

Critical Thinking



Office of Student Life & Academic Support

RaiseHighHS@gwu.edu

Critical thinking encompasses a broad set of skills and dispositions, including cognitive skills (e.g. analysis, inference and self-regulation); approaches to specific questions or problems (e.g. orderliness, diligence and reasonableness); and approaches to life in general (e.g. inquisitiveness, concern with being well informed, and open-mindedness) (Facione, 2011).

Critical thinking is not only an essential skill that needs to be developed in healthcare professionals but an expectation.

Why is critical thinking important?

On a daily basis, students and professionals are required to gather, analyze, and process information to make sound, logical decisions. So why is critical thinking important?

1. It is an essential life skill that is not limited to just learning.
2. It encourages curiosity and fosters lifelong learning.
3. It enhances creativity and encourages us to question assumptions.
4. It enhances our problem-solving ability and is therefore key to decision-making.
5. It promotes independent thinking.

School of Medicine
& Health Sciences

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

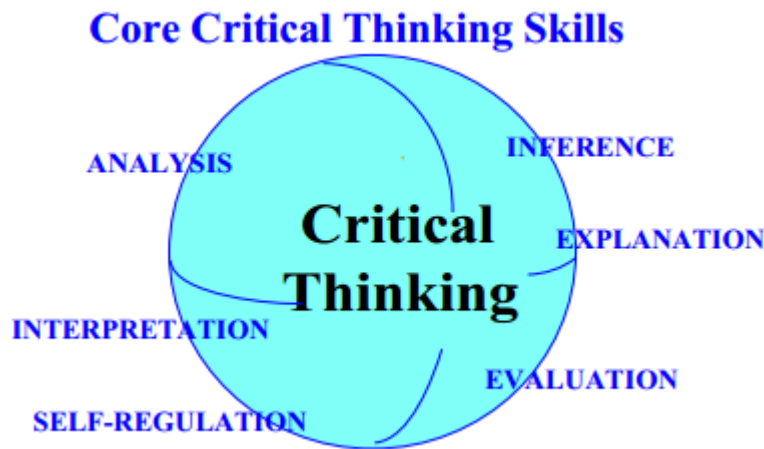


Image Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/qepcafe/modules/overview/facione>

What are the key critical thinking skills?

- **Inference** – ability to draw reasonable conclusions or form hypotheses based on relevant information
- **Explanation** – ability to justify and clearly and concisely state your results or conclusions based on sound rationale
- **Evaluation** – ability to assess the value of the information that you obtain based on its relevance, reliability and credibility.
- **Self-regulation** – ability to monitor and reflect on your thinking processes that lead to a conclusion and self-correct when necessary. You should be on the alert for biases* and improper assumptions.
- **Interpretation** – ability to understand and express the meaning or significance of information or a particular event.
- **Analysis** – ability to identify relationships, intended and inferred, among statements, concepts, descriptions and/or questions and investigate a course of action based on data that is objective and subjective.

Attributes needed to be a critical thinker:

- Analytical
- Confident in reasoning
- Fair
- Inquisitive
- Judicious
- Logical**
- Open-minded***
- Truth-seeking
- Systematic

***Bias** - Critical thinkers are able to identify their biases and do not allow them to compromise their thinking processes.

****Logic** – Critical thinking is affected when logic is not used properly. Errors can occur we generalize and do not consider the evidence.

*****Closed Minded** - Being closed-minded as a learner or professional can be detrimental if you ignore other points of view and expertise. It limits innovation and identification of potential options.

Ways to Improve Your Critical Thinking

1. Keep the goal in mind
2. Know your biases and try to look past them
3. Ask questions and gather information
4. Evaluate the facts of the situation and all available data
5. Collaborate and get feedback from others-especially those with different perspectives
6. Generate possible solutions
7. Consider short- and long-term consequences of implementing each potential solution.

IDEAS: A 5-Step Critical Thinking Problem Solving and Decision Making Process

I – Identify the problem and set priorities
D = Deepen understanding and gather relevant information
E – Enumerate options and anticipate consequences
A – Assess the situation and make a preliminary decision
S – Scrutinize the process and self-correct as needed

Resources

6 Benefits of Critical Thinking and Why They Matter. <https://www.wabisabilearning.com/blog/critical-thinking-benefits>

Facione PA. Critical thinking: what it is and why it counts. Insight Assessment (2011).

<https://docs.google.com/file/d/1YwkD94KQONbGSdQULbaRr4LcKvggShQyI9pLLh1aK0nxVLbBNRAZ5AaOI2z0/edit>

Facione PA, Gittens CA. Think critically. Pearson Education: Englewood Cliffs, NJ. 2011.

Sharples JM, Oliver S, Oxman AD, Mahtani KR, Chalmers I, Collins K, et al. (2017) Critical Thinking: A Core Skill within Education and Healthcare <https://impact.chartered.college/article/sharples-critical-thinking-healthcare-education/>

The Value of Critical Thinking in Nursing + Examples <https://nursejournal.org/community/the-value-of-critical-thinking-in-nursing/>

Other Critical Thinking Resources (YouTube)

Sotir D. Critical Thinking Skills. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PsLktb7HTA>

Study Skills-How to Think Critically https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMt_RIR_JHo