

MODULE 2: Why we need critical thinking and a critical view

Developed by ADES

within the project

MCRE - Media literacy, critical viewing and CREative vision as effective learning
approach for people with fewer opportunities

THE PARTNERSHIP:



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1. AIM AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1. AIM OF THE MODULE

The aim of the module is to introduce learners to the concepts of critical thinking and critical view, which play a special role nowadays, especially when it comes to organising and identifying information that can be found by the hundreds on the Internet every day. The module is designed to introduce learners to the reasons why they need critical thinking, why it is important and necessary, and to identify areas where critical thinking and a critical view brings tangible benefits to those using both techniques.

Why is critical thinking so important and why do we focus on this topic? The choices you make affect the quality of your life. And if you want to live your best, most successful and happiest life, you need to make informed decisions. You can achieve this through a simple method known as critical thinking.

Critical thinking is extremely important, especially in this day and age, when information spreads very quickly through social media and other online platforms. We cannot simply assume that everything we see or read in the media is the truth. Among other things, this issue will be addressed in this module. Through the content included here, the learner will learn how critical thinking skills are able to provide tangible benefits and why it is difficult to operate in a variety of areas of life without this skill.

1.2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand what critical thinking is and what it entails;
- Identify areas where critical thinking is essential in everyday life;
- Identify the benefits that critical thinking brings to particular aspects of everyday life;
- Know what critical view is and in which situations it is used.

2. LEARNING CONTENT

2.1. THE CONCEPT OF CRITICAL THINKING AND A CRITICAL VIEW

In order to have a good understanding of the topic and to be able to put into practice the issues discussed in this module, let us start with simple definitions.

Let us start by noting that the concept of critical thinking dates back to the mid-20th century. Many of the world's great philosophers, thinkers and reformers have defined the term critical thinking in their own words. Although there are many definitions of the

term, each essentially encapsulates the essence of what the term critical thinking is. Let us look at one such definition.

Critical thinking is the **ability to analyse and evaluate information and arguments independently and objectively**. It encompasses a critical approach to different ideas, theories, claims and situations in order to effectively solve problems, make decisions and draw conclusions.

It is a **process** in which a person **carefully analyses** data, arguments or situations rather than accepting them unconditionally. Critical thinking includes the ability to identify ambiguity, recognise logical fallacies, evaluate sources of information, consider different perspectives and draw conclusions based on **sound analysis**.

Simply put, critical thinking allows you to develop new ideas and perspectives that are different from others. It also helps to make the right decisions. In addition, people who think critically save a lot of time, money, resources, and effort by choosing the right things and removing the wrong and useless ones.

The ability to think critically helps people both in their personal and professional life and is valued by most employers.

Critical view, on the other hand, is a concept similar to critical thinking and is a kind of complement to it. Critical view refers to **the ability to examine and analyse information, ideas, and situations in an objective and sceptical manner**. It involves questioning assumptions, evaluating evidence, identifying biases, and considering alternative perspectives. Critical view allows us to move beyond superficial understanding and encourages a deeper examination of underlying factors, implications, and potential consequences.

Cultivating a critical view is essential for informed decision-making, intellectual growth, and a more discerning and thoughtful engagement with the world around us. It empowers us to navigate complex issues, challenge established norms, and contribute to a more rational, inclusive, and informed society.

2.1.1. Critical thinking skills

It is troublesome to find a universal scheme to represent the skills that make up critical thinking. However, it is possible to single out some of those widely regarded as the most important in this field. Concentrating on them can make each of us an exceptional critical thinker.

Therefore, let's have a look at a list of key skills when it comes to critical thinking:

- **Connection between critical thinking and identification.** Critical thinking and identification are interrelated because critical thinking is based on the ability to accurately analyse and recognise different elements in a situation or problem. Identification involves the precise identification and understanding of relevant information that supports the critical thinking process, while critical thinking enables effective evaluation and interpretation of this information.

