# What makes a critical thinker?

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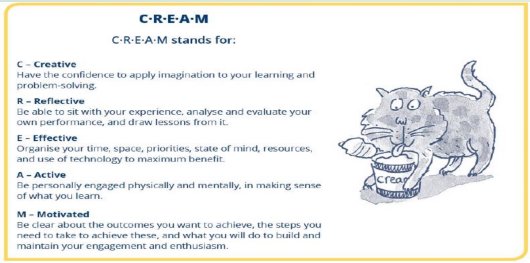
**Module code: ECGE4005P**


C·R·E·A·M

C·R·E·A·M stands for:

**C – Creative**
Have the confidence to apply imagination to your learning and problem-solving.

**R – Reflective**
Be able to sit with your experience, analyse and evaluate your own performance, and draw lessons from it.

**E – Effective**
Organise your time, space, priorities, state of mind, resources, and use of technology to maximum benefit.

**A – Active**
Be personally engaged physically and mentally, in making sense of what you learn.

**M – Motivated**
Be clear about the outcomes you want to achieve, the steps you need to take to achieve these, and what you will do to build and maintain your engagement and enthusiasm.

## Introduction

According to the father of critical thinking Mr John Dewey (1910), critical thinking is another term for an educational goal. Critical thinking originates from the finding and the effort of solving a problem. This form of thinking is a cognitive thinking that is linked to using our minds.

***"We can have facts without thinking but we cannot have thinking without facts."***
***- John Dewey (1916)***

## Skill 1- Creativity.

According to the work of Stella Cottrell (2011), C in the C.R.E.A.M strategy stands for 'Creative'. This means that you are able to confidently apply imagination to, not only your problem solving techniques but also your learning. By having this skill you are able to ask questions that are relevant to any assumptions that may occur, there for giving you an in-depth, valid and factful synthesis. By being creative you will the ability to find new ways to research as apposed to simply scrolling through a website or opening a book, which in turn helps you generate new and unique ideas for your projects and assignments.

## Skill 2- Time management.

In the Cambridge dictionary it says that time management is having the ability to utilize your available time productively and effectively. This is especially important to learners and employees when having to work towards deadlines. If you fail to manage your time efficiently then this risks late hand-in's for work, raised stress levels trying to fit everything into a small timescale and the inability to clear your mind and focus solely on the task in hand. There are many ways you can manage your time. For example, when looking at the week ahead, you could timetable your to-do list staring with the most important.

## Skill 3- Open mindedness.

The Cambridge dictionary describes open-mindedness as having the ability and willingness to consider the ideas and the opinions of others that are different to your own. An open-minded person should be able to acknowledge that it is possible that though you may believe in something, it is not always necessarily right. As an open-minded critical thinker values the fact that some people may disagree with them. It is important to respect other people's views and allow them to be able to express them. You should be able to have your ideas challenged without becoming offended or defensive.

## Skill 4- Self-care.

The NHS's definition of self-help is ensuring you look after your physical health and also nurturing your emotional and mental well-being. Examples of this could be taking time for yourself. An important factor to self-care is to set realistic goals for what you want to achieve. For example if you were to set an impossible, unrealistic goal then this could cause you unnecessary stress, leading to an endless amount of serious health conditions. Eating a well-balanced diet and prioritising your sleep and exercise can have a positive effect on your mental and physical health. It is also important that you balance life, study and work so that you can manage your stress levels and learn to take time for yourself and your family.

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