Clear and Critical Thinking

ATH 613 Theological Research & Writing

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Introduction

Throughout the educational endeavors of students in the University system in the United States there is a constant need to change and evolve in the way that learners think. In various institutions there is an emphasis in clear and critical thinking. In order to understand the importance of critical thinking there needs to be an understanding of what is the definition of critical thinking. According to researchers critical thinking is defined as the capacity to compare ideas, examine their significance, subject the information to a polite skeptic analysis, to weigh them in relation to other opposite points of view, to build argumentation systems that would support and give them coherence and to adopt a position on the basis of these structures.[1] In simple words critical thinking is the ability to compare ideas, data and research while examining information to form new ideas. Critical thinking on a master's level focuses on the connecting older ideas, and theories with new ideas based on the information received through research. In order for the ideas to be understood there needs to be clear and concise thinking. For this assignment learners will examine clear and critical thinking between undergraduate students and military personnel. However there first must be an understanding of what critical thinking really means.

Clear and Critical Thinking

Clear and critical thinking is essential on a master's level learning and every aspect of life on a personal and professional level. Critical thinking does not refer to the accumulation of information, but the development of the ability to process information.[2] Learners may believe

1 NEDELCU, Elena. 2017. "CRITICAL THINKING BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE." *Romanian Review Of Social Sciences* 7, no. 12: 3-14. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

2NEDELCU, Elena. 2017. "CRITICAL THINKING BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE." *Romanian Review Of Social Sciences* 7, no. 12: 3-14. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

that critical thinking is about arguing or forming a new opinion, however clear critical thinking

involves analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the information presented. Critical thinking can

also be seen as a way of dealing with and solving problems based on a convincing argument that

is coherent, logical and rational. [3] Though critical thinking does not identify itself with logic, the

two can be mistaken. As previously mentioned clear critical thinking is utilized in one's

professional and individual development. In order to visual critical thinking researchers utilized a

method called concept mapping to facilitate critical thinking. Concept mapping, graphically

depicting the structure of complex concepts, is based on the observation that pictures and line

drawings are often more easily comprehended than the abstract words that represent complex

concepts. [4] The visual representation of what critical thinking puts into perspective the ability to

think clearly and present complex ideas in a visual setting. It should be noted that critical

thinking is not the ability to repeat the same information that is presented, but the individual

should seek to adapt, fuse and utilize the information to form a new thought to have a positive

result in your favor. By utilizing the technique of concept mapping student are able to put into

practice and visually see the difference in their thinking that allow them to make better

decisions.[5] It is needless to say that critical thinking for students is an essential tool that will be

utilized not only in classes, but in the real world as well.

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3 NEDELCU, Elena. 2017. "CRITICAL THINKING BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE." *Romanian Review Of Social Sciences* 7, no. 12: 3-14. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).
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 HARRIS, CHARLES M., and ZHA SHENGHUA. 2017. "CONCEPT MAPPING FOR CRITICAL THINKING: EFFICACY, TIMING, & TYPE." *Education* 137, no. 3: 277-280. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

5 HARRIS, CHARLES M., and ZHA SHENGHUA. 2017. "CONCEPT MAPPING FOR CRITICAL THINKING: EFFICACY, TIMING, & TYPE." *Education* 137, no. 3: 277-280. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

Students are not the only individuals that utilize critical thinking, but critical thinking is utilized in the work place as well. It is easy for individuals to get stuck in the routine of their jobs, but employing clear critical thinking is of great importance for life outside of academia. For instance, the United States Air Force has identified critical thinking as a key skill for their personnel.[6] As we will learn critical thinking is not reserved for academia, but spills over into real world scenarios in the work force. Within the military, critical thinking is seen as the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving the activity being conducted.[7] After all no one wants mindless drones, just willing to accept commands in the workplace. Workplaces look to find individuals willing to think outside the box, and improve their overall goal.[8] The ability to improve one's thinking skills and improve the quality of the job is needed in part of the growth process for employees, and the mission for many places of employment. The United States Air Force's mission requires personnel to be able to recognize personal thought and make structured and reasoned analysis to reach decisions.[9] The everyday process of an airman includes thinking critically about multiple complex situations that impact our nation's security and the safety of fellow military personnel. Complex thought processing is a vital tool that is utilized by academia as well as the real world. The essence of critical thinking is to go beyond the

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6 Stone, Adam J. 2017. "Critical Thinking Skills in USAF Developmental Education." *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 2: 52-67. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

7 Stone, Adam J. 2017. "Critical Thinking Skills in USAF Developmental Education." *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 2: 52-67. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

8 Franco, Amanda R., Patrício S. Costa, Heather A. Butler, and Leandro S. Almeida. 2017. "Assessment of Undergraduates' Real-World Outcomes of Critical Thinking in Everyday Situations." *Psychological Reports* 120, no. 4: 707-720. *Business Source Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

9 Stone, Adam J. 2017. "Critical Thinking Skills in USAF Developmental Education." *Air & Space Power Journal* 31, no. 2: 52-67. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

regurgitating of information, but being able to examine complex information and form a clear

and concise thought in solving whatever the problem is a tool that makes life better.

Conclusion

Life is complex, and without the ability to think of our actions before allowing actions to follow. Critical thinking is kind of "good" thinking that integrates a set of cognitive skills and dispositions to use those skills with knowledge to increase the chances of success in an academic setting, job market, and daily life.[10] Critical thinking is not only employed in the academic setting, but when taught correctly and employed becomes a vital tool on an individual's utility belt of life. As researchers have found individuals who utilize critical thinking skills do better than individual's who do not employ such techniques.[11] With these notions in mind, it is important that educators are teaching proper techniques for learners to adequately prepare themselves for the work force, and society as a whole. In addition it is vital that learners practice and utilize their critical thinking skills in every avenue of their lives, so that they can solve situations and have better outcomes. Whether it is military personnel, academia, or the general workforce, critical thinking is an essential component of every aspect of life.

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11 HARRIS, CHARLES M., and ZHA SHENGHUA. 2017. "CONCEPT MAPPING FOR CRITICAL THINKING: EFFICACY, TIMING, & TYPE." *Education* 137, no. 3: 277-280. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 12, 2017).

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