

CRITICAL THINKING CONCEPT AND ITS DIFFERENT DIMENSION

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Abstract

Have you ever thought that critical thinking can help you to be objective? It actually can. To appreciate this, bear in mind the fact that whenever you are engaged in critical thinking, you are not going to respond to something instantaneously. Instead, when you hear something, whether it is a question or a statement, you are going to ensure you heard it right. Then you will proceed to assess what it could actually mean in the context it was said. Only then will you be set to make a decision depending upon whether it is something you can believe or relate to or not. What you will eventually see is that after evaluating all the different sections of what you have listened to, and you have had opportunity to consolidate the different meanings, the conclusion you come to is normally one that is reasonable and objective.

Keywords: *Critical, Judgments, Cognitive, Research, Analyticity, Open-Mindedness, Systematicity*



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MEANING OF CRITICAL THINKING

When examining the vast literature on critical thinking, various definitions of critical thinking emerge. “Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (Scriven, 1996). “Most formal definitions characterize critical thinking as the intentional application of rational, higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem recognition and problem solving, inference, and evaluation” (Angelo, 1995). Critical thinking starts as soon as individuals establish a connection between their individual experience and social conditions. There is a direct relationship between individuals’ ability to establish this connection and the education they have on this issue. The most important place to offer this education in schools and teachers also trained in critical thinking. A qualified teacher is the one “who has the necessary information and dispositions required with knowledge regarding the teaching profession, one who think, ask, criticize, are open to development and innovations”. Consequently, importance should be given to the training of qualified individuals needed in today’s

societies, the consideration of these in teacher education programme and the training of teacher candidates in accordance with these qualifications.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITICAL THINKING

Wade (1995) identifies eight characteristics of critical thinking. It involves asking questions, defining a problem, examining evidence, analyzing assumptions and biases, avoiding emotional reasoning, avoiding over simplification, considering other interpretations, and tolerating ambiguity. Dealing with ambiguity is an essential part of critical thinking Strohm and Baukus (1995). Educational research has identified several discrete skills related to an overall ability for critical thinking. These are: i. Finding analogies and other kinds of relationships between pieces of information. ii. Determining the relevance and validity of information that could be used for structuring and solving problems. iii. Finding and evaluating solutions or alternative ways of treating problems. Beyer (1985) elaborately explains what he sees as essential aspects of critical thinking these are. Dispositions Critical thinkers are skeptical, open-minded, value fair-mindedness, respect evidence and reasoning, respect clarity and precision, look at different points of view, and will change positions when reason leads them to do so. Criteria To think critically, must apply criteria. Need to have conditions that must be met for something to be judged as believable. Although the argument can be made that each subject area has different criteria, some standards apply to all subjects such as an assertion must, be based on relevant, accurate facts, based on credible sources, precise, unbiased, free from logical fallacies, logically consistent, and strongly reasoned. Argument Is a statement or proposition with support the evidence. Critical thinking involves identifying, evaluating, and constructing arguments. Reasoning The ability to find a solution from one or multiple premises. To do so requires examining logical relationships among statements or data. Point of view The way one view the world, which shape one's construction of meaning. In a search for understanding, critical thinkers view phenomena from many different points of view. Procedures for applying criteria Other types of thinking use a general procedure. Critical thinking makes use of many procedures. These procedures include asking questions, making judgements, and identifying assumptions.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Scheffer and Ruben (2000) discuss the critical thinking habits and critical thinking skills. For each of the critical thinking skill shown below, they give a number of activity statements.

1. Analyzing Separate or breaking a whole into parts to discover their nature, functional and relationships.
2. Applying Standards Judge the situations according to establishing personal, professional, social rules or criteria.
3. Discriminating Recognizing differences and similarities among things or situations and distinguishing carefully as to category or rank.
4. Information Seeking Search for evidence, facts, or knowledge by identifying relevant sources and gathering objectives, historical, and current data from those sources.
5. Logical Reasoning Draw inferences or conclusions that are supported by evidence for.
6. Predicting Envision a plan and its consequences for.
7. Transforming Knowledge Changing or converting the condition, nature, or concepts among contexts.

