

Dimensions of Critical Thinking in Workplace Management & Personal Development: A Conceptual Analysis

Mitashree Tripathy 

Sri Sri University, Cutack, India

* Correspondence: mitashreetripathy84@gmail.com

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Abstract

Globalization has caused a massive impact on the speed and nature of the business all around the world. The workplace setups have grown extremely complicated and job roles have become complex. Employees suffer a hard time at the workplace as communication patterns have become increasingly intricate. Decisions made by others are no more relied on and problems have turned more crucial than ever. Judgments are expected to be drawn faster and communication crystal clear. In such a rapidly moving business world, employees are provided with only limited space and opportunities for personal growth and development. In short, the exit gate remains open for the one who does not prove to be befitting each of the complexities in the business world. At this expository point, employees are required to view different problems differently and create variable approaches towards finding solutions to the problems. The need for such a powerful skill set is required not only to create a powerful vision at the workplace but also to develop other sub-skills set in oneself. This paper studies developing critical thinking skills to make careful judgments, make proper decisions, solve complex problems and wipe out the basic inability to communicate appropriately especially at the workplace. This paper provides ways to foster better the workplace management and personal development especially for the employees at workplace through critical thinking.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Judgement, Decision Making, Communication



1. Introduction

An analysis of communication has necessarily teemed with delicacies and difficulties. The process of communication is intricate, inconstant and instantaneously influenced by several factors that are intertwined. This directly supports the fact that if scrutinized meticulously, some form of construing structure is usually denoted. The perspective of communication is guided by the exchange of information, thoughts, ideas, opinions, expressions, emotions and instructions between people. A very basic human tendency is to think unquestioningly and indiscriminately to various situations. People easily tend to draw conclusions and make quick judgments. More often people do not tend to do thorough research or think much before solving a problem. The reasons behind any of such thought process are because of the tendency to get biased or one-sided towards personal interests, motives and insensible emotions that hinders them to develop any ability or skill that throws light towards different situations having different approaches or evaluate situations before making decisions and judgments and so on. Critical thinking does just that. Critical thinking provides definite and controlled means as an advisable guide before taking any actions. “According to the National Council for Excellence in Critical thinking, it is the intellectually disciplined means of aggressively conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and assessing information collected through experience, observation or reflection, as a guide to taking actions” (Jones, 2016).

Kallet discusses the basis of our everyday life which is based on thinking. Each action is guided by our thought process like eating, meeting someone, interacting, even sleeping. Kallet, however, writes that “critical thinking is thinking but in a different way. (...) Most would agree critical thinking is not our everyday, automatic, not-really-thinking-about-it thinking” (Kallet, 2014, p. 1)

Chatfield is very positive that developing such thinking capabilities like no other would furnish us to continue learning all our lives. Chatfield presents critical thinking as “when we are thinking critically, we are setting out actively to understand what is going on by using reasoning, evaluating evidence and thinking carefully about the process of thinking itself” (Chatfield, 2017, p.6). He further discusses scepticism and objectivity which are attached with critical thinking and which is strong skill sets to respond open-mindedness and simplistic thinking to further an expert and a deeper assessment of situations.



Developing critical thinking skills can guide sensible decision making at the workplace. To this Gambrill and Gibbs understand that critical thinking assists in taking proper decision making which is useful and also helps in delaying decisions if needed for better management. They write “critical thinking is a unique kind of purposeful thinking in which we use standards such as clarity and fairness. It involves the careful examination and evaluation of beliefs and actions to arrive at well-reasoned decisions” (Gambrill and Gibbs, 2017, p. 5).

A key aspect of critical thinking is that it views problem differently by abandoning logical thinking and bias attached to it and seeking to find out solutions through different approaches. Kallet and Kallet provide a framework of critical thinking components like clarity, conclusions, and decisions in their book *Think Smarter: Critical Thinking to Improve Problem-Solving and Decision Making Skills*. They believe that “within each of the framework components of clarity, conclusions, and decisions, there are numerous critical thinking tools and techniques to guide your thinking. As you use and practice these tools, your problem-solving and decision-making skills will improve” (Kallet and Kallet, 2014, p. 20).

