

Differences between critical and non-critical thinking

There are three primary areas in which to look for differences between critical and non-critical thinking. These are: views of knowledge, views of thinking and strategies for thinking.

View of knowledge

Critical thinking

shades of gray - strives for depth
interdisciplinary
knowledge is open
intertwined with thinking

Non-critical thinking

black and white - superficial level
unidisciplinary
knowledge is closed
independent of thinking

View of thinking

Critical thinking

rational and consistent
strives to learn how to think
holistic/webbed
original/insightful
multiple frames of reference

Non-critical thinking

irrational and inconsistent
strives to learn what to think
unidisciplinary/linear
second hand thinking
limited frame of reference

Strategies for thinking

Critical Thinking

suspends closure
explorer/probing
questioning
fair-minded
active
collaborative/communal
precise language

Non-Critical Thinking

strives for closure
dogmatic/avoiding
doubting
ego-/ethnocentric/emotional
passive
authoritative
vague language

Sources: University of Saskatchewan, Library Instruction Guide;
<http://success.oregonstate.edu/criticalthinking.html>
www.criticalthinking.org

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