- **The significance of research.** Independent information searching is highly valuable. Arguments are designed to be persuasive, which means that supporting facts and figures may be presented out of context or originate from unreliable sources.
- **Identifying biases.** The challenging skill of objectively evaluating information and recognizing biases.
- **Inference.** The ability to deduce and draw conclusions based on the information presented. The ability to infer allows you to explore and discover possible outcomes when evaluating a scenario. It is important to remember that not all conclusions will be accurate.
- **Curiosity.** By combining curiosity with critical thinking, our ability to understand, analyse and comprehensively evaluate information can be enhanced. These are essential skills that allow us to become independent thinkers and make better decisions in various aspects of life.

It is important to develop critical thinking skills while maintaining moderation and flexibility. Working on these skills requires a conscious balance between analysis and openness to new ideas as well as new perspectives.

Critical thinking skills develop gradually and may require practice. It is not always easy to show all the signs in all situations, but pursuing critical thinking can help you better understand the world around you and make more rational decisions. In fact, the more you practice, the more positive results you will experience.

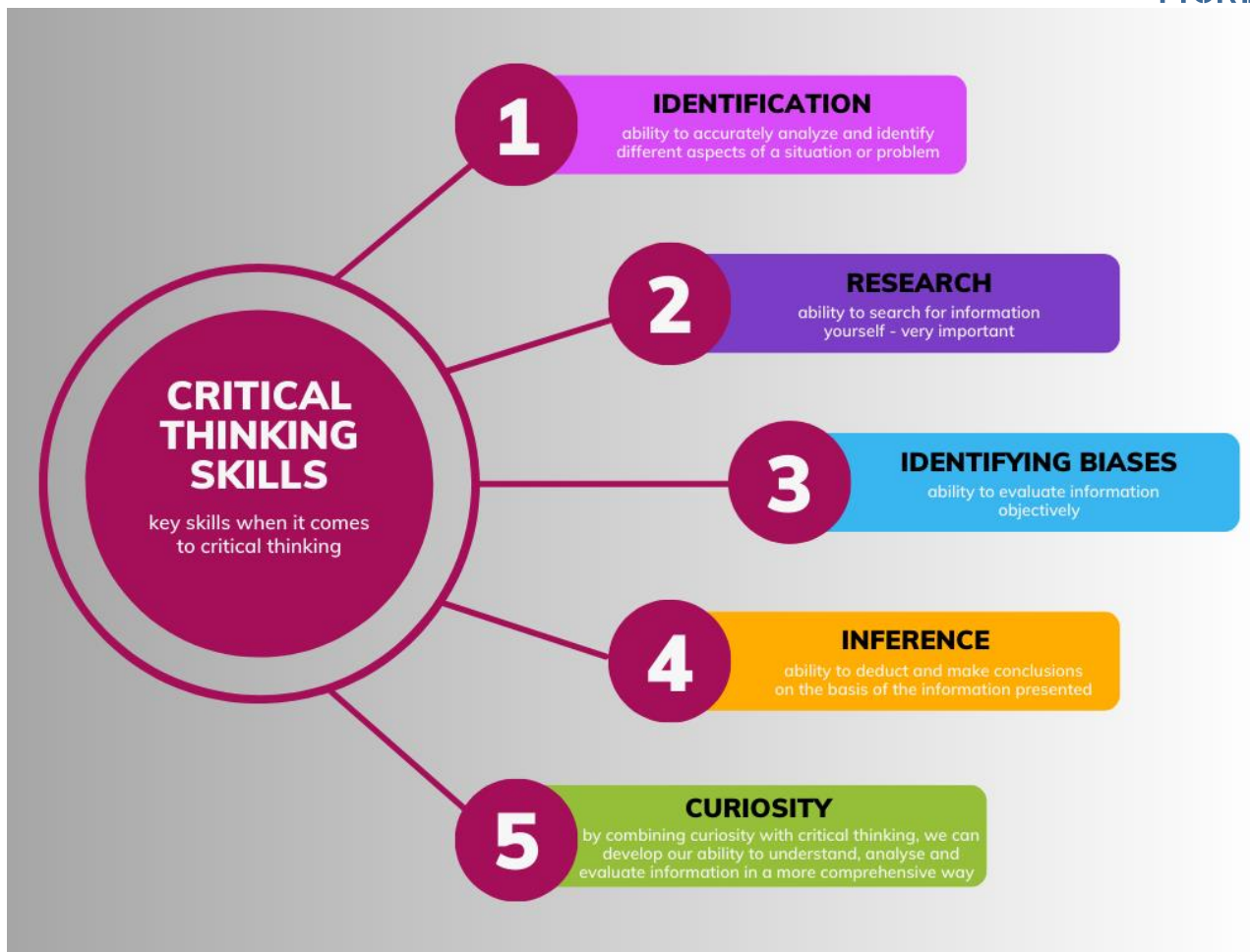


Image 1: Created by ADES

2.1.2. Critical thinking process

It is important to acknowledge that critical thinking is not always present in our thoughts. There are times when our thinking deviates from critical analysis, such as when our emotions like anger, grief, or joy influence our self-control, or when we are simply being stubborn. However, the positive aspect is that our critical thinking ability is not fixed; it can vary based on our current mindset. This means that most of the time, we have the potential to enhance our critical thinking skills by incorporating certain routine activities and applying them to any problems we encounter.

Once we grasp the underlying principles of critical thinking, the key to improving our critical thinking skills lies in persistence and practice.

To help you start thinking critically, you can try the exercise¹ below. It involves analysing what you have been told, using questions.

¹Source: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/critical-thinking.html>

Think of something someone has said to you recently. Then ask yourself the following questions:

Who said it?	Someone you know? Someone with authority or power? Does it matter who told you this?
