UNIT 3

THINKING CRITICALLY

Understanding Critical THinking

- What is critical thinking?
- What is a claim?
- What is an issue?
- What is an argument?
- What is the difference between facts and opinions?

Identifying Arguments

- Identify the arguments
- Look for argument indicators: Premise or conclusion indicators are used. Because, since, assuming that etc. suggest a premise. Phrases including as a result, that means, as you can etc.are examples of conclusion indicators.
- Differentiate between an argument and an assertion: Assertion is a simple statement that does not include any supporting evidence. Evidence/ rationale – becomes argument.
- Recognize deductive arguments: general observations or premises to a specific conclusion.
- Recognize inductive arguments: broad conclusion from specific examples or premises.

Assessing the credibility of an Argument

- Consider the validity of the argument: Valid argument has a conclusion that logically follows from the premises.
- Make sure the argument is sound: When the premises are also true, it is considered a sound argument. A valid argument can logically follows the premises, even if one of the premises is false.
- Assess the credibility of the source: the source of information matters where firsthand knowledge or direct observations are usually more credible than secondhand information.
- Consider reasons based on authority: Experts or authorities are typically credible and reliable.
- Compare the argument to your background knowledge: background knowledge is the collection of beliefs, facts, experiences, and observations one has amassed during one's life.

Exploring weakness in an Argument

- Consider how to test the claims and premises: A scientific approach tests ideas and arguments to verify their correctness.
- Evaluate the relevance: A well-crafted argument explains its subject clearly and present claims that relate to the conclusion.
- Look for dubious assumptions: An assumption is a proposition or claim that you take for granted as though it were known to be vaild.
- Compare the argument to other data, observations and ideas: A critical thinker compares information to other data and looks for incompatibilities and inconsistencies.
- Identify alternative explanations: keep your eyes open for alternative explanations and rationales.

Overcoming obstacles to Critical Thinking

- Avoid egocentric thinking: being egocentric means seeing the world from your own point of view, assuming you are the norm or center. This limits your ability to appreciate other point of view or see your own limitations.
- Be aware of your social conditioning: It encourages you to accept the beliefs, traditions, and values of your social group. Hence, moving beyond social conditioning is necessary.
- Identify outliers:Past experiences with other people, places and situations that are extremely good or bad are outliers. They can bias your expectations in the future.
- Avoid normalization: People who assume that their ideas are normal because they have been exposed to them repeatedly are normalizing the ideas.
- Respect your emotions: respect your emotions, but consider their logic and apprpriateness for the decisions that you are trying to make.

Avoiding Deductive Reasoning Fallacies

- Avoid the slippery slope: if one event happens, another serious or drastic event will inevitably follow. Hence, ask how they arrived at their conclusion.
- Be aware of false dilemmas: presents a limite number of options, though more options are available. The goal of a false dilemma argument is usually to have you accept a particular conclusion.
- Straighten out circular reasoning: has a claim or premise that is little more than a restatement of the conclusion. It is often used when expressing their opinions.
- Clear up eqivocation: Using ambiguous or vague words in an argument. It may or may not be intentional.

Avoiding Inductive Reasoning Fallacies

- Avoid hasty generalizations
- Separate cause and effect
- Look for false causes.
- Consider the composition

Becoming a Critical Thinker

- Develop intellectual humility
- Be a critic, not a cynic
- Challenge your assumptions and beliefs
- Work through complex issues and problems
- Have confidence in your reasoning ability