The significance of critical thinking is also about making fair judgments. Dwyer writes “critical thinking considers possible viewpoints and results in interpretation, analysis, and evaluation of evidence and the conclusions inferred from the evidence. It is a purposeful, self-regulatory judgment that occurs when an issue is raised, the problem needs to be solved, opinions are reconsidered or experiences carefully reflected upon. Critical thinking is more than personal opinion”(Dwyer, 2012, p. 379).

Critical thinking is an art and subtle art to evaluate and consider a concept independently without falling for bias or discrimination and conclude to being logical, sensible and ethical. The workplace has a plethora of job roles, management and many more activities that entirely depend on the medium of communication. In fact, Moisescu and Golomoz believe that “competition is one of the most important factors that affect the competitive strategies of organisations” (Moisescu and Golomoz, 2018, p. 54). And in the world of competition an in order to bring efficiency to the workplace, proper communication is very essential. As a matter of fact, each communication at the workplace is based on critical thinking. Communication without critical thinking is simply hazardous and the consequences can never be repaired or recovered. Dyer in her book *Critical*

Thinking for Business Students writes “an important outcome of developing your critical thinking skills is that you can improve your own arguments when you write or speak. You will know how to state your views clearly and provide appropriate justification for them. You will be able to avoid fallacies in reasoning, explore your own underlying assumptions, and deal effectively with evidence that runs counter to your views. In general, you will develop further your appreciation for the use of language” (Dyer, 2006, p.8).

Critical thinking has become the most required skill in the 21st century workplace. “When more than 400 senior HR professionals were asked in a survey to name the most important skill their employees will need in the next five years, critical thinking ranked the highest surpassing innovation o the application of information technology” (Chartrand, Ishikawa, and Flander, 2013, p.1). It has become a pivotal and key element for the workplace success as it enables employees to view situations from diverse angles and offers response from multiple surfaces.

Different authors in their own way and thorough research have penned down developing critical thinking skills through various steps, strategies, principles, and stages. These steps are not obscured but are misleadingly simple as listed by Bareham. In his book *Think Well and Prosper: A Critical Thinking Guide* Bareham highlights six steps namely “decode, interpret, analyse, reason, inference and synthesize” (Bareham, 2012, p.12-13).

Similarly, Cottrell in the book *Critical Thinking Skills: Effective Analysis, Argument and Reflection* writes “Critical thinking assumes abilities in a range of skills such as categorizing, selection and differentiation, comparing and contrasting” (Cottrell, 2017, p.5). Likewise, Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison made their own interpretations regarding building critical thinking skills. They viewed “observing closely, building explanations and interpretations, reasoning with evidence, making connections, considering different viewpoints and perspectives, and capturing the heart and forming conclusions” (Ritchhart, Church and Morrison, 2011, p.11).

In the same way, Schiering detects “the thinking involves some of the following skills: organisation, evaluation, advanced decision making and problem-solving, reflection and self-actualization” (Schiering, 2016, p.4).

This paper studies in detail the benefits of critical thinking and the various aspects of critical thinking for effective workplace management and also to self-improvement. In addition to that referring to already developed ideas regarding stages to improve critical thinking, this paper provides additional inputs and explanations to deliver the approach.

2. Benefits of Critical Thinking at the Workplace

Global economy is aggressively unpredictable so much so that leaders find it struggling to maintain their calm and quotient and in doing so that may lead to a more judicious communication. Tripathy writes “in this extremely unpredictable global economy when there is a speedy change in almost every aspects of organisations, it has been increasingly complicated for the leaders of the organisation to have a clear picture on getting their visions right” (Tripathy, 2019, p. 110). The growth or fall of an organisation largely depends on how the leaders see through things. Critical thinking assists in doing just that. As a part of soft skills critical thinking which is easily one of the countless required skills for top positions in organisations, recent studies reveal that critical skills are pivotal for every employee and are an essential component for every action in the workplace starting from communication to building team, from leadership to creativity, from making crucial decisions to forming a conclusion, from making judgments to solving problems and many more. Overall, critical thinking is the basis of meeting every demand at the workplace. The section below is categorized into two subsections. The first section studies some of the many benefits critical thinking provides at the workplace and the second section studies the benefits critical thinking provides to self.

