

## CRITICAL THINKING

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### **Abstract**

Critical thinking is the awakening of the intellect to the study of itself. Critical thinking is a grand concept that has been developing throughout the past 2500 years. It is the awakening of the intellect to the study of itself. . It is derived from Greek word 'Kriticos' and 'Kriterion' that means the development of discerning judgment based on standards. Critical thinking is beneficial in every aspect of our life. It benefits the employees and managers in taking decisions. Critical thinking means making reasoned judgments that are logical and well thought out. It becomes a fruitful practice for everyone in business. It is a way of thinking in which you don't simply accept all arguments and conclusions you are exposed to but rather have an attitude involving questioning such arguments. Critical thinking exercises promote workplace tolerance and can be used as a part of diversity training. Critical thinking helps managers and their sub-ordinates to think beyond the conventional solutions. Rather it stresses on the new ideas that can efficiently solve a problem. Critical thinking can help us effectively and efficiently using emotional appeal and can influence our emotions and feeling, but by not controlling our reasoning. If there is some problem and we go deep into it then through critical thinking we can take over our emotions when making an important decision or arguing for our opinion. Becoming a critical thinker takes conscious and constant diligence. A critical thinker continually asks the questions:

- **Does this make sense?**
- **If so, why?**
- **It not, why not?**

Critical thinking by its very nature questions ideas, opinions and thoughts of oneself and of others. But sometimes some barriers to critical thinking arise and they can harm and even seriously injure critical thinking concepts.

Key-words: 'Kriticos', Kriterion, tolerance, diversity, diligence, critical, thinker.

### **Introduction**

The basic nature of human being is to think. And it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking left to itself is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or downright prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Critical thinking is the awakening of the intellect to the study of itself.

Critical thinking is a grand concept that has been developing throughout the past 2500 years. The term 'Critical Thinking' has its roots in 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is derived from Greek word 'Kriticos' and 'Kriterion' that means the development of discerning judgment based on standards.

The tradition of critical thinking seeks ways of understanding the mind and then training the mind in a way so that blunders and mistakes can be lessened. And the capacity of humans for good reasoning can be nurtured and developed by an educational process.

Critical thinking means making reasoned judgments that are logical and well thought out. It is a way of thinking in which you don't simply accept all arguments and conclusions you are exposed to but rather have an attitude involving questioning such arguments.

## **There are varieties of definitions regarding critical thinking.**

### **According to Glaser**

"Knowledge of the methods of logical enquiry and reasoning, and some skill in applying those methods."

### **According to Ennis**

"Reasonable and reflective thinking about what to believe or do."

### **According to Lipman**

"Thinking that devotes itself to the improvement of thinking."

Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored and self-corrective thinking.

## **Benefits of Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is beneficial in every aspect of our life. It benefits the employees and managers in taking decisions. Before going to the final answer, the manager and the subordinates come up with the possible solutions through critical thinking. It becomes a fruitful practice for everyone in business. Critical thinking helps people in:

### **1. Innovative ideas**

Critical thinking helps managers and their sub-ordinates to think beyond the conventional solutions. Rather it stresses on the new ideas that can efficiently solve a problem. Suppose there comes up an issue in the workplace, so it is assumed to be classified under predetermined category. Through critical thinking we learn to avoid certain problems and learn not to keep them in certain categories that have happened in the past.

### **2. Boost up teamwork**

Everybody thinks and everyone should involve in critical thinking. More the number of people, more will be solutions. It means when we involve more persons, the more solutions we get. A diverse workplace can benefit immensely from critical thinking. We get more diverse results. People from a diverse background come up with solution, so it encourages teamwork

also. Critical thinking exercises promote workplace tolerance and can be used as a part of diversity training.

### **3. Promotes Options**

One of the benefits of critical thinking is that the company can develop multiple feasible solutions to the same issue. And the company can offer a number of solutions to clients and it provides an assistance in workplace innovations. Several solutions provided by the company, can suggest to use available material instead of purchasing new material. Customers benefit themselves from having so many solutions/options to choose from in taking a problem.

### **4. Self-directed learning**

Students can become more independent and self-directed learners through critical thinking. So instead of relying on teachers and classroom time for instruction and guidance, we should move ahead to critical thinking. Researcher Jane Dinijuan Zhang writes that critical thinking enables students to assess their learning styles, strengths and weaknesses and allow them to take ownership of their education. For example, students of English might write reflective letters about how their writing has improved and what they still need to work on. So, through self-direction they can view their performance objectively and can reach on conclusions.

### **5. Higher Accomplishments**

Academic performance of a student can also be enhanced by learning critical thinking skills. According to Linda Elder and Richard Paul, authors of "Critical Thinking Development: A stage Theory, students who know how to analyze and critique ideas are able to make connections across disciplines, see knowledge as useful and applicable to daily life and understand content on a deeper, more lasting level." Through this process, students learn to analyze and compare historical events. And while writing about history, it help them better understand its relevance and application to present-day concerns.

