

Critical thinking on development of thinking strategies

[Business](#), [Strategy](#)



Most of us are less than what we could be. Great capacity exists within us but most of it is undeveloped and dormant. Improving in thinking is just like any other improvement, for instance improvement in ballet, in basketball or even in playing of the saxophone. Development of thinking is unlikely to take place in the absence of unconscious commitment to learn. We really don't do the work required to help us in the improvement of thinking if we take thinking for granted. A gradual process is required in the development of our thinking, calling for plateaus of plain hard work and learning. It is absolutely hard for one to become an excellent thinker simply because he or she wishes to. Changing ones habit of thought is a long term project, happening not within weeks or months but taking place in years.

We must understand that there are stages required for the development of one to be a critical thinker. Stage one: Unreflective Thinker, whereby we are very unaware of having significant problems in our thinking. Stage two, The Unchallenged Thinker; becoming aware of our thinking problems. Beginning Thinker is the third stage in which one tries to improve his or her thinking but does not do it regularly. The fourth stage is the Practicing Thinker, recognizing the necessity of regular practice. Advanced Thinker is stage five, meaning advancing in accordance to the practice and the last stage is the Master Thinker in which insightful and skilled thinking becomes a second nature. We only develop through these stages on accepting that we have a problem in thinking.

Nine strategies have been suggested that any inspired person can employ to develop as a thinker, but only three have been discussed below. First

strategy: Use 'wasted' Time. Wastage of time is a problem facing all humans. They fail to use their time in a productive and pleasurable manner, sometimes jumping from one place to another without enjoying any of the places. Matters that are totally beyond our control gets us irritated sometimes. We cause ourselves negative consequences that we could have avoided by planning well. For example, spending time unnecessarily being trapped in the traffic when we could have avoided it by leaving an hour earlier. Other times we worry unproductively and spent time regretting about the past. The key remains that the time is 'gone', if only we had thought about it and considered our opinions we would not have spent our time the way we spent it deliberately. Then why not take advantage of the time we normally waste to practice critical thinking during that otherwise wasted time.

Second strategy; A Problem A Day. At the start of everyday, perhaps when going to school or going to work, choose a problem to handle whenever you have free minutes. Identify the elements of your problem which is, what the problem really is and whether it is in alignment with my goals, purposes and needs. Wherever possible have a clear picture of the kind of problems you are dealing with and analyze it, interpreting the information. For example what sort of things you are going to have to solve it. Figure out options of action and evaluate them taking into account the advantages and disadvantages. Have a strategy towards the problem, then act and monitor the implications of the actions.

Third strategy: Internalize Intellectual Standards. Every week develop a higher degree of awareness of one of the universal intellectual standards, that is, accuracy, clarity, depth, precision, relevance, significant, logicalness and breadth. Every week focus on a different universal intellectual standard. For example when focusing on clarity for a week, try to notice when not clear in communicating with others and when other is unclear in what they are communicating. Also notice when you are clear and not when reading. To be effective in these focus on the four techniques' of clarification; stating what you are saying precisely and explicitly, elaborating on your meaning, giving examples of what you meant and using analogies such as metaphors, pictures, or diagrams for illustration.

REFERENCES

Paul, R & Elder, L (2005) . Critical Thinking: Tools for taking charge of your learning and your life.