2.1 The Critical Thinking Fosters Effective Communication

Workplaces are large platforms where diversities collaborate to work for a common goal under a common roof. Employees from varied cultures, backgrounds, experiences, and distinctions communicate with each other to get the best of profits for the organisation and fulfilling the growing demands of the business world. Every day the communication process travels from desks to desks, roles to roles and from positions to positions. It may be thereby concluded that the workplaces survive because of communication. However, keeping in mind the diversities and the need to achieve goals, employees are required to communicate effectively which in turn demands

thinking but not the usual way. Instead, it applies the ability to analyse situations by discarding the conventional thought processes and applying to beyond conventional thought processes.

Let us understand the above point with an example. There are different personalities of employees in the workplace. However, there are many who do not feel comfortable communicating with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Even if they communicate they develop ethnocentrism and generalizations towards them which in turn become barriers to communication. Some employees also tend to bully and cause disturbances and nuisance thus causing an unpleasant ambiance at the workplace. Such are the characteristic features of uncritical thinkers who would generally tend to avoid communicating with people who do not match their minds. On the other hand, critical thinkers are good communicators. They understand the importance of cross-cultural communication in business and have a propensity towards building a successful relationship with everyone. They critically think regarding the consequences of distasteful relationships and endeavour to break through the barriers thereby creating a working atmosphere. In the words of Chase and Shamo in the book *Elements of Effective Communication* “Critical thinking is the basis of those good communication skills that employers seek and democracies need. As a listener, critical thinking will help you recognise a speaker’s unstated assumptions. As a speaker, it will help you form precise statements that embody your thoughts. Overall, critical thinking will place ideas into a broader context, showing how they relate to other things that you already know or believe” (Chase and Shamo, 2014, p. 213).

Critical thinking enables employees to think, observe and analyse situations and also the consequences and then proceed to draw a steadfast conclusion necessary for effective communication. Apart from this critical thinking skills also help to choose the right words for a better language presentation especially during presentations in boardrooms.

2.2 Critical Thinking Enables Better Decisions Making

Each day both employees and managers have to make countless decisions for the benefit and future of the company. Examples of decisions making can be listening to various outputs from the employees regarding an issue which is significant for the company and making a decision to choose the best suggestions. Other examples can be identifying a fault in newly manufactured products and deciding to stop further production despite bearing tremendous loss for the raw



material of the production. Still, some examples can be deciding to chop off salary as cost-cutting measures keeping in mind the impact on employees and many more.

Employees may be replete with great ideas but sometimes the ideas are generalized and simplified and not put forward through a thorough evaluation which results in perilous outcomes. Besides this, the process of conversion of ideas into decisions is at times accompanied by fallacies and predetermined assumptions. This restricts moving further with appropriate decisions. At this point, the role of critical thinking becomes of pivotal connotation. Critical thinking enables employees to make good decisions after arriving at a clever, clear and creative conclusion.

Decisions at the workplace are often stuffed with imperfections and actions resulted from such flawed decisions at times fail to deliver the breakthrough performance as expected. Decisions making is a stressful task especially the important ones most likely at the workplace where one has to choose the best alternative from a myriad perspective. The fact as to which alternative would turn out to be the finest depends only after the consequences. As a matter of fact, all humans lead more than one realm of life like with self, family, friends, the workplace, neighbours, society, strangers and others. When it comes to taking important decisions in these realms they are likely to build their thinking processes in similar ways as they build in the other domains of life they live. This ultimately results in having common characteristics with the decisions making process and what remains is a generalization towards selecting alternatives and thus no rational decision is made.

However, when decision making is accompanied by critical thinking the results are outstanding as critical thinking skills enable a decision-maker to analyse and evaluate situations a number of times before comparing the theories with past experiences and finally considering or coming up to a rational decision. Paul and Elder view “critical thinking when applied to decision making, enhances the rationality of decisions made by raising the pattern of decision making to the level of consciousness and deliberate choice” (Paul and Elder, 2013, p.184). Apart from this critical thinking also provides guidance to modify decisions as and when required.

