



(LEARN NC, 2016)

Critical thinking involves the three higher thinking processes

One way to understand critical thinking is by looking at the diagram above. This is a hierarchy of thinking processes, first developed by Bloom et al. in 1956. Simpler thinking processes are at the bottom; remembering, understanding and applying. More complex thinking processes are above; analysing, evaluating and creating (Krathwohl, 2002).

The diagram shows how we need to start with remembering, understanding and perhaps applying the knowledge we are learning. Then we can move into critical thinking by analysing and evaluating what we are learning, and maybe even creating new ideas and knowledge (Krathwohl, 2002).

Analyse

- Show how the parts of something work together. Explain the causes of something. Show how two or more things are different or similar (UNSW, 2016).
- "Breaking material down into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215).

Example

Mental illness is rarely caused by a single factor. In this case study, the client appears to have attachment problems caused during childhood. These problems may be influencing the client's dependence on alcohol. In addition, the client's alcohol use seems to be negatively impacting her ability to maintain relationships with others. Therefore, a negative cycle is in place.

Evaluate

- Decide which theory (or solution or technique) is the best one in a given situation. Decide whether someone's choice or approach is valid. Decide if evidence that supports an idea is relevant and reliable.
- "Making judgements based on criteria and standards" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215).

Example

The aim of coaching is to help clients achieve their goals (Millard, 2009; Sonn, 2010). The coaching approach outlined by Jones (2013) seems to be in conflict with this aim. He suggests that coaches can influence their clients' choice of goals. This is a step too far in the coaching role, as it takes power away from the client.

Create

- Combine ideas from different fields to create a new approach. Explain something in a new way. Create a new theory or approach.
- Bring existing information and ideas together in new ways to create a new idea or approach (UNSW, 2016).
- "Putting elements together to form a novel (new), coherent whole or make an original product" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 215).

Example

For clients recovering from heart surgery, traditional rehabilitation techniques such as physiotherapy could be supplemented with non-western approaches, including mindfulness meditation and tai chi. This approach would more effectively rehabilitate the body and mind as a whole entity.

References

- Krathwohl, D. R. (2002). A revision of Bloom's taxonomy: An overview. *Theory into Practice*, 41(4), 212-218.
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