

Characteristics of a Successful Student

- ✓ Successful students attend classes regularly.
- ✓ They are on time.
- ✓ They listen and train themselves to pay attention.
- ✓ If they miss a session, they feel obligated to let the instructor know why before class begins, if possible, and their excuses are legitimate and reasonable.
- ✓ They make sure they get all missed assignments (by contacting the instructor or another student), and understand specifically what was covered in class.
- ✓ Successful students take responsibility for themselves and their actions.
- ✓ Successful students take advantage of extra credit opportunities when offered.
- ✓ They demonstrate that they care about their grades and are willing to work to improve them.
- ✓ They often do the optional (and frequently challenging) assignments that many students avoid.
- ✓ Successful students are attentive in class.
- ✓ They don't talk, read, or stare out windows. In other words, they are polite and respectful, even if they get a little bored.
- ✓ They also participate in class even if their attempts are a bit clumsy and difficult.
- ✓ They ask questions that the instructor knows many other students may also have.
- ✓ Successful students see their instructors before or after class or during office hours about grades, comments on their papers, and upcoming tests.
- ✓ Successful students end up at their instructor's office door at least once during the semester. They'll go out of their way to find the instructor and engage in meaningful conversation. These students demonstrate to the instructor that they are active participants in the learning process and that they take the job of being a student seriously.
- ✓ Successful students turn in assignments that look neat and sharp. They take the time to produce a final product that looks good, and reflects of a care and pride in their work.
- ✓ Successful students seem driven to complete their assignments. All work and assignments are turned in, even if some of their responses are not brilliant.
(OnCourse, Downing, 2011)

University of New England Student Support Services Division of Student Affairs

Mission Statement

Student Support Services provide a seamless collection of resources to assist students with psychological and emotional health, academic support, educational and career planning, and equal opportunities during their academic experience. We take an active role in meeting the ever-changing and diverse needs of our sophisticated student population.

Core Values Statement

Our multi-dimensional outreach programming is designed to meet the needs of students and the overall campus community and address preventative, developmental, social, psychological, career, and academic issues. We consult with students, faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and alumni, as well as collaborate with other campus and community organizations. We recognize that our ability to be a responsive service is based on a commitment to organizational integrity, professional ethics, and personal growth and development. Our services are an integral part of the mission of the Student Affairs Division and the University of New England.



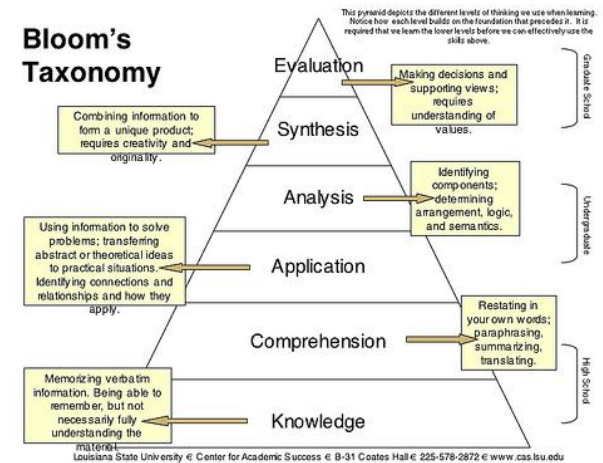
Study smarter
not harder

For more information and assistance, contact UNE's Learning Specialist, Lorraine Pecchia, at 207-602-2398, or email LPCecchia@une.edu

Student Academic Success Center

Student Support Services Division of Student Affairs

Bloom's Taxonomy



Critical Thinking, Reasoning and Reading Strategies

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Critical Thinking

Critical thinking involves stepping aside from your own personal beliefs, prejudices, and opinions to sort out the facts and discover the truth, even at the expense of your basic belief system.

The Problem

Everyone thinks; it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or downright prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.

A Definition

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.

The Result

A well cultivated critical thinker: raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; gathers and assesses relevant information using abstract ideas to interpret it; effectively comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking.

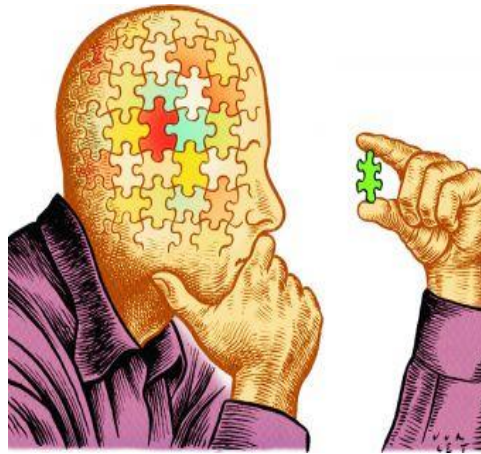
(Taken from Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*, Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2008).

Critical Reasoning and Metacognition

Metacognition is usually defined as “what we know about what we know,” so metacognitive reasoning is determining how we can use this knowledge to direct and improve the thinking and learning process. While engaging in critical thinking, students need to monitor their thinking process, checking that progress is being made toward an appropriate goal and making decisions about the use of time and mental effort. In the jargon of cognitive psychology, metacognitive monitoring serves the executive function of directing the thinking process.

Think about your thinking!

How do you know what you know?



Critical Reading

First, adopt and adapt a reading strategy that works with your learning style and reading assignments. You may find helpful the SQ3R method – Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review. **Survey** your reading assignment by skimming and observing titles, charts, table, bold words, etc. Develop **Questions** about each section of the reading. This will help you identify what information you want to “look for” while reading. **Read** the assignment as thoroughly as possible. Read and Reflect one section at a time and don't get too bogged down with details. Look for main ideas and supporting details. **Recite** and recall the information by paraphrasing and summarizing. **Review** and review over time.

We can distinguish between critical reading and critical thinking in the following way:

Critical *reading* is a technique for **discovering** information and ideas within a text. Critical *thinking* is a technique for **evaluating** information and ideas, for deciding what to accept and believe.

Critical reading refers to a careful, active, reflective, analytic reading. In actual practice, critical reading and critical thinking work together. Critical thinking allows us to monitor our understanding as we read.

Reading to see what a text says may suffice when the goal is to learn specific information or to understand someone else's ideas. But we usually read with other purposes. Students need to solve problems and make meaningful connections.

Students must evaluate what they have read and integrate that understanding with their prior understanding of the world. Students must decide what to accept as true and useful.

As critical readers, we want to accept as fact only that which is actually true. To evaluate a conclusion, we must evaluate the evidence upon which that conclusion is based. To assess the validity of remarks within a text, we must go outside a text and bring to bear outside knowledge and standards.