3. Critical Thinking Assists in Problem Solving

The workplaces comprise different sorts of problems like conflicts, ethical issues, executive decisions, job role ambiguity and many more. Certain problems are easy to solve without giving much stress. However, there are some problems that are difficult to solve and that cause disappointment, dissatisfaction and create annoyance. Let us understand this with an example. Many times employees have clashes of opinions and personalities which result in negative outcomes like poor delivery of performance, negative work atmosphere, and the kind. Solving disputes is one of the most difficult jobs for managers as going in favour of the favourite employee leads to further disputes and not doing so results in strained relationships with the employee. Such clashes will be endless until managers who practice a high degree of critical thinking come ahead to solve the matter. Other examples include cases of sexual harassment that target not only women but men. But agreeing too easily that only a man can sexually harass a woman and not the other way round is not the style of solving a problem for critical thinkers. Rickards discusses the nature of problems and distinguishes them into two varieties namely close-ended and open-ended. He writes “Closed-ended problems have answers that are the logical consequences of the nature of the problem givens. Open-ended problems do not have correct answers, because, for example, they are not precise enough defined or because there is disagreement about the nature of the problem, with different people seeing it in different ways” (Rickards, 1997, p.11). Although problems can be of different natures, however, to solve it thinking beyond logical method is required which is fulfilled by critical thinking.

Critical thinking includes a number of ways to solve a problem. The first step begins with identifying or recognizing a problem which is accessed by gathering as much background information about it. The second step begins with the approach towards the problem. Butterfield opines the approach of solving problems can be through two ways “intuitively or systematically. When you solve a problem intuitively, you react immediately and instinctively, without following a particular procedure and systematic problem-solving method is to adopt a solution from a prior problem and apply it to your current situation” (Butterfield, 2016, p.2). While the former approach is meant to take fast decisions the latter is adopted in rather an organized manner and proceeded systematically. The next step involves brainstorming or attempting to find possible solutions to

determine the problem. This step is often carried forward hastily as problem-solvers are often misguided with various possibilities at the same time. Although it is good to have more than one possible solution, not being able to find the best solution is often frustrating. For every possible solution, it is required that problem solvers get a clear idea about the negative and positive outcomes of each possible alternative. This is the next step which is assessing each alternative and also the risks and merits attached to them. Then comes evaluating or selecting the best solution for the problem and which dominates all other alternatives keeping in mind the maximum benefits from the solution and negligible or no risks with it. The final step involves monitoring solutions which ultimately results in the solving of the problem. Goetsch in his book *Taking Your Faith to Work* concludes “critical thinking will make you a better problem solver. This is important because problem-solving is essential to success in a competitive the workplace” (Goetsch, 2008, p. 155).

4. Critical Thinking Generates Better Judgments

Fuller, Munro and Rainbird in their book *The workplace Learning in Context* write “when situations are complex or information is sparse, judgment becomes a critical aspect of decision-making: judgment of people; judgement of the quality of products, practices and processes; judgment of the relative significance of, and interaction between different factors; judgment of priorities, options, and strategies” (Fuller, Munro and Rainbird, 200, p. 207). The workplaces are often loaded with difficult judgement to make for example, choosing the right candidate between two best candidates during an interview, prioritizing between focusing on employees’ efficiency and work ethics, prioritizing on putting efforts on achieving short term goals or long term goals.

Judgments at workplace often get deranged when the process collides with ethics. Good judgments are based on ethics and abiding by them. In such situations not taking right judgment may lead to severe consequences the extreme being failure of business deals ultimately affecting organisations. Hence, employees must adopt critical thinking while reviewing or making any value judgments. Applying critical thoughts to ethics based judgment can produce miracle outcomes. Critical thinking generates better ways of applying judicious evaluations to crucial situations. Siddiqui describes it to be a skilful thinking that involves applying reasoning and logic to ideas one finds and opinions one forms and situations one experiences” (Siddiqui, 2018).

