Critical thinking is essential for students because it applies to nearly all tasks and situations. It involves clear, reasonable, and reflective thinking to decide what to believe or do. It means questioning assumptions, like asking, "How do we know?" or "Is this always true?" For instance, when reading a history textbook, critical thinking helps identify biases and reveals "other sides to the story."

In college, critical thinking is crucial. It helps evaluate information and analyze problems, determining the accuracy and truthfulness of statements. For example, when reviewing consumer products, critical thinking involves questioning endorsements and comparing different products to find the best one.

Problem-solving is closely related to critical thinking but focuses on identifying and defending solutions. Examples include:

- Conceptualizing new forms in an art project and explaining your techniques.

- A math teacher guiding students to understand a concept through questioning.

- Preparing for a job interview by analyzing how your skills match the employer's needs.

- Budgeting for college expenses by analyzing your income and spending.

Developing critical thinking involves intentional questioning and habit formation. Creative thinking drives progress by inventing new solutions to problems. For example, brainstorming generates many ideas quickly, helping overcome limitations and barriers.

Group work is an excellent way to develop both critical and creative thinking skills. Working collaboratively brings different perspectives and ideas, challenging and defending analyses and ideas. This dynamic process helps students grow as thinkers.

In education, critical thinking is vital. Modern education emphasizes developing independent thinking, processing information, and creative problem-solving. Critical thinking fosters self-improvement, helping make objective decisions without emotional bias. It’s crucial in many professions, such as law, engineering, accounting, and medicine, especially during the industrial revolution 4.0, where it’s highly sought after.