DIMENSIONS OF CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking has been broadly defined as a purposeful, self-regulatory judgement, which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference in order to achieve a judgement based on evidence, concepts, methodologies, criteria, and 13 contextual considerations. The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI, 1992) was proposed by Facione & Facione, The disposition toward critical thinking is the consistent internal motivation to engage problems and make decisions by using thinking. Based on the CCTDI critical thinking dimensions are explained as follows.

Analyticity: Analyticity expresses the tendency to be cautious towards situations that might lead to potential problems and the ability to use logic and objective evidence even under difficult problems. High scores indicate that this tendency is strong.

Self-Confidence: Self-confidence, as its name suggests, expresses the person's confidence and process of thinking. High scores on this tendency reflect that the individual has high self-confidence.

Inquisitiveness: Inquisitiveness expresses the individuals' tendency to acquire and learn new things without any expectations regarding benefits. High scores mean that this tendency is also high in the individual.

Maturity: The maturity addresses cognitive maturity and epistemic development. It gives preferences to those disposed to approach problems, inquiring and decision making with a

sense that some problems are ill-structured, some situations admit more than one plausible option and many times judgement based on standard, contexts and evidence which precludes certainly must be made.

Open-Mindedness: Open-mindedness expresses an individual's tolerance to different approaches and the sensitivity towards own faults. The main mentality being open mindedness is that does not consider the individual own thoughts but also the views of others while making decisions. High scores indicate that the individual is good in terms of this tendency.

Systematicity: Systematicity is the tendency to make systematic, organized, planned and cautions research. It is the tendency to use strategic decision-making skills based on information and a specific procedure (Kokdemir 2003). vii. Truth-Seeking: This dimension measures the individual's ability to evaluate different alternatives and thoughts. A high score in this dimension shows that the individual has

CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION

The aim of critical thinking is to promote independent thinking, personal autonomy and reasoned judgement in thought and action. Critical thinking involves logic as well as creativity. It may inductive and deductive reasoning, analysis and problem-solving as well as creative, innovative and complex approaches to the resolution of issues and challenges. One of the significant aims of education is to produce learners who are well informed, that is to say, learners should understand ideas that are important, useful, beautiful and powerful. Another is to create learners who have the appetite to think analytically and critically, to use what they know to enhance their own lives and also to contribute to their society, culture and civilization. These two aims for education as a vehicle to promote critical thinking are based on certain assumptions.

- i. Brains are biological. Minds are created. Curriculum is a mind-altering device. This raises the moral requirements to treat learners as independent 15 centers of consciousness with the fundamental ability to determine the contours of their own minds and lives.
- ii. Education should seek to prepare learners for self-direction and not pre-conceived roles. It is, therefore, essential that learners be prepared for thinking their way through the maze of challenges that life will present independently.

- iii. iii. Education systems usually induct the neophyte into the forms-of-representation and realms of meaning which humans have created thus far,
- iv. iv. Careful analysis, clear thinking, and reasoned deliberation are fundamental to democracy and democratic life.

On the basis of these considerations the capacity for critical assessment and analysis emerges as fundamental for enjoying a good quality of life. Critical thinking may be distinguished from general or ordinary thinking in many ways. Its real value lies in its quality of being most skillful and responsible thinking that facilitates good judgement. It definitely sets some criteria for its own procedural advancement and is self-correcting and sensitive to the contemporary issues and circumstances. It proves to be a backbone and a reliable support for carrying out the process of problem solving. It does not teach or encourage the child to mugup thinks without proper understanding. Rather it makes him a self-reliant, independent inquirer and discoverer and a useful and progressive citizen as needed by a rational and democratic society. Therefore, all our efforts should be concentrated to develop the required critical thinking potential among the youngsters. he skills of researching, asking questions, and being objective despite data opposing his ideas.

Conclusion

Your brain is the super-computer that governs your life and body, and it's involved in everything that you do. It is going to determine who you are, what you do, and how well you do it. Therefore, it's imperative that you keep your brain in tip-top condition so that you can make better decisions about your life and think in a logical manner. Thinking logically doesn't mean that you don't have emotions. It means that you are able to come to a conclusion based on rational thinking rather than feelings.

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