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Once you read the materials below click the link to Learning Activity 1.2 to complete the activity.

[Link to Learning Activity 1.2]

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is not something you do once with an issue and then drop it. It requires that we update our knowledge as new information comes in. Time spent evaluating claims is not just time well spent. It should be considered part of an implicit bargain we've all made. ***Daniel Levitin***

Critical thinking is a process by which we explore and analyze ideas and questions, assess the quality of the evidence, thoughts and arguments presented, and evaluate the credibility, relevance and applicability of ideas. ***-Judy Carter***

Definitions

Disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.
(Dictionary.com)

The mental process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information to reach an answer or conclusion.
(Dictionary.com)

Traits of a Critical Thinking Mind

- Intellectual humility
- The intellectually humble do not promote themselves above others, but let their thinking and reasoning speak for them.
- Intellectual perseverance
- Intellectual perseverance can be described as the pursuit of the truth, or pure knowledge, even if the road to get there is arduous - **Michael Botyarov**
- Intellectual responsibility
- Being rational, logical and reasonable in our thinking and belief. - **unknown**

Critical Thinking Values and Skills

When it comes to critical thinking values and skills, it is not simply enough to pat yourself on the back and determine you are a critical thinker. May have taken the stance critical thinking is the negative view of others and their faults; hence critical thinking. But critical thinking is much more.

> ... critical thinking is about taking a step back and thinking logically and carefully about the information and evidence you have, rather than believing and acting on everything you read, see and hear. (Aveyard, Woolliams, & Sharp, p. 7)

Critical thinking involves clarifying the questions asked. What is the context? Is the information accurate? Are the sources biased or inaccurate in their reporting of fact?

When we ask the questions, we dig deeper into the clarity we seek in trying to assess and develop the materials we research and develop for our professional responsibilities. Too often, people take the first result of the first Google search and apply it as true, when further research and asking critical questions would take them to a much different result.

In addition to clarity, it is important to critically seek accuracy in reporting your findings in your research. Taking previous assumptions is not an acceptable practice when developing ideas your research or your report professionally. Take this learning activity. This is an older presentation I developed in 2008. I could repeat the information and cut and paste the previous information. But that is simply ineffective in providing the most up to date information on the topic designed to enhance your learning. Using older information to convey present truth is akin to suggesting the best way to get across Canada is by bus. The information is accurate for a bygone era, but not relevant to the present day of air travel and the development of low cost flight options. Gathering relevant data requires up to date relevancy of materials to provide the most accurate information available at the time of reporting.

It is also part of the critical thinking to evaluate material regarding its precision as well. By identifying key assumptions (i.e. bus travel is the best way to get across Canada), we can address

flaws in the accuracy of the information and update it with fresh understandings, statistics and report on the faulty assumptions related to the material presented. The more accurate your research, the better received and respected it will be. The critical thinker aims for the most accurate representation of their material to the intended audience.

When we identify and wrestle with assumptions, follow through with clearly research ideas and understanding of the issues, the value of critical thinking and its benefit is clear.

A further value of critical thinking is relevance. When we trace significant implications in material we review and/or research we have opportunity to test the validity of the material and discover its relevance for the present work in front of us; be it research or reporting (which can be one and the same). Accepting what we read without question (often because we are pressed for time) can cause us to miss alternative points of view or distort our findings so they bend to our view versus a clear and unbiased reflective view of relevant materials.

Critical thinking also values and practices logic in its approach. When we apply logical consideration to the materials we review, we can assess much of the material based on its logical outcomes. If the result doesn't make sense (isn't logical) we need to review the material and sources again to refine and confirm our conclusions before proceeding. When we apply logic and seek valid conclusions, the result of our critical thinking efforts bears fruit and becomes of greater benefit to all concerned.

Critical Thinking Process

When we think about being critical thinkers, we no longer look at the immediate and consequential views of what we view. We move into a larger view. A big picture view providing us with the best possible oversight of a topic. Looking at the ramifications of decisions and the possible alternatives to direct action available to us in the decision and review process for our organizations and the people we lead and serve.

The Big Picture View looks at what the person is saying? What the key points and major assertions are. Are issues/concepts clearly and accurately defined and described? Are examples pertinent? Do they substantiate the presenter's point of view? Do you agree with the definitions and descriptions? Critically evaluating what you see, hear, read, reflect and pursue moves your view from localized and cursory to in depth a broad based.

