

Introduction to Critical Thinking

Definition

- A wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositioned needs to effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate arguments and truth claims
- To discover and overcome personal preconceptions and biases
- To formulate and present convincing reasons in support of conclusions
- To make reasonable, intelligent decisions about what to believe and what to do

Critical Thinking Standards

Clarity

- Clarity of thought and language is essential for critical thinking and effective communication

Precision

- Precision is important not only in specialized fields but in critical thinking in everyday life

Accuracy

- Critical thinkers have a passion for accurate, timely information in order to make informed decisions

Relevance

- It is important to stay focused on relevant ideas and information

Consistency

- Critical thinkers are always looking for inconsistencies in their thinking and the thinking of others

Logical Correctness

- Critical thinkers need to be able to logically reasons from accurate and well-supported beliefs.

Completeness

- Deep and complete thinking is preferred to shallow thinking

Fairness

- Critical thinking demands that our thinking be open-minded, impartial, and free of bias

Critical Thinking in the Classroom

- In college the focus is on higher-order thinking: the active, intelligent evaluation of ideas and information

Critical Thinking in the Workplace

- Employers are more and more looking for good thinking and communication skills rather than specialized skills which can be learned on the job

Critical Thinking in Life

- Critical thinking is important in avoiding making foolish personal decisions and in promoting democratic processes
- Much of today's serious societal issues arise from poor critical thinking

Barriers to Critical Thinking

- Lack of relevant background information
- Poor reading skills
- Prejudice
- Egocentrism
- Sociocentrism
- Peer pressure
- Conformism
- Provincialism
- Closed-mindedness
- Distrust in reason
- Relativistic thinking
- Stereotyping
- Unwarranted assumptions
- Rationalization
- Denial
- Wishful thinking
- Short-term thinking
- Selective perception
- Selective memory

- Overpowering emotions
- Self-deception
- Face-saving
- Fear of change

Egocentrism

Definition

The tendency to see reality as centered on oneself

Self-Interested Thinking

Definition

The tendency to accept and defend beliefs that harmonize with one's self interest

Self-Serving Bias

Definition

The tendency to see oneself as better in some respect than one actually is

Sociocentrism

Definition

Group centered thinking

Group Bias

Definition

The tendency to see one's own group as being inherently better than others

Conformism

Definition

The tendency to conform to authority or group standards of conduct

Unwarranted Assumptions and Stereotypes

Assumption

Definition

Something we believe to be true without any proof or conclusive evidence

Stereotypes

- A hasty generalization, in which one draws a conclusion about a large class of things from a small sample, often leads to stereotyping

Exercise 1.3

1. I chose Lieutenant Ashley Morgenstern as they are most likely the oldest and have endured military combat, making them more prepared to swim in dangerous waters. The others are more likely not to survive swimming, and have more to live for.
2. Descriptions
 - The Captain - Calm, collected, logical
 - Dr. Brown - Quick witted, clever
 - Marie Brown - Exhausted, late in pregnancy
 - Lieutenant Ashley Morgenstern - Emotionless, most likely traumatized from 20 years in military service
 - Letty - Quick-witted, logical
 - Eagle Eye Sam - Unsure, not many details given
3. I think Dr. Brown and Marie Brown are married

Relativistic Thinking

Relativism

Definition

The view that truth is a matter of opinion

Cultural Relativism

Definition

The view that truth is a matter of social or cultural opinion

Cultural Moral Relativism

Definition

The view that what is morally right for an individual is whatever their society or culture believes is morally right

Subjectivism

Definition

The view that truth is a matter of individual opinion

Moral Subjectivism

Definition

The view that what is morally right for an individual is whatever they believe is morally right

Wishful Thinking

- Believing something not because you had good evidence but simply because you wished it were true
- Reason has usually come out the "loser" to wishful thinking throughout human history