Drawing conclusions and making judgments is not an easy task. Implementing critical thinking helps recognizing conjectures, evaluating debates based on the assumptions and finally making a judgment are the salient features of critical thinking that support to make good judgments or modify them within a stipulated time span without much harming situations. A good judgment depends on splitting reality from belief. While judging at times it becomes easy to fall for information that is provided without digging deep and getting insights. At this first stage, critical thinking helps in finding the assumptions and putting forward questions to the nature of the situation. The second stage is pivotal as this is where most of the times judgments are done based on pure bias or which matches one's own viewpoint or else allowing emotions to penetrate the mind. Critical thinking helps to remain controlled, unbiased and objectively while dealing in this second stage which assists in making better judgments. The final stage is where a judgment is to be taken by bringing and comparing dissimilar information together and finally arriving into conclusions through a logical, rational, sensible and quality decision. "When presented with information, people typically alternate between recognising assumptions and evaluating arguments. Critical thinking is sequential in that recognising faulty assumptions or weak arguments improves the likelihood of reaching an appropriate conclusion" (Chartrand, Ishikawa, and Flander, 2013, p. 5).

The above points discussed what benefits critical thinking can bring to the workplace management. The sub-section below studies the advantages of mastering critical skills bring to self-development.

4.1 Critical Thinking instils Self Reflection

Critical thinking adds meaning to our existence. Simply doing actions without having the knowledge of the potentialities one has is as good as wondering aimlessly without any purpose. Taking time from the daily life, one can begin to think beyond the usual duties and think insightfully to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, fears, and calibre that one carries and how one can make the strengths strong, weaken the weaknesses, discard fears and make use of the calibre to get opportunities. This helps in avoiding mistakes and motivating self to be a quick learner by developing good judgemental and decision- making skills.

Critical evaluation of self helps in analysing and planning for commitments in various situations and domains of life and also provides a vent to unacknowledged and countless abilities an individual may own. Suter in his book *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach* provides briefly a list of the qualities critical thinkers possess. He writes “Critical thinkers are able to display inquisitive ideas, consider defensible conclusions, remain sceptical, reason with clarity, self-correct, justify conclusions, and seek multiple sources of information” (Suter, 2011, p.11).

An individual can add more and more skills and traits to his/her personality through critical thinking. One can be able to deeply and in an organised manner structure one’s life as thinking critically enables in polishing the best of qualities one has and by bringing one to close connection with self. It also prepares an individual not to be dependent on others and taking complete possession of duties and responsibilities. Hoaglund expresses “critical thinking is reflective in that it observes its own progress, evaluates each step to decide whether it is justified and corrects its own. The critical thinker is self-reliant and aspires to a degree of independence or autonomy in their thinking” (Hoaglund, 1999, p. 2).

Self-reflection is largely influenced by the values, beliefs and morals an individual carries and has a massive impact in the workplace too as employees get a tight hold on themselves and control their feelings and behaviour. It empowers employees to pause, think and analyse situations before taking any action which is way beneficial. Lot of issues both minor and major gets solved. The Management Association and Information Resources propose “the definition for values that emphasizes the need and benefit of self-reflection as part of the method by which an individual sets personal limitations and understands the consequences of his/her behaviour. Through self-reflection we are able to determine the best course of action in our personal lives and within an organisation” (Management Association and Information Resources, 2018, p. 100).

4.2 Critical Thinking Builds Compassion

One of the most important criteria one must infuse within self is the ability to be empathetic or compassionate in order to develop a personality. As it is there are tremendous circumstances that bring sufferings, failure, and disappointment to life. At such a point what one requires is a shoulder to lie on or kind words of compassion. At the workplace too employees expect care and consolation



“yet many workers say their employers remain silent and uncaring in the face of suffering, perhaps because they believe work life and home life should be kept separate, or because they fear making a mistake in offering support” (How to awaken compassion at work, 2018).

Critical thinking enables compassion as putting one’s foot into other shoes and feeling the pain and suffering of others as own. Compassion stems from kindness or an unfathomable consciousness towards others. Gilbert writes “compassion can be defined in many ways, but its essence is a basic kindness, with a deep awareness of the suffering of oneself and of other living things, coupled with the wish and effort to relieve it” (Gilbert, 2010, p. xiii). Critical thinking smoothes the progress of thoughts, wisdom, and understanding towards being compassionate. It first encounters the intensity of understanding with self and finds out when what and how an individual is affected by various emotions and then gradually proceeds to understand the emotions of others. However, the same understanding gets clouded with feelings of jealousy, depression, and anxiety. The emotions of others would start seeming vague and there would be focus only on self and not on others thereby damaging relationships. Critical thinking builds the emotional gap and restores relationships.

