

Critical thinking



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As a field Grade officer I believe that critical thinking and problem solving is a necessary and very important tool that will assist in my career development for the next ten years. Critical thinking is an important part of all professional fields and academic disciplines. The process involves the careful acquisition and interpretation of information and using it to reach a justified conclusion. It allows you to clarify goals, examines assumptions, evaluates evidence, makes judgments, determines courses of actions, and assess conclusions.

Critical thinking is important because it is necessary for success and will saves life and makes good decisions on how to use and redistribute dwindling limited resources. It will prepare students and leaders to educate themselves to make better decisions and enable us to solve problems more effectively. Mastering critical thinking skills will prepare you to take greater advantage of the opportunities provided by your constitutional rights.

According to FM6-22, 2006. Par. 6.

5, critical thinking is a thought process that aims to find truth in situations where direct observation is insufficient, impossible, or impractical. In addition, it is central to the decision making process and allows people to think through and solve problems. Critical thinking is integral to studying and learning. One of the most effective ways to learn anything is to actively think it into your thinking. For instance, it is very common to hear leaders, teachers, and just about everyone say, ??? let me think about it??? when they have to make decisions about things from simple to complex questions and /or choices. Almost anyone can become adept at memorizing facts,

events, names and faces. However, without critical thinking, people find it difficult to integrate ideas they learn from one situation or experience to another. By using critical thinking and decision making processes, officers will increase their chances of drawing valid inferences based on accurate evidence and well supported reasoning, thus, avoiding problems such as hasty decisions based on insufficient or faulty information.

Everyone has the ability to think. According to the Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools, much of our thinking, left to itself, is partial, distorted biased, uninformed or prejudicial. Further, the way we unconsciously think can affect the way we behave, the things we build and produce and how we live our lives. Faulty and egocentric thinking can be costly both in money, health, and in life. To that end, critical thinking must be cultivated in order to improve and maintain the very quality of our lives.

Managers and leaders are expected to be able to critically read and evaluate both written and oral communication as well as delivering their own arguments in a credible unbiased way, supported by credible evidence. The success of any organization depends on the ability of members to ask relevant questions, listen actively, assess complex information and made critical decisions. To successfully complete combat missions, leaders should be ready at all times, to use critical thinking during changing situations and combat stress operations.

Sometimes difficult decisions must be made quickly in order to put our soldiers in position to bring about the best possible outcome. Being an officer, I am a leader of soldiers and Department of Defense employees and

contractors. Decision-making and problem solving are among the two most crucial and common thinking processes leaders use. Leaders by their very nature inherit an expectation to be problem solvers. It is very important for leaders and managers to make the right decision in a timely manner. Taking a long time to make a simple decision or making a complex decision too quickly can have detrimental effects on any organization, especially the armed forces where it may cost soldiers' lives and families emotional distress. Life is filled with many different levels of thinking, ranging from normal daily decisions such as planning meals, to life-changing situations such as how to deploy your troops or take an objective.

Critical thinking will provide leaders with a systematic problem-solving process that will improve the chances of favorable solutions. Changes in technology, the workplace, the economy, and the art of war have made the ability to think critically more important than ever before. Leaders are faced with more complex problems.

The armed forces are tasked to do more with less almost daily. To meet these challenges, it is important that we as field-grade officers with aspirations of becoming future senior leaders develop a systematic approach to assess the current situation and find creative, suitable outcomes. Consequently, critical thinking is an important skill to develop, in order to understand changing situations, make good judgments, and achieve appropriate solutions. Learning and applying critical thinking skills will enable the leader to ask vital questions, clearly and precisely formulate problems, assess and interpret relevant information to reach solutions to complex

problem. It can also improve our ability to communicate effectively. Finally, critical thinking will help you to solve problems.

Since doing the Foundation Block, especially the critical thinking and problem solving module, I have made a conscious effort to become a responsible critical thinker and to use a systematic approach when faced with potential problems. By practicing the Military Decision Making Process Model, I have become even more open minded and creative in generating and analyzing possible solutions before implementing decisions. I realized that it has made me better in reaching conclusions and implementing courses of action, not only in work related issues, but it has carried over to every other life situations.

I have been stimulated intellectually; my thinking is clearer, more accurate, relevant, and logical. Critical thinking is an ongoing process and can be beneficial to any individual or group. Using critical thinking will help you to solve immediate and long term problems and can become the foundation for future success. References Astleitner, H. (2002). ??? Teaching Critical Thinking Online, ??? Journal of Instructional Psychology, 29, (2): 53. Bascal, Robert. ??? Sharpening the Decision Making Process in Groups ??? “ Fighting GroupThink ??? [On-line} (Ontario, Canada: Conflict911 , 2004, accessed 10 August 2011).

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