What did they say?	Did they present facts or opinions? Did they give all the facts? Did they leave anything out?
Where did they say it?	Was it in public or in private? Did other people have a chance to respond and provide an alternative narrative?
When did they say it?	Was it before, during or after an important event? Did the timing matter here?
Why did they say it?	Did they explain the reasons for their opinion? Did they try to make someone look good or bad?
How did they say it?	Were they happy or sad, angry or indifferent? Did they write it or say it? Could you understand what was said?

2.2. WHEN CRITICAL THINKING IS NECESSARY

Critical thinking is necessary in various aspects of life when we encounter complex situations, challenging problems, or the need to make informed decisions. It is an essential skill that helps us analyse information, evaluate arguments, and arrive at well-reasoned conclusions. Whether in personal, professional, or academic contexts, critical thinking allows us to navigate through the complexities of the world, think independently, and make informed judgments. It enables us to question assumptions, identify biases, and approach issues with an open mind, leading to more effective problem-solving, better decision-making, and a deeper understanding of the world around us. Ultimately, critical thinking is a valuable skillset that empowers us to navigate the complexities of life with clarity, logic, and intellectual rigor.

In general, critical thinking is essential in different aspects of life and in different contexts.

Here are some situations in which critical thinking is particularly important:

- **Problem solving.** When faced with challenging or complex problems, critical thinking helps to analyse situations, identify potential solutions, and make informed decisions based on available evidence and logical reasoning.
- **Decision making.** Critical thinking plays a key role in evaluating options, weighing pros and cons, and considering potential consequences before making a choice. It helps to minimise biases and make informed decisions.
- **Evaluating information.** In an age of information overload, critical thinking helps individuals assess the credibility, reliability, and relevance of the information they encounter. This involves analysing sources, verifying facts, and distinguishing between credible information and misinformation.
- **Analysing arguments.** Critical thinking enables individuals to assess the strength of arguments, identify logical fallacies, biases, and faulty reasoning. It involves questioning assumptions, examining evidence, and assessing the consistency and validity of claims.

