

Critical Thinking

Don't Jump to Conclusions

An important step in problem solving is taking the time to acquire the necessary information. Often, we tend to jump to conclusions before we have all of the facts. How can we use our understanding of logic to gather all the necessary facts? Remember, the premises are the facts or statements that help us come to conclusions.

Objectivity

Objectivity is defined as “intention on objects external to the mind.” In critical thinking, we want to have a keen sense of objectivity. This is a heuristic or rule/strategy for problem solving. Objectivity helps us to engage more thoughtfully and deliberately in the critical thinking process. However, we should not completely exclude our emotion or subjective feelings in the decision making or problem solving process. The most important thing to remember is that evaluating information objectively helps us to be more deliberate or thorough.

Increased Emotional Intelligence

What is emotional intelligence and how does critical thinking help increase our emotional intelligence? Emotional intelligence is identified as the ability to assess and control the emotions of oneself, others, and even groups. Emotional intelligence is being “heart smart” as opposed to “book smart.” Critical thinking helps increase emotional intelligence because one of the characteristics of a critical thinker is self-awareness. Also, critical thinkers know how and when to use their emotions, such as empathy, in making decisions. The more a person uses his or her critical thinking skills the better adept they should become at identifying, understanding, and managing their emotions. Emotional intelligence in general consists of four abilities:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management