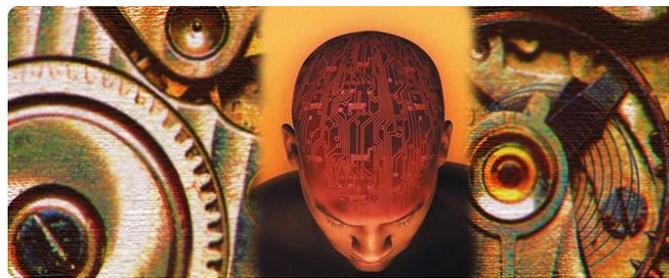


Developing a Critical Attitude

By Deborah Bowman, PhD

You are a self-directed learner who set your own goals and standards. You are an autonomous and independent thinker, which is why the online environment is ideal for you. The following are tips to dispose you to critical thinking and help you move to higher intellectual levels and achieve critical consciousness (Ennis, 1987), so your brain can transact much smoother in this online environment. This requires a continuous special effort to achieve though. Using both the Socratic Method and metacognition promotes your critical thinking dispositions and will be an essential skill in your doctoral program.



These tips were taken from both Ennis's (1987) critical thinking taxonomy and Clark's Metacognitive Support Principle (2003) to help you build on this important strength.

- ◆ In order to write better we have to read better. Critical thinking and critical reading go together.
- ◆ Use a concept map to reveal relationships between concepts, theories and principles.
- ◆ Always judge the credibility of your sources.
- ◆ Identify conclusions, reasons and assumptions.
- ◆ Judge the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence.
- ◆ Develop and defend a position on an issue and change your position when the evidence and reasons are sufficient to do so.
- ◆ Ask appropriate clarifying questions.
- ◆ Define terms in a way that is appropriate for the context.

- ◆ Be open-minded.
- ◆ Always seek to be well informed and seek reasons.
- ◆ Draw conclusions when warranted, but with caution.
- ◆ Strive to remain relevant.
- ◆ Deal in an orderly manner with the parts of a complex whole.
- ◆ Always strive to use metacognition and build on your critical thinking abilities.
- ◆ Be sensitive to the feelings, level of knowledge, and degree of sophistication of others.

Use these tips to profile your learning needs and adapt accordingly. All my best for another productive weekMitzie!

References

Clark, R. (2003). *Building expertise: Cognitive methods for training and performance improvement* (2nd ed.). Silver Spring, MD: International Society for Performance Improvement.

Ennis, R. H. (1987). A taxonomy of critical thinking disposition and abilities. In J. Baron & R. Sternberg (Eds.). *Teaching thinking skills: Theory and practice* (pp. 9-26). New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.