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CRITICAL THINKING –THINKING IS POWER

Introduction: According to Ennis (1985, p.45)

“ Critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do”

Skills needed for critical thinking are; Observation, Analysis, Interpretation, Reflection, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation, Problem solving, Decision making. This can be overwhelming when listed as such but what we forget is that we use critical thinking skills daily and it is proven that the earlier we introduce these to children we can strengthen their foundations in critical thinking and ensure that learnt skills and qualities follow them through into adult hood making them a more rounded learner and adult.

Over the years many theorists such as Edward De Bono and his theory of “Six Thinking Hats” (1985) have looked at how to make an every day skill of thinking be less overwhelming, time consuming and emotionally led. His aim is to separate emotion from logic and by using the visual prompt of the hats the learner, learns to define their thinking and the time allotted to that type of thinking.

<https://tipsinterviews.blogspot.com/2013/12/edward-de-bono-six-thinking-hats.html>, (On line 07.11.20)



Firstly Problem Solving is a skill we need for Critical thinking if we think of the Blue Hat – Process. We will work with the learner to organise their thinking. We can do this by brain storming using, Mind mapping or class discussions. On reflection, most of us do this everyday with lists without realising this is critical thinking.

Secondly Analysis is another skill for critical thinking if we think of the White Hat – Facts. We can work with the learner to encourage questions such as What? Why? How? To truly understand information. We do this in Science, Maths and Geography. On reflection most of us will use this when deciding if a post on social media is fake news.

Thirdly Decision Making is a vital skill to critical thinking and if we use the Red Hat – Feelings. Not only will it allow us to use our innate instinct to go with our gut feelings but it will also remind us not to go back to our Neanderthal reaction to problems and run. We have moved on and all sexes are in touch with their feelings in 2020. Drama, Art and English language use this hat best. Reflecting on elections and voting most of us wear this hat. If harnessed correctly and using the red hat we can move onto the next hat which is creativity.

Conclusion: In Summary we need to think about a topic in an objective, critical way. Identify different arguments in relation to the topic. Evaluate a point of view to determine if it is true and is their strength behind the words. Check facts for weaknesses' or negative points. Are there benefits behind a statement or argument. Be creative with ideas form structured reasoning for an argument to be put forward. The theory of Six Thinking Hats will help myself and my students by using the hats as visual prompts, by giving time to each thought process, time management will improve as will confidence, organisation of thoughts and writing. To build on this theorist and increase learning the way forward is further readings and question, question!

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