Critical thinking also looks at the invisible components we often miss at the cursory level and looks for the implications for decisions. What will happen if moments. What will happen when? Where will this lead if we do such? Each invisible component missed in the cursory, becomes an alternative in the critical review. Taking the time to review discovery, decision and determinations

helps to ensure we make the best possible decisions and provide the best information at the best time; reflective of best practices in our research and reporting.

Invisible Components of critical thinking include:

- What are the presenter's assumptions? Are they accurate and valid?
- What values and beliefs underlie the presenter's argument?
- Do you agree with the presenter's assumptions, values and beliefs?
- What exceptions can you think of?

Taking the time to address the questions and seek the answer increases your critically thinking acumen and reveals what was previously hidden in your thinking and your conclusions.

> Critical thinking generally incorporates active mental processes (considering, reviewing, thinking) that involve some breaking down or analysis of the evidence or experience within a particular context and then reaching a conclusion or outcome. (Aveyard, Woolliams, & Sharp p. 114)

Critical thinking urges us and allows us to:

- Scrutinize the details
- Review information, reflect on its relevance and assess its logic.
- Ask:
 - Is anything unclear or ambiguous?
 - Are the description and qualities accurate? (all, none, always, never)
 - Do the models, illustrations, charts, maps, illustrate the presenter's point of view and add credence to his/her argument?
- What additional information is needed?
- Assess the evidence

- Is the information we reviewed accurate?
- Does it stand up under scrutiny?
- Is there an alternative view to what we've just found
- Is the data clear, adequate, pertinent, convincing and complete?
- Is the presenter's interpretation of the data accurate, complete?
- Are the findings universal?
- Are stated cause and effect correctly interpreted?
- Do other alternative explanations exist or might be discovered?
- Are reasons sufficient and valid?
- Is the evidence biased?
- Explore context and connections
- Are the truths discovered contextually accurate?
- Do they mean the same in different and differing contexts? 3 * What are the cross disciplinary connections to what we discovered?
- How can it be applied in different and differing contexts?
- Does the viewpoint fit the field and discipline?
- Does it add something new, present contrasting viewpoints, connect to other ideas?
- Are other points of view and data taken into account?
- What information is missing?
- What would you change or add to improve the work?

Critical thinking leads us to greater clarity in thinking and development of greater focus on what we research, read and discover.

The following illustration shows how we generally approach the things we observe and make the assumptions that guide us.![/assets/The data and Experience ladder_edited.jpg)

Image **Source?** Permissions?

Learning Activity 1.2 Critical Thinking

Unit Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Learning Activity 1.2 learners will be able to:

1. Develop a general awareness of critical thinking theory and practice as it relates to the various and varying aspects of addressing critical thinking in its multiple contexts.
2. Create a short proposal to suggest changes to practices within these areas as the result of your critical review.

Read the Learning Activity 1.2 Learning Notes by clicking on the link below.

[Link to Learning Activity 1.2 Learning Notes]

Take the time to read through and reflect on the following principles and suggested activities during the coming week.

Looking at your area of personal worldview, responsibility, discipline, organization or area of study; respond to the questions below as they relate to the discipline of critical thinking:

1. What changes presently influence your personal worldview, area of responsibility, discipline, organization and/or area of study in the twenty- first century, and how can critical thinking help you respond to these changes?
 - a. Look at each area (personal worldview, responsibility, discipline, organization or area of study); review the basic assumptions you are dealing with and list the changes influencing YOU.
 2. How can you think more critically about the changes you listed?
 - a. List the critical observations you make on a separate log for future review and discussion.
3. Review these changes critically to broaden your personal worldview, area of responsibility,

discipline, organization, area of study and practice?

4. Once you review these questions and respond to them:

- a. Make a short proposal to yourself, your organization, people in your discipline or area of study to suggest changes to practices within these areas as the result of your critical review.
- b. Keep the proposal for future use in other participation activities throughout the course.

Learning Activity 1. 3 PressBooks Instruction

Unit Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of Learning Activity 1.3 learners will be able to:

1. Understand the process for entering course materials into the PressBooks platform.
2. Be able to edit course materials in the PressBooks platform.

Pressbooks is a self-publishing tool that we will be using to create content in this course. For instructions on how to use Pressbooks click the link [\[Link to PressBooks instruction\]](#)

Unit 1 Learning Activity References

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