

Critical thinking



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Abstract Critical Thinking Critical thinking is the art of thinking about thinking while thinking in order to make thinking better (Paul & Scriven, 2007). It is the ability to weigh each component of the decision-making process against intellectual standards and improve thinking. The quality of work, the quality of life, and the quality of relationships are defined by the quality of thinking. Critical thinking allows us to be more effective communicators and more efficient problem solvers.

The intellectual standards outlined in our text are: intellectual autonomy, intellectual empathy, intellectual courage, and intellectual confidence in reason, intellectual fair-mindedness, intellectual perseverance, and intellectual sense of justice, intellectual humility, and intellectual integrity (Paul & Elder, 2006, p. 5). Critical thinkers make a conscious effort to hold themselves as well as those with opposing viewpoints, to very high standards employing the intellectual standards. They also recognize these virtues are interdependent; they all work together. Hold all viewpoints in a fair, unbiased, and unprejudiced light Maintain the confidence to face ideas that challenge our thinking See things from a different point of view Hold ourselves and others to high standards Continue to work through difficult problems Respect evidence and reasoning Value independence of thought Once the intellectual standards are assessed, the critical thinker then seeks to improve the quality of thought. Critical thinkers understand the elements of reasoning. These elements are: purpose, question, information, inference, assumption, point of view, concepts, and implications (Elder & Paul, 2002). Have a well defined purpose Ask clear questions Use only information that is relevant and accurate Make logical conclusions based on only sound theories

Understand our own point of view, and respect opposing ideas Use ideas reasonably I recently took a phone call from a customer in Ruidoso who was concerned about his March electric bill.

His concern initially seemed valid since the bill in question was nearly three times higher than the previous month. He could not validate any changes in his electric use to explain the increase. After researching his account, I determined that the previous bill was based on an estimated reading. There was a terrible snow storm in Ruidoso around the time his February reading was scheduled to be taken and the technicians could not access his property. The estimated read was based on the usage during the same month of the previous year.

During the conversation it was discovered that the property was unoccupied in February 2009, but he had a renter in 2010. The February 2010 bill was much lower than it should have been, and the actual reading in March made up for the undercharges. Human nature causes us to panic when we receive a bill that is much larger than we expect, but we don't always notice a bill that may be too low.

Applying the intellectual standards helped me to communicate effectively and resolve the call that had the potential to escalate. I understood his viewpoint; he had a very high bill. I had to understand my own ignorance to the occupancy of the home, and ask the right questions to get to the bottom of things. I had to exert confidence in my explanation and stand by my discoveries, at the same time I was sensitive to the fact that he would not be happy knowing his bill had been estimated. I treated him the way I would like

to be treated; I continued to explain the technical aspects of the situation in different ways until I was confident that he had a clear understanding. When the call was over he thanked me for my patience and was satisfied with the explanation.

To think critically in the strong sense requires that we develop fair-mindedness at the same time that we learn basic critical thinking skills, and thus begin to ??? practice??? fair-mindedness in our thinking (Paul & Elder, 2006). At work I am very conscious about the fair-mindedness of my thinking; my job is critically monitored to ensure my compliance. I would like to say it is easy, but in most cases it is a struggle. I realize the importance of critical thinking when can take difficult situation and direct it toward a positive resolution. Critical thinking allows us to be more effective communicators and more efficient problem solvers. References Elder, L., & Paul, R. (2002).

Critical Thinking: Distinguishing Between Inferences and Assumptions. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 25(3), 34. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete database. Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2006). *Critical thinking: tools for taking charge of your learning and your life* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.