At the workplace too critical thinking and compassion go hand in hand if attempted to bring these feelings together. Worline and Dutton write “facing challenges from turbulent environments, regulatory changes, or customer complaints, leaders and managers can easily dismiss the need for compassion. But when seeking to build high-performing organisations that meet the challenges of a twenty-first-century work environment, compassion matters more than most people recognise” (Worline and Dutton, 2017, p. 13). As a matter of fact, critical thinking coupled with compassion fosters the workplace relationships and information sharing with each other. The combination can have a desirable impact both on work performance and interpersonal relationships.

4.3 Critical Thinking Augments Creativity

Critical thinking is useful in developing creative and innovative ideas to solve a problem, to do a task, to write and to bring out change. Only inquisitive people who question, investigate, search enquire and are curious for ideas are passionate to alter ideas into action are likely to be creative in their thoughts (Tripathy, 2019, p. 43). Creativity rejects a wide range of applicable

deviations. It encourages an individual to dismiss the assumptions which are common and biased or any other approach to the thoughts development process which narrows down intelligence and inventiveness. Creativity constitutes intellectual subsets like questioning, cognizance and insightful means to foster new ideas and problem-solving methods. In the words of Goodwin and Sommervold “creativity is the ability to invent or repurpose, to make something novel that has value. The value can be social, political, financial, or personal, but in order for an act to be considered creative, it must produce something of value” (Goodwin and Sommervold, 2012, p. 50).

Creativity is transferable which assists in solving many problems every day. Critical thinking fosters a creative approach towards problems in order to solve it and also ensure that the problem does not arise again. Individuals, as creative people learn to learn various things around them and at the same time are bearing to mistakes and take pleasure in insightful thinking. Also simply developing ideas is not the only thing that creativity encourages; finding out the link between ideas is equally significant. However, it is the critical thinking earned by severe efforts that enable creativity over and over again generating new ideas, answers and solutions to causes, questions and problems respectively. Lau states “a crucial step in the creative cycle is to actively explore the connections between ideas. The emergence of a new idea might only take seconds, but the thinking habits that allow the idea to emerge can take years of hard work and discipline to cultivate” (Lau, 2011, p. 201). At the workplaces too individuals with creativity accompanied by critical thinking can solve various problems, make decisions and draw conclusions without fallacies.

The above section discussed the significance of critical thinking in personal development. At this point it is important to understand that for personal development an individual requires many skills and abilities. However, those skills and abilities begin with the basis of critical thinking which is the centre for learning, behaving, dealing and leading. It is also mandatory to comprehend and follow certain steps that are required to be followed in order to develop critical thinking skills. The section below studies the important steps one by one essential to develop critical thinking.

5. Steps To Develop Critical Thinking

Studies reveal that developing critical thinking skills at a very early stage in life fosters better opportunities in life and boosts the way an individual sees life through



thought processes. Often at workplaces “leaders face a number of challenges related to professional and personal structures and come across complex circumstances when trapped between their morals and professional demands in order to resolve problems that bypass their state of affairs” (Tripathy, 2019, p. 135). Most of the times they fail to use critical thinking to differentiate between these structures. Instead, they select only a few domains where they can use critical thinking thereby ignoring other fields of life. In order to master critical thinking an individual needs to follow step by step technique that would promote goodness at workplace management and develop an overall personality. This would foster an overall development in all spheres of life but simply a countable few. The stages below discuss in details the step by step procedures to inculcate critical thinking.

5.1 Gather Knowledge

The first stage of critical thinking is to gather as much knowledge as possible regarding a concept or a subject. One cannot think without acquiring knowledge. Not having sufficient knowledge would lead to confusion and vague thinking. Only having corrected and sufficient knowledge can make us fair in our judgments and decisions. Paul and Elder write “our false knowledge, misconceptions, prejudices, and illusions stand in the way of the possibility of our being fair”(Paul and Elder, 2013, p. 29). Hence, one needs to carefully receive the ideas, information and adequate knowledge that would further assist in thinking failing which reaching the next stage is meaningless.