- **Engaging in debate and discussion.** Critical thinking is essential for constructive and meaningful engagement in debates and discussions. It enables individuals to actively listen, consider different perspectives, evaluate evidence, and make informed contributions to the exchange of ideas.
- **Professional and academic context.** Critical thinking is highly valued in the workplace and academia. It helps professionals to solve problems, make informed judgements and adapt to changing circumstances. In academia, critical thinking is essential for conducting research, analysis and developing sound arguments.
- **Ethical considerations.** Critical thinking assists in ethical decision-making by assessing ethical implications, considering multiple perspectives, and evaluating the consequences of actions.

Overall, critical thinking is essential in situations requiring objective analysis, informed judgement, problem solving and effective decision-making. It enhances intellectual autonomy, enables individuals to think independently and fosters a deeper understanding of the world around them.

2.2.1. Critical thinking in everyday life

Critical thinking is invaluable in everyday life as it empowers us to navigate various situations with clarity and rationality. It helps us to make informed decisions, analyse information, solve problems, and evaluate situations.

More generally, critical thinking is a fundamental skill that enhances our ability to engage with the world around us. It enables us to make more informed choices, solve problems effectively, critically evaluate information and communicate thoughtfully. By applying critical thinking to everyday life, we can cope with challenges, make better decisions, and lead more satisfying and intellectually enriched lives.

Here are some examples of how critical thinking can be useful in different spheres of life:

- **Work.** In the workplace, critical thinking enables us to analyse data, evaluate options, and make informed decisions. It supports problem-solving, helps identify cause-and-effect relationships, and encourages the exploration of innovative solutions. Following, critical thinking abilities are an important resource to a worker, as bosses tend to esteem candidates who can accurately survey a circumstance and discover a coherent arrangement. Time could be a valuable asset for most managers, and a worker competent of making the correct choices without supervision will spare both the director and the company as an entire a parcel of profitable time.
- **Personal life.** Critical thinking is valuable in personal life as well. It empowers us to evaluate information encountered in media, news, or scientific articles, helping us navigate through biased or misleading messages. It fosters self-reflection, enabling us to analyse our beliefs, actions, and choices more objectively.
- **Interpersonal relationships.** Critical thinking enhances our ability to build healthy interpersonal relationships. By analysing our own attitudes and behaviours, we can better understand their impact on others. Critical thinking also helps us actively listen to others, understand their perspectives, and recognize manipulative or exploitative behaviours.

- **Consumption and shopping.** In the realm of consumption and shopping, critical thinking is essential. It enables us to critically evaluate advertisements, reviews, and product information. Through analysis, we can assess the quality, benefits, and costs of products, avoiding falling into marketing traps and making well-informed purchasing decisions.

Overall, critical thinking plays an important role in the workplace, personal life, interpersonal relationships, and consumer decision-making. It enables us to think independently, make sound judgements and navigate the complexities of our daily lives.

It is worth mentioning that critical thinking is an extremely important set of skills in today's world full of information and diverse perspectives.

Here are some examples of how critical thinking can help us in our daily lives:

- **Media and information.** Critical thinking is instrumental in shielding us from the influence of disinformation and fake news. It enables us to critically evaluate the information we encounter, discerning reliable sources from unreliable ones.
- **Politics and public debates.** Critical thinking empowers us to make more informed decisions in the realm of politics. It allows us to analyse and evaluate arguments presented in public debates, enabling us to form well-grounded opinions and engage in constructive discussions.
- **Consumer culture.** Critical thinking enables us to analyse advertising and promotions critically. It equips us with the ability to evaluate the quality of products and services, making purchasing decisions that align with our individual needs and values.
- **Social relations.** Critical thinking assists us in analysing social situations, evaluating the behaviour of others, and making decisions based on our values and intentions. It enables us to navigate emotional manipulation and make well-informed choices about our relationships.
- **Education and personal development:** Critical thinking fosters a mindset of scepticism, investigation, and the pursuit of deeper knowledge. It promotes a better understanding of the world and encourages personal growth and development.



