time effectively. This method asks you to look at your daily routines and decide what things you can change to manage time more effectively.

For example, do you over commit yourself to things that are far less important to the task in hand? If the answer is yes, then look at these tasks and identify what you can abandon. Are there other commitments that are more important but can be put off until after exam or assignment deadline dates?

It is also useful to look at how you work and assess whether you are working towards unachievable goals by being a perfectionist. Lastly look at responsibilities you have taken and assess whether they could be shared fairly with others. Looking at the image below, it divides priorities into 4 categories ranging from Urgent to not urgent and not important. Using methods such as this allows you to organise your priorities and identify areas in which you can make positive changes to your daily schedule.



NOTE TAKING

Note taking is the method of writing down details whilst reading, watching or listening to information being shared. This enables the student to understand, organise, recall and analyse all the information effectively at a later time. Making draft notes is incredibly useful in the recording of information. It enables you to note down the details as briefly or as detailed as you need which allows you to use the draft notes to study. When using draft notes to study it allows you to enhance them by analysing and rewriting. When doing so it forces you to go over the information you learned in class and allows time to review, add or change information.

According to Cotteral (2019) there is no particular method to note taking that supersedes another, however it is beneficial to consider what it is you need to decipher your notes. Cotteral (2019) suggests that you ask yourself what information is needed, how you will use the information and when, have you duplicated this information? And what questions do you want to answer with this information? Some students use paper and pen to take draft notes however some will prefer to type using a computer. There is no correct way, and it is important for students to find what method works best for you. Typing information may allow a student to record information quicker than handwriting however typing information can often lead to taking down word for word which can be time consuming and can lead to information overload.

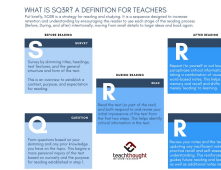
A BBC work life article (Roessingh, University of Calgary, 2020) claims that regular use of pen and paper improves learning and strengthens the brains capacity for memorising and recalling information. Also, when taking notes by hand your hands are working in tune with your brain to create and build upon your internal memory.

<https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20200910-the-benefits-of-note-taking-by-hand>

Reading

(Price and Maier, 2007, p. 217) claims that Reading is an essential skill a person needs beyond school. Reading academically gives you the opportunity to scrutinize information using a range of strategies to expand on the details more skilfully. Being able to read critically is to analyse, compare and assess what different writers have said about a certain topic and draw your own conclusion.

A popular method of developing reading skills is the SQ3R method, Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review (Price and Maier, 2007, p. 229). Price and Maier (2007) suggests that using this method enables you to become more interactive with your texts. Begin with surveying the text, skimming the chapter to determine if it is relevant to your purpose. Next ask the question what are you looking for within the text? Is it relevant to your focus of work? If the text is pertinent to the purpose of your research then read the chapter using smaller sections at a time to discover the main points. The next step is to recall the text read and choose the main points that enable you to answer the main question. The final step is to review by recalling the information obtained and check it answers the questions you were looking to answer.



(Cotteral, 2019, p. 213) believes that developing your reading and skills enables you to reach a higher level of academic study. Having the ability to select relevant information to read, managing the amount of reading required, use critical thinking to analyse text and deciding what to use are skills needed to develop academic reading. Cotteral recommends reading selectively, using the reading list provided, use up to date information, select information relevant to the question or assignment, use well known sources and use your reading skills to ascertain what information is needed.

Conclusion

To conclude this academic poster, I believe that reading, note taking and effective time management are fundamentally important skills needed to strengthen abilities for academic success. Using these 3 study skill strategies enable you to develop and use critical thinking in your studies allowing you to question analyse and devise your own conclusion on subjects and topics which answers will vary from person to person.

Reference List

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