5.2 Understand

The next stage is to understand the knowledge acquired. Once sufficient knowledge and information is gathered it’s time now to understand it specifically. A thorough research is to be done on the existing knowledge and the acquired knowledge. Implementation of understanding means going in exactly the direction our thinking is taking us to but also ensuring the fact that personal interpretations are discarded. However, it must also be kept in mind that the consequences of the interpretation and understanding can have a significant impact if the sense of understanding carries flaw. At this stage one can start reasoning and questioning and can receive insightful answers. This stage provides limitless combinations of solutions to solving various problems.



Moore writes “the framework of structured reasoning frames questions to help decide the best means or best combination of means that are suited to solving specific intelligence problems” (Moore, 2010, p. 18).

5.3 Contextualize

The third stage is to contextualize or finding out any relative or related situation or context with the present one. Contextualization is beneficial as it provides results and outcomes which were earlier not achieved and hence furnishes with new ways one can move ahead to find better solutions. In this stage there is a comparison between the present situation with the past experiences and thereby moving ahead with the results. Bareham suggests “if we can fit new information into an accurate context by associating it with our existing knowledge, we can acquire some semblance of understanding by blending the new with the old if we can comprehend, we can express meaning and significance” (Bareham, 2012, p. 13). The constraint to combine collected information and already existing information elucidates the reason behind the impossibility of learning when dealing with knowledge which we are completely ignorant of. Hence, when there is no substantial related knowledge or information, links and connections cannot be formed and the base to differentiate between information, truth, reality, intention, meaning or meaninglessness.

5.4 Evaluate and Analyse

The next stage involves evaluation and analysis of the facts and results in hand. This further seeks to endeavour efforts to find the right answer to the solution. Hence, for this one needs to in a much-organised manner dismantle and break apart the total with an aim to comprehend the single parts or pieces. People most of the time because of hurry and worry do not evaluate or analyse at all. However, the need to evaluate and analyse will tell the need to scrutinize comprehensions, understandings and interpretations. Therefore it takes time. Evaluation and analysis include thorough attention towards fine points without being diverted by other diverting agents. Cottrell views “when critically evaluating arguments, it is important to remember that one can find an argument to be good or effective even if one does not agree with it” (Cottrell, 2017, p.12). Evaluation and analysis require teaching, learning, and extensive concentration and regulation to do it greatly fitting.

5.5 Synthesize

After a thorough analysis that is the meticulous study of breaking down its components to smaller parts and exploring their connections with those smaller parts and a constituent as a whole, it is time now to combine those smaller parts and form new information by eliminating the unwanted information and keeping back the important ones. Black suggests “within critical thinking, synthesis is the term given to the construction of new and original arguments out of appropriately interpreted and organised evidence and other raw materials for argument construction (Black and Thompson, 2012, p. 166). Studies reveal that the act of synthesizing is faster and more than analysing as critical thinkers quickly want to come to a conclusion or solution. However, both analysis and synthesis require a deep understanding of the broken parts, only then it is possible to reconstruct and infuse meaning so that they can become more than the total constituent. This would be helpful in drawing conclusions and taking actions.

5.6 Take Actions

After going through all the stages of critical thinking the final stage is to take actions, or conclude. However, this stage also upholds another stage of modification or alterations if required depending on the situation and the emergence of taking any further action. The action has to be fulfilled with clarity and has to be evidence and research-based. Many conclusions fair and just are made after coming through the afore discussed stages. Effective decisions are made and many complex problems are solved.

6. Conclusion

This paper studied the essence of thinking systematically, rationally, logically and sensibly. Critically evaluating and formulating thoughts and beliefs through organised procedures. Critical thinking is relevant to personal development and the workplace management as it determines our actions, decisions and choices we make. Critical thinking governs our automatic thinking and gives us power to learn, explore and defend against biases, fallacies, influences and errors. Critical thinking demands non-acceptance of believing things which we see or hear and putting efforts to categorize truth as viewed in general and not prejudiced. The paper studied critical thinking as the most important skill set in the present era and the countless benefits it furnishes for the workplace management like effective communication, powerful decision making, substantial judgments,



problem-solving and also improves personal management by instilling indispensable abilities like self-reflection, compassion and creativity for a better living and successful life. The paper also studied in detail the various stages of developing critical thinking so as to fully understand the process and work accordingly. This paper is not only useful for professional lives but also for personal lives overall to bring excellence in all domains of life.

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