Critical Thinking

Kinds of Thinkers

Video Lecture

Each of us views the world through multiple lenses, often shifting them to fit our changing feelings. Much of our perspective is unconscious and uncritical and has been influenced by many forces—social, political, economical, biological, and psychological. Selfishness and narrow-mindedness are deeply influential in the lives of most people.

We need a systematic way to further sound thinking and limit unsound thinking. We need to take command of our minds in order to determine what thinking to accept and what to reject. Critical thinking is that process, that orientation, and that way of thinking.

To develop critical thinking skills we must first examine how we approach thinking. This video lecture will help you examine your approach to thinking.

What Kind of Thinker Are You?

Video script:

Narrator: Humans live in a world of thoughts. We accept some thoughts as true and reject others as false. We each view the world through multiple lenses, often shifting them to fit our changing feelings. However, people think differently and there are different thinkers in the world.

Let's examine three types of critical thinkers. There are three main kinds of critical thinkers: the naïve thinker, the selfish critical thinker, and the fair-minded critical thinker. The naïve thinker is one who does not care about, nor is he aware of his or her own thinking. This kind of thinker believes he already understands something without thinking about it. Generally, this thinker doesn't voice his own opinions. Naïve thinkers always have some sort of excuse for not thinking for themselves. This type of thinker does not question things. Because of this, he may not learn much and he may not truly understand a subject. The selfish critical thinker is one who actually is good at thinking, but is unfair to others. The selfish thinking level is very self-centered. Generally, selfish thinkers are not very honest and are quick to try to manipulate by telling
people what they want to hear, even though it may hold no truth. Selfish thinkers may sometimes say they can't, but in their mind, they know they can. A selfish thinker also believes what he wants to believe without having anything to back it with. A selfish thinker is also able to use thoughts to get what he wants at other expenses. Finally, the fair-minded critical thinker is one who is good at thinking and is also fair to others. These thinkers work to improve their thinking whenever they can. Even though they want things for themselves, they are not selfish. They want to make the world a better place. They don't always have the correct answers, but they work to improve their thoughts and actions over time. Each type of critical thinker approaches thinking with different attitudes. Here's the voice of the naïve thinker.

Naïve Thinker: I don't need to think. I understand everything without thinking. I just do whatever occurs to me to do. I believe most of what I hear, most of what I see on TV and mostly everything I read on the internet. I don't need to waste a lot of time trying to figure things out. If I need to find the answer to a problem, I just ask someone else. I mostly go along with what everyone else is doing. I do what I'm told, keep my mouth shut. Thinking gets you into trouble.

Narrator: Here's the voice of the selfish thinker.

Selfish Thinker: I think a lot. It helps me get what I want. I believe whatever I want to believe as long as it helps me to get what I want. I question anyone who asks me to do what I don't want to do. It helps if you tell people what they want to hear, even if it isn't true. You only get into trouble when you tell people what they don't want to hear.

Narrator: Here's the voice of the fair-minded thinker.

Fair-minded Thinker: I think a lot. It helps me learn and figure things out. Not only do I want to understand the thinking of other people, but I want to understand myself and why I do things. In order to understand other people, you have to look at their situation and think about what you would feel like if you were them. I want to help create a better world for everyone.

Narrator: What kind of thinker are you? Each of us may sometimes be a naïve, selfish or fair-minded thinker. We will never be perfect, but we can work together to improve our thinking and to develop as consistent, fair-minded thinkers. Are you ready to become a critical thinker?

End of video.
Activity: Check Your Understanding

Examines traits of the three kinds of thinkers. Fair-minded critical thinkers believe understanding other people requires looking at things from their perspective. Naïve critical thinkers generally believe what they see on TV or read on the Internet because verifying what they see or hear requires too much effort. Selfish critical thinkers use their thinking to get what they want; they do not consider how their actions affect other people.

ECAMPUS USERS: To return to the main page for this lesson go to the top of the page and select the lesson link.