

Critical Thinking in Social Studies

Persistent process of critical thinking means people must take a break and think to make a decision. It needs a main element of critical thinking, reasoning. Critical thinker must collect the information with the accuracy and concern, accuracy to imprecision of potent, distortion or abuse.

John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist, and educator, extensively is regarded as ‘father’ of modern critical thinking culture. He called it as reflective thinking that is active consideration, persistent, and accurate of the faith or granted knowledge regarded to supported reasons and tendency continued conclusion

The critical thinker is described as habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit.

Creative thinking generates ideas, critical thinking evaluates those ideas. An appropriate classroom environment is vital to encourage students to become critical thinkers. Aside from modelling critical thinking skills, teachers need to develop an open, non-threatening climate for the discussion of ideas and issues in class. In a manner similar to controversial issues, the focus should be on the ideas, viewpoints, and supporting arguments, rather than on the person who is presenting them. A creative and critical thinker cannot be closed minded and dismissive of others and their ideas.

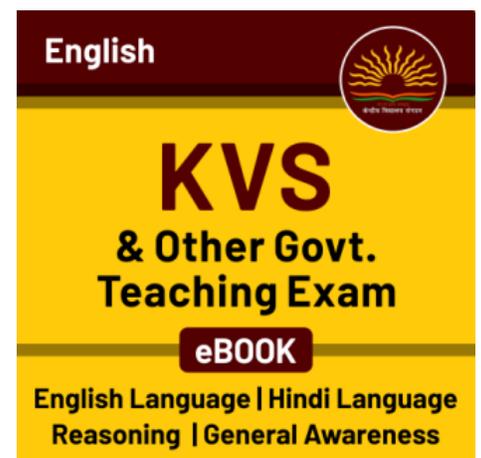
Critical Thinking Skills Ennis (1995) shared six basic elements of critical thinking through approaching FRISCO (Focus, Reason, Inference, Situation, Clarity, and Overview).

(1) Focus: Introducing some situations, we must understand about what to discuss, main point, issue, what to ask or what to say. To hold it, we must focus on it because if we do not, we will waste the time.

Ennis define it as “the focus is ordinarily the conclusion”.

(2) Reasons: Supporting the conclusion, we must have supporting reasons and decide the acceptable reasons. This is accomplished before we value the argument.

(3) Inference: Assessing the inference is different to assessing reason. We must assess the acceptable and sufficient to make a decision. **Ennis** said “Sometimes the word inference is used to mean conclusion, so that the conclusion of an argument would then be an inference”.



(4) Situation: When thinking focuses on trust and takes a decision, needs to supporting situation that includes involving other people, other side. It is not only thinking activity but also the meaning of what to hold and to assess by the thinker.

(5) Clarity: The most important thing in our writing and speech is clarity of what we said. We must understand what to say and the other people understand to what we say. By delivering clear and explicit message we will avoid ambiguity. And clarity is the most important element in FRISCO

(6) Overview: In the overview, the thinker verifies about what to think.

Critical thinking education is divided into three points:

(1) teaching for thinking: Teaching for thinking is teacher and administrator's effort to create conducive situation so that the students can think critically as through curriculum and learning.

(2) teaching of thinking: Teaching of thinking is teacher activity to create a critical thinking student through learning method choice, to create student involve in discussion actively. Teacher can promote the contextual problems and students can have debate each other.

(3) teaching about thinking: Teaching about thinking is about critical thinking.

Characteristics of Critical Thinkers

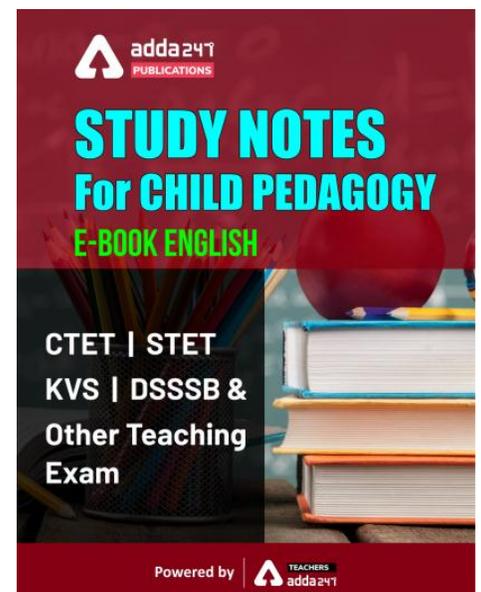
- gain as much knowledge as possible on an issue before beginning evaluation
- do not make or accept conclusions without careful thought and evaluation
- carefully analyze and evaluate reasons and evidence
- distinguish between what is known and what is suspected
- are able to detect bias and unsubstantiated evidence

Skills for Critical Thinking

- ask questions that are clear and easily understood
- listen to others' views and opinions
- distinguish between fact and opinion
- determine credibility of sources of information
- distinguish relevant from irrelevant information
- draw logical conclusions based on evidence
- organize and classify ideas and evidence

A primary goal of social studies is to prepare students to make informed decisions on public and political issues. Making those informed decisions requires critical thinking skills. Therefore, effective participation in public life is contingent on the quality of one's critical thinking skills.

Among the several major approaches to teaching critical thinking skills, the literature seems to favor infusion-teaching thinking skills in the context of subject matter. This approach entails integrating content and skills as equally as possible in order to maintain a balance of the two. Thinking skills are reinforced throughout the teaching of the subject and later retained.



The Metacognitive Approach

Metacognition, which refers to the knowledge and control people have over their own thinking and learning activities, deals with the "individual's knowledge about the task, possible strategies that might be applied to the task and the individual's awareness of their own abilities in relation to these strategies" According to **Sanacore** (1984), metacognition is "knowing what you know," "knowing what you need to know," and "knowing the utility of active intervention." However, this metacognitive skill is apparently not developed in all students.

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