

## CRITICAL THINKING

- Critical thinking is the objective analysis of facts to form a judgment.
- Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally about what to do or what to believe.
- It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking.
- Critical thinking is self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way.
- A statement by Michael Scriven & Richard Paul, presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987:
- Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skilfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action.
- In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.
- It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose, problem, or question-at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference.
- Critical thinking — in being responsive to variable subject matter, issues, and purposes — is incorporated in a family of interwoven modes of thinking, among them: scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking, and philosophical thinking.

Critical thinking can be seen as having two components:

- 1) a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and
- 2) the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behaviour.

It is thus to be contrasted with:

- 1) the mere acquisition and retention of information alone, because it involves a particular way in which information is sought and treated;
- 2) the mere possession of a set of skills, because it involves the continual use of them; and
- 3) the mere use of those skills ("as an exercise") without acceptance of their results.

Someone with Critical Thinking is able to do the following:

- understand the logical connections between ideas
- identify, construct and evaluate arguments
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning

- solve problems systematically
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas
- reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values
- does not involve in criticizing someone or pulling someone down
- look at things in a different way

### **Need and function of Critical Thinking**

- Critical Thinking skills teach a variety of skills that can be applied to any situation in life that calls for reflection, analysis and planning.
- Critical Thinking is a domain-general thinking skill. The ability to think clearly and rationally is important whatever we choose to do. If you work in education, research, finance, management or the legal profession, then critical thinking is obviously important. But critical thinking skills are not restricted to a particular subject area. Being able to think well and solve problems systematically is an asset for any career.
- Critical Thinking is very important in the new knowledge economy. The global knowledge economy is driven by information and technology. One has to be able to deal with changes quickly and effectively. The new economy places increasing demands on flexible intellectual skills, and the ability to analyse information and integrate diverse sources of knowledge in solving problems. Good critical thinking promotes such thinking skills, and is very important in the fast-changing workplace.
- Critical Thinking enhances language and presentation skills. Thinking clearly and systematically can improve the way we express our ideas. In learning how to analyse the logical structure of texts, critical thinking also improves comprehension abilities.
- Critical Thinking promotes creativity. To come up with a creative solution to a problem involves not just having new ideas. It must also be the case that the new ideas being generated are useful and relevant to the task at hand. Critical thinking plays a crucial role in evaluating new ideas, selecting the best ones and modifying them if necessary
- Critical Thinking is crucial for self-reflection. In order to live a meaningful life and to structure our lives accordingly, we need to justify and reflect on our values and decisions. Critical thinking provides the tools for this process of self-evaluation.
- Good Critical Thinking is the foundation of science and a liberal democratic society. Science requires the critical use of reason in experimentation and theory confirmation. The proper functioning of a liberal democracy requires citizens who can think critically about social issues to inform their judgments about proper governance and to overcome biases and prejudice.
- Critical Thinking is important in life. It helps you to think creatively – ‘outside the box’. It keeps you from becoming narrow.

## **Characteristics of Critical Thinkers**

Critical Thinkers demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Inquisitiveness with regard to a wide range of issues
- Concern to become and remain well-informed
- Alertness to opportunities to use critical thinking
- Self-confidence in one's own abilities to reason
- Open-mindedness regarding divergent world views
- Flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions
- Understanding of the opinions of other people
- Fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning
- Honesty in facing one's own biases, prejudices, stereotypes or egocentric tendencies
- Prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments
- Willingness to reconsider and revise views where honest reflection suggests that change is warranted

## **Analysis of various media using Critical Thinking**

Let's take a look at how we can use critical thinking to analyse information shown in the Media

- When a message is shown in the media, and if you use your everyday automatic thinking, you might accept it as fact and move on.
- But if you think critically, you would first analyse the available information and ask some questions as given below:
- What's the source of this media message?
- Is the message potentially misleading?
- What are the general beliefs of the creators of the message?
- Do the beliefs inform why the message might have been shown?
- After analysing all of this information, you can draw a conclusion about whether or not you think the media message is trustworthy.
- In similar manner, all the media messages should be analyzed critically before accepting them as the truth because there may be bias, prejudice, misinformation and/or disinformation which is being shown in the media message.