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Critical Thinking

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What is critical thinking?

There are many definitions of critical thinking depending on the book or web page you use for research. According to (Eales-Reynolds et al. 2013, p. 9) Critical thinking is questioning everything, to help us evaluate and enhance our own understanding. (Cottrell, 2005, p.47) Believes Critical Thinking is the ability to recognising a good argument even if it goes against our own belief, and not following a poor argument just because we agree with it. Critical thinking is used in all areas of life from basic living skills to academic studies.

Analyse

To analyse is studying information in detail and taking it apart, in order to discover more about its content and origins and to identify supporting evidence. (Open university, 1999-2020).

Its all about asking the right questions.

- Compare – Can It compare to other information?
- Linking – Where is the relationship?
- Organize – How can I categories?
- Outline – What is relevant?

In our day to day lives we are constantly analysing what is happening around us, how we perform a task and in the current situation we analysing risk. In my studies I have used critical thinking a lot without realizing analysing information for assignments asking myself if its relevant to the piece I am writing.

Understand

To understand is to make sense of the information, in order to summaries and retell the main points in your own words. (open university, 1999-2020). Analysing and understanding work together in critical thinking .

- Classifying – Why does it fit?
- Interpreting – What is the main point?
- Inferring – Where is the reasoning?
- Showing – How can I paraphrase this?

We need to understand the information we are researching, if we do not, we can be influenced in the wrong direction. In school and further education we are exposed to a high amount of information and we must use our critical thinking skills to break it down and find what is relevant, what is the truth and what it means to us.

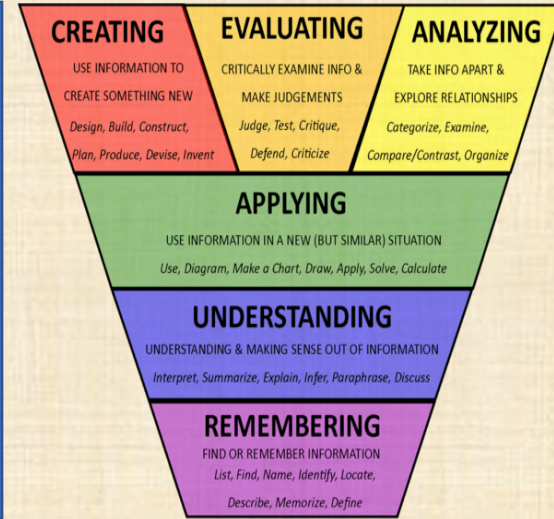
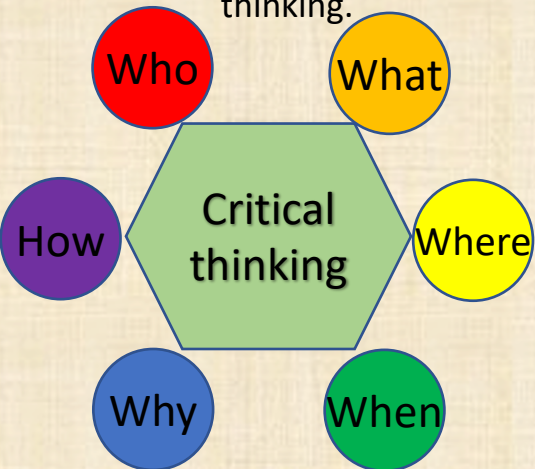


Figure 1, Bloom: Taxonomy
<https://bokcenter.harvard.edu/taxonomies-learning>

Six questions of critical thinking.



Evaluate

To evaluate is use knowledge and understanding, to identify and evaluate sources of information, which is then used critically to support a conclusion (DfEE/QCA, 1999, p29).

- Checking – Where has it come from?
- Judge – What is more important?
- Argue – Why is this of value?
- Select – Can you defend?

We are constantly evaluating our own and others disscissions, analysing and understanding "why?", in our studies we will evaluate a lot of information, however it is very important that we must not allow our own prejudices do not cloud our ability to see the wider and smaller points. We can have an opinion but we must not be closed for that opinion to change.

Apply

To apply is to accurately implement the information found, to support a clear view of your own ideas, or to use it to enhance and broaden your knowledge. (Lovell. 2018, p3)

- Demonstrate – How can I show this?
- Choosing – Why have I chosen this?
- Developing – Which approach would I use?
- Problem solving --What would happen if?

In our studies the application of information and ideas is the hardest part, turning the knowledge that we have learned and develop the information in to our own work, explore new ideas and the then share our ideas and knowledge with others, but also be prepared to defend our decisions. Everyday we are problem solving from deciding what to wear each morning, how we are going to perform a task in work or even entering in to a relationship.

Summary

Critical thinking plays a major part in our daily lives, and more so when it comes to our academic studies. We must question everything we research, read and what we are told. By doing this we can gain a clear approach to further knowledge and form an unbiased opinion.

If we look at Bloom's Taxonomy diagram in figure 1 we can see how the four skills featured on this poster fits to Bloom's pyramid, In doing research for this poster I have found the steps of critical thinking are not straight forward and you will dip in and out of each step when needed.

When researching in future I can see Understanding the information is key to working out how it fits and how to use the information. Applying the information I think I am going to find the hardest solving the problem of how to use the information in my own ideas and transforming it to my own words.

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