### **6. Adequate Sentimentalism**

A report from York University, asserts that critical thinking can help us effectively and efficiently using emotional appeal and can influence our emotions and feeling, but by not controlling our reasoning. If there is some problem and we go deep into it then through critical thinking we can take over our emotions when making an important decision or arguing for our opinion. For example, a public speaking student arguing for wealth care reform might share a personal story about a relative who struggles with getting insurance, but also provide solid supporting evidence from credible source to support this position.

### **7. Team work and empathy**

We can have a better understanding of [people and surrounding through critical thinking skills. It enhances the ability to work with different people of different background. For example, the

scholastic parents article “Think About It: Critical Thinking” shares that group activities let elementary school students hear their peers’ ideas for accomplishing a task, rather than zeroing in on their own thoughts. This not only shows them that multiple solutions can be there to one idea to work together. Students get to know the feeling and emotions of others.

### **8. Better understanding of subject matter**

The one of the foremost thing to the path of learning is to have a better understanding of the subject is to have a better understanding of the subject matter. We experience the positive and negative aspect of life. But through critical thinking skills we can have a better understanding of the things what is right and what is wrong.

### **9. Lifelong Learning**

As the word only suggest learning begins as soon as we born and contains throughout our lives. And we never forget whatever we learn and everything we learn adds to the previous learning. Critical thinking’s goal is to foster lifelong learning and the traditional ideal of a liberally educated mind: a mind that question, probes, enmasters, a variety of forms of knowledge through command of itself, intellectual perseverance and the tools of learning.

### **10. Successful and Secure Future**

Critical thinking or in other words, effectively evaluating our own thinking or the thinking of others and help us to successfully secure our future. For example, we evaluate which washing machine to buy after reading consumer reports, we evaluate, which move to go see after studying the reviews, we evaluate new job opportunities after talking with friends and colleagues, but rarely do we explicitly evaluate the quality of our thinking.

## **Barriers to Critical Thinking**

Becoming a critical thinker takes conscious and constant diligence. A critical thinker continually asks the questions:

- Does this make sense?
- If so, why?
- If not, why not?

Critical thinking by its very nature questions ideas, opinions and thoughts of oneself and of others. But sometimes some barriers to critical thinking arise and they can harm and even seriously injure critical thinking concepts. As critical thinking is self-directed, some barriers can harm our critical thinking. These barriers are:-

### 1. Egocentric Thinking

A number of blocks impede us from arriving at a reasonable basis for belief. They thwart our efforts to become more effective thinkers. Egocentric is one among them. As the very name indicates- Egocentric, means looking everything in relation to oneself or viewing everything for one's selfish motives. It hinders a person's thinking to become effective thinker. There are a number of eminent and successful business people, lawyers, politicians and others who are egocentric thinkers. They are unaware of his or her thinking patterns. They are closed minded to the thoughts and ideas of others.

### 2. Social Conditioning

Social conditioning plays a vital role in critical thinking. We all are unique in this world. A person varies from other. He is different as far as age IQ, race, genes, gender, culture, family friends are considered. This social conditioning can benefit or drawback to the ability to think critically. While we are thinking we should take care of the needs, desires and dreams of others, but critical thinking is impeded when the world and people in it are viewed from bias conditioning. Open minded critical thinking can enable us to listen, learn and empathize and helps to understand others better.

### 3. Biased Experience

Biased experience and egocentric thinking are interrelated. No doubt experience is a wonderful teacher and if it is filtered through a biased or distorted view, that is how it is remembered. This is our own self delusion that makes it so. So the need is to create an open mind and question logically. Try to question yourself like, "Am I thinking logically or rationally?" another example is to have good friends. Don't choose those friends who will not tell you the truth but just what you want to hear. Always choose good friends as they are priceless.

### 4. Proud and Intolerance

A critical thinker should not be proud and intolerant. Arrogance and intolerance hinder the process of thinking logically. They are not welcomed Arthur Ide says, "Everyone is prejudice, I hate bigots." His words remind us continually that though people are prejudice but we should not recognize proud and intolerance. For example:- The economist Milton Friedman makes a strong case for individual freedom. He has stated: "The people who always get us into trouble are the people who know better than you do what's good for you."

### 5. Schedule Pressures

Schedule pressure can be an enemy of sound critical thinking. It can affect our thinking and leads to:

- ❖ Cutting Corners— that can lead to mistakes and poor decision making.
- ❖ Under stress — this can also lead to mistakes and bad decision making.
- ❖ Procrastination— this comes from not knowing how or where to start.

This can lead to even more stress and cutting corners.

## 6. Group Discussion

There is an old but worthwhile statement: “when everyone thinks alike, no one thinks very much.” Group discussion is actually a danger to critical thinking. The very statement indicates the same thing. It is very true. Critical thinking questions ideas, opinions and thoughts of others. Becoming critical thinker takes conscious and constant diligence. When we are in a group, we have a number of options. But these very options can create problem for us also because it is not possible for everyone to welcome others’ ideas, views and opinions. So it also hinders the process of critical thinking.

To conclude, we can say that critical thinking is the thinking that devotes itself to the improvement of thinking. As far as barriers are concerned, we face a number of barriers in the way of critical thinking like-ego, greed, proud, intolerance etc. instead of going deep into the barriers, we should try to overcome them.

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