

Critical Thinking

Course Overview

In today's world, having the ability to clearly reason through problems and to present arguments in a logical, compelling way has become a key skill for survival.

Learning Objectives

- Define critical and non-critical thinking
- Identify critical thinking style(s), including areas of strength and improvement
- Describe other thinking styles, including left/right brain thinking and whole-brain thinking
- Work through the critical thinking process to build or analyze arguments
- Develop and evaluate explanations
- Improve key critical thinking skills, including active listening and questioning
- Use analytical thought systems and creative thinking techniques
- Prepare and present powerful arguments

Course Outline

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| 1. Session One: Course Overview | Case Studies |
| Learning Objectives | Identifying the Arguments |
| Pre-Assignment | Identifying the Arguments |
| Pre-Course Assessment | Clarifying the Issues and Arguments |
| 2. Session Two: Understanding Critical Thinking | Establishing Context |
| What is Critical Thinking? | Checking Credibility and Consistency |
| A Closer Look | Case Study: Changing Cafeteria Offerings |
| Glossary | Evaluating Arguments |
| Characteristics of a Critical Thinker | Case Study |
| Common Critical Thinking Styles | Critical Thinking Worksheet |
| Making Connections | 6. Session Six: Critical Thinking Mindset |
| 3. Session Three: Where Do Other Types of Thinking Fit In? | Answering Questions Activity |
| Left- and Right-Brain Thinking | 7. Session Seven: A Critical Thinker's Skill Set |
| Whole-Brain Thinking | Asking Questions |
| 4. Session Four: Pitfalls to Reasoned Decision Making | Closed Questions |
| Getting Over the Barriers | Probing Techniques |
| Defining Pitfalls to Critical Thinking | Pushing My Buttons |
| 5. Session Five: The Critical Thinking Process | Critical Thinking Questions |
| The Critical Thinking Model | Active Listening Skills |
| The Standards of Critical Thinking | Responding to Feelings |
| Identifying the Issues | Reading Cues |
| | Demonstration Cues |
| | Tips for Becoming a Better Listener |

8. Session Eight: Creating Explanations

Defining Explanations

Mini Case Study

Argument or Explanation?

Steps to Building an Explanation

Gathering Information

Processing Information

Developing Hypotheses

Testing Hypotheses

Making Connections

Questions

9. Session Nine: Dealing with Assumptions

What is an Assumption?

10. Session Ten: Critical and Creative Thought

Systems

Techniques for Thinking Creatively

Limitations of Brainstorming

Brainwriting

More Methods

Creative Thinking Exercise

11. Session Eleven: Putting It Into Practice

Presenting and Communicating Your Ideas
to Others

Pre-Assignment Preparation

Presentations

12. Personal Action Plan

13. Course Summary

14. Recommended Reading List

15. Post-Course Assessment