Image 2: Created by ADES

2.3. THE BENEFITS OF CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking has numerous implications and benefits at both the person and social levels. Here are a few of them:

- increasing creativity,
- increasing innovation,
- open-mindedness and tolerance of different perspectives,
- making better, more informed decisions,
- building better relationships,
- solving problems more effectively,
- personal development,
- stronger analytical skills,
- effective communication,
- handling ethical conflicts safely,
- optimal resource management,
- increased self-awareness,
- adaptability and flexibility,
- more detailed risk assessment,
- lifelong learning.

Critical thinking enables individuals to approach complex problems with a logical and systematic mindset, leading to more effective and efficient problem resolution. It also helps in avoiding hasty or impulsive decisions and fosters the ability to make sound judgments based on evidence and logical reasoning. Critical thinking strengthens analytical skills by improving the ability to evaluate information, identify patterns, and draw logical conclusions. It enhances individuals' capacity to assess the credibility and reliability of sources, critically analyse arguments, and make well-reasoned judgments. It promotes effective communication skills by encouraging individuals to express their thoughts clearly, listen actively, and consider different perspectives. It enhances the ability to articulate ideas, present logical arguments, and engage in constructive dialogue, fostering better understanding and collaboration in personal and professional relationships. It helps individuals recognize their own biases and challenges preconceived notions, leading to more inclusive and empathetic interactions with others. It prompts individuals to examine their own beliefs, biases, and assumptions, allowing for personal growth and development.

By being aware of their own thought processes and cognitive biases, individuals can make more informed choices and continuously improve their thinking skills. Critical thinking promotes adaptability and flexibility in the face of changing circumstances or new information. It encourages individuals to re-evaluate their assumptions, adjust their thinking and modify their approach when necessary. This adaptability is valuable in navigating complex and dynamic environments. Critical thinking also fosters a mindset of continuous learning and intellectual curiosity. It encourages individuals to seek out new knowledge, explore different perspectives and engage in intellectual challenges. It enhances the ability to critically evaluate information and engage in lifelong learning for personal and professional development. The ability of critical thinking and critical view not only helps to solve existing problems, but also helps to anticipate potential trouble. By critically analysing situations, identifying patterns and assessing risks, individuals can proactively address challenges before they escalate, leading to more effective problem prevention and risk management.

In general, critical thinking offers a range of benefits, including effective problem-solving, improved decision-making, enhanced creativity and innovation, stronger analytical skills, effective communication, open-mindedness, increased self-awareness, adaptability, lifelong learning, and better problem anticipation. By cultivating and applying critical thinking skills, individuals can navigate complex situations, make informed choices, and thrive in various personal and professional endeavours.

The following section will discuss in more detail the key benefits that are achievable by putting critical thinking skills into practice.

2.3.1. Critical thinking promotes creativity

Can critical thinking promote creativity? Absolutely! As we already know, critical thinking is the ability to analyse, evaluate and synthesise information in order to develop our own conclusions and solutions. When we are able to think critically about problems and challenges, we pose questions, explore different perspectives, consider alternatives and

examine consequences. What is important here is the balance between thinking critically and demonstrating creativity.

Critical thinking encourages individuals to think outside the box, challenge assumptions, and explore alternative possibilities. It fosters creativity and innovation by promoting the generation of unique ideas, making connections between different concepts, and approaching problems from different angles. Critical thinking is closely linked to creativity and often acts as a catalyst for innovative ideas and problem-solving.

Engaging in critical thinking allows us to uncover non-obvious connections between facts, detect hidden patterns, and generate original ideas. By posing questions and igniting our curiosity, critical thinking stimulates the creative process, leading to the emergence of novel concepts.

