

Best practices in critical thinking and decision making



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Critical Thinking and Decision Making This paper will examine the importance of critical thinking and how the use of it will help in making quality decisions. Critical thinking and effective decision making are related.. Critical thinking helps you to choose the best option when there are many alternatives to a problem. Decisions made when our thinking is not clear may lead to ineffective decisions.

Introduction

Critical thinking is a process in which individuals analyze their thoughts, actions and decisions. They also analyze other people's thoughts and actions. Critical thinking provides us various alternatives to a situation and helps us to make an informed decision. It involves gathering of information, analysis, evaluation and application of the information obtained in the process of critical thinking, and finally arriving at a final decision. According to Carter (1973), " Critical thinking is thinking that proceeds on the basis of careful evaluation of premises and evidence and comes to conclusions as objectively as possible through the consideration of all pertinent factors and the use of valid procedures from logic." Decision-making is a process where the individual arrives at a solution to a given problem by evaluating information. A decision can be arrived at through analysis, discussions and debates. A review of the process of critical thinking and decision making makes it clear that a quality decision cannot be arrived at without critical thinking. In the absence of critical thinking, entire details of a situation may not be available and the best solution may be hard to find.

Contribution of critical thinking to decision making

Decision making involves balancing of quantitative and qualitative data and <https://assignbuster.com/best-practices-in-critical-thinking-and-decision-making/>

using our judgment to make the right choice. It is here that critical thinking helps. Critical thinking puts our knowledge of a particular situation or problem into a proper perspective. It helps us to understand the subject by filling the gaps in information and revealing the significance of the assumptions we have made about the subject. When there are many options available to us it is difficult to choose. A final and informed decision can be arrived at when we have a full understanding of the subject. Critical thinking helps you to do just that by providing us with the consequences and implications of various options. Critical thinkers use the power of reasoning to dissect complex problems and make things simple. Critical thinking contributes towards avoiding mistakes and making one aware of opportunities available.

Skills necessary for Critical Thinking

Critical thinking requires practice. It is not mere thinking. To be a critical thinker one has to do more than that. Critical thinking requires certain skills.

According to Callahan (1998) a critical thinker should be able to:

1. Observe and describe : Carefully see and notice things and describe them
2. Compare: Examine similarities between men or things and judge and measure a thing against another
3. Identify: To show the qualities of a person or a thing
4. Associate: Link or connect people or things
5. Infer: Form an opinion or come to a conclusion that is based on available information
6. Predict: Forecast in advance what is going to happen
7. Apply: Use the relevant information and apply it to the particular situation

Paul, Binker, Jensen, and Kreklau (1990) have added some more
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requirements. A critical thinker according to them must be able to:

1. Think independently
2. Avoid oversimplification
3. Clarify and analyze the meanings of words or phrases
4. Develop criteria for evaluation
5. Evaluate the credibility of sources of information
6. Question deeply
7. Evaluate beliefs, theories and interpretations
8. Read and also to listen critically

Conclusion

As Brian Egan (2005) says “ Critical thinking is the methodical analysis of reasoning. It is about understanding the implications of inputs (data) and influences (bias) to the reasoning process.” Critical thinking helps us to think with clarity without being prejudiced by biases, assumptions or mindsets. One is able to approach a problem without any preconceived notions. Critical thinkers do not take hasty decisions. They first try to find out what they do not know, take time to analyze and then come to a conclusion. Hence they are able to make excellent as well as effective decisions.

References

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