Critical thinking

Critical Thinking The term critical brings to mind words such as analytical, evaluation and extremely important. It also conjures up thoughts of something that must be carried out immediately and with the greatest of care. Critical used with thinking implies a more active process than creative thinking. One can think about an event or a person by having thoughts simply passing through one's mind, without necessarily focusing on any specific idea or trying to make much sense of the thoughts. Critical thinking however requires an attempt to ' make sense' of the thoughts and ideas, to understand them at a deeper level or to make judgments about them, to make connections between them or even to develop beliefs and ultimately to arrive at appropriate relevant action derived from these thoughts.

Critical thinking has been defined in many different ways. Scriven and Paul (2007) define critical thinking as " the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action". However in order to understand what it means to think critically one must look at the components of critical thinking and the attributes of people who think critically. The best description of what it means to think critically is the ability of the thinker to take charge of their own thinking. In order to do this it means that the thinker is engaging in a number of processes including questioning, interpreting and evaluating information, assessing and analyzing information, examining their own beliefs and assumptions and weighing up opinions against facts.

One of the important criteria for thinking critically that differentiates it from other kinds of thinking such as creative thinking is that the thinking leads to

reactive behaviors that are rational. To think critically therefore means more than just having thoughts; it means analyzing and evaluating an assessing not just thoughts but beliefs to improve life.

Reference.

Scriven, M. & Paul, R. (2007). The Critical Thinking Community. Retrieved February 12, 2008, from Foundation for Critical Thinking Web site: http://www. criticalthinking. org/aboutCT/define_critical_thinking. cfm