Moreover, critical thinking plays a vital role in evaluating and enhancing existing ideas. By analysing the strengths and weaknesses of different solutions, we can refine our concepts, innovate, and develop a more creative and effective approach. Critical thinking empowers us to critically assess and evolve our ideas to drive innovation and progress.

Critical thinking has many positives that encourage creativity. The most important of these are:

- ✓ analysing problems,
- ✓ catching errors,
- ✓ creative problem solving,
- ✓ evaluating and refining ideas.

However, it is important to note that critical thinking and creativity do not always have to work in combination. Critical thinking can sometimes inhibit creativity, especially when it is too critical or confined to traditional frameworks and thought patterns. It is therefore important to find a balance between analysis and imagination in order to develop both critical thinking and creativity.



Image 3. Source: [Freepik](#)

There are various exercises geared to promote critical thinking and at the same time develop creativity. One of these is an exercise called 'six hats of thinking'. This is a popular exercise developed by Edward de Bono. Would you like to find out what it consists of? This link will provide you with the information: [Six Thinking Hats technique](#).

In summary, critical thinking plays an important role in promoting creativity. By challenging assumptions, assessing perspectives, solving problems, generating alternative solutions, making connections, embracing ambiguity, and learning from mistakes, critical thinkers are able to think creatively and contribute to innovative ideas and solutions. However, it is important to remember that sometimes critical thinking can inhibit creativity when it is too formulaic and too critical. Therefore, a balance between the two is extremely important.

2.3.2. Critical thinking improves relationships

Does critical thinking play an important role in interpersonal relationships? Yes, it can indeed improve relationships! When we use critical thinking in interpersonal relationships, we can better understand, interpret, and respond to situations, leading to healthier and more constructive interactions.

Here are some ways in which critical thinking can positively impact relationships:

1. **Effective communication.** Critical thinking involves active listening, evaluating information, and responding thoughtfully. By applying critical thinking skills, individuals can communicate more effectively, express their thoughts and opinions clearly, and understand others' perspectives. This leads to better understanding, better communication, and fewer misunderstandings in relationships.
2. **Conflict resolution.** Critical thinking enables individuals to approach conflicts in a rational and objective manner. It helps in analysing the root causes of conflicts, identifying possible solutions, and evaluating their consequences. By applying critical thinking skills, individuals can find common ground, negotiate compromises, and resolve conflicts in a constructive and respectful manner.
3. **Situation analysis.** Critical thinking enables us to look at a situation from different perspectives. It allows us to assess what the facts are, what our own beliefs are, and what the intentions of others are. This helps us to avoid making hasty judgments and to better understand other people's motivations and needs.
4. **Empathy and understanding.** Critical viewing encourages individuals to consider multiple perspectives and think beyond their own biases and assumptions. This mindset promotes empathy and understanding in relationships. By actively seeking to understand others' viewpoints, critical thinkers can foster deeper connections, build trust, and promote healthier interactions.
5. **Problem-solving.** Critical thinking equips individuals with problem-solving skills that can be applied to relationship issues. It helps in identifying and addressing underlying problems, analysing possible solutions, and evaluating their potential outcomes. By using critical thinking, individuals can work together to find effective resolutions and make informed decisions that benefit the relationship.

6. **Evaluating assumptions and biases.** Critical thinking involves questioning assumptions, beliefs, and biases. By applying this approach to relationships, individuals can challenge preconceived notions and biases that might hinder effective communication and understanding. This self-reflection helps in fostering more open-minded and inclusive relationships.
7. **Growth and learning.** Critical thinkers are open to learning and personal growth. They value constructive feedback and are willing to self-reflect and adapt their behaviours and perspectives. In relationships, this willingness to grow and learn fosters a healthy environment for personal development and strengthens the bond between individuals.
8. **Self-awareness.** Critical thinking also requires us to reflect on our own beliefs, biases and mistakes. It helps us identify our weaknesses and areas where we can improve. This leads to greater self-awareness and capacity for self-development, which benefits our relationships with others.

