

Strategies for critical thinking in learning

Critical thinking studies a subject or problem with open-mindedness.

The process begins with a statement of what is to be studied, proceeds to unrestricted discovery and consideration of possibilities and concludes with a pattern for understanding that is based on evidence. Motives, bias, and prejudice of both the learner as well as the experts are then compared and form the foundation of judgment.

Enter with an open mind:

- **Define your destination, what you want to learn** and clarify or verify with your teacher or an "expert" your subject

Topics can be simple phrases:

"The role of gender in video game playing"

"Political history of France between the Great Wars of the first half of the Twentieth Century"

"Mahogany tree cultivation in Central America"

"Domestic plumbing regulations in the suburbs"

"Vocabulary and structure of a human skeleton"

- **Think about what you already know about the subject**

What do you already know that will help you in this study? What are your prejudices?

- **What resources are available to you, and what is your timeline?**

- **Gather information**

Keep an open mind so as not to close your options and for chance opportunities

- **Ask questions**

What are the prejudices of the authors of the information?

- Organize what you have collected into patterns to understand it Look for connections

- **Ask questions (again!)**

- **Think in terms of how you would demonstrate your learning for your topic**

Yes! how would you create a test on what you have learned? From simple to more complex (1-6) operations:

1. List, label, identify	Demonstrate knowledge
2. Define, explain, summarize in your own words	Comprehend/understand
3. Solve' apply to a new situation	Use your learning; apply it
4. Compare and contrast, differentiate between items differentiate	Analyze
5. Create, combine, invent	Synthesize
6. Assess, recommend, value	Evaluate and explain why

Think in terms of making your learning an adventure in exploration!

Summary of critical thinking:

- Determine the facts of a new situation or subject without prejudice
- Place these facts and information in a pattern so that you can understand them
- Accept or reject the source values and conclusions based upon your experience, judgment, and beliefs