How might being a critical thinker affect your life and relationships?

Being a critical thinker can positively impact your life and relationships in several ways. Firstly, it enables you to better understand other people's perspectives and be open to a variety of viewpoints. Secondly, it helps you to communicate your feelings and thoughts effectively.

Being a critical thinker also allows you to better understand other people's perspectives and can help you become more open to different views. It is an important tool in building healthy interpersonal relationships. It helps us to better understand other people, communicate effectively, make informed decisions, and solve problems. Through critical thinking we can create more supportive, empathetic, and constructive relationships with other people.

In summary, critical thinking improves communication, promotes effective conflict resolution, cultivates empathy and understanding, assists in problem solving, helps assess assumptions and biases, builds trust and credibility, and encourages growth and learning. These qualities contribute to healthier and more satisfying relationships.

2.3.3. Critical thinking exercises your mind

Critical thinking is one of the most important intellectual skills to develop in today's world full of information and diverse perspectives. It is not without reason that critical thinking is said to exercise the mind. It does so by engaging and challenging cognitive abilities. This approach awakens thought processes enabling us to better understand problems, make rational decisions and formulate sound arguments.

Above all, critical thinking and critical insight develops people's **ability to analyse and evaluate arguments**. It allows one to detect weak arguments based on emotions, prejudices, or lack of information, enabling one to approach, among other things, debates and problem solving in a more logical way. The **skill of self-criticism** includes the **ability to evaluate and critically analyse our own beliefs, mistakes, and inadequacies**. By focusing on our weaknesses, we can improve our skills, expand our knowledge, and grow as individuals. By looking at ourselves critically, we avoid self-

promotion and an uncritical approach to our own actions, which would lead to stagnation and loss of perspective. Critical thinking trains our minds, helps us to understand more complex problems and enriches us as individuals. In today's fast-paced and informative world, it is a skill that is extremely valuable and necessary for success and fulfilment in various spheres of life.

Here are some ways in which critical thinking exercises can benefit and strengthen your mind:

1. **Analytical thinking.** Critical thinking exercises require you to analyse information, break it down into its components, and evaluate its relevance and credibility. This process enhances your analytical thinking skills, allowing you to approach problems and situations with a more logical and systematic mindset.
2. **Dealing with problems.** Critical thinking exercises often involve solving complex problems or puzzles. Engaging in these exercises stimulates your mind to identify patterns, consider various solutions, and evaluate their potential outcomes. Regular practice improves your problem-solving abilities and enhances your capacity to approach real-life challenges more effectively.
3. **Creativity and innovation.** Critical thinking exercises can spark creativity by encouraging you to think outside the box and generate novel ideas. These exercises often require you to make connections between seemingly unrelated concepts, explore alternative perspectives, and devise innovative solutions. By engaging in creative thinking, you expand your mental flexibility and foster a more imaginative mindset.
4. **Making good decisions.** Critical thinking exercises involve making decisions based on evidence, reasoning, and careful evaluation. They require you to weigh different factors, consider potential consequences, and choose the best course of action. Regular practice strengthens your decision-making skills, enabling you to make informed and well-reasoned choices in various aspects of life.
5. **Logical reasoning.** Critical thinking exercises train your mind in logical reasoning. They require you to identify logical fallacies, evaluate arguments, and draw valid conclusions. By engaging in logical reasoning exercises, you enhance your ability to detect flaws in reasoning and construct sound and coherent arguments.
6. **Reflection and self-awareness.** Critical thinking exercises often involve reflection and self-assessment. They prompt you to examine your own beliefs, biases, and assumptions, and to question their validity. This process cultivates self-awareness, allowing you to better understand your own thoughts and perspectives, as well as recognize potential cognitive biases that might influence your thinking.
7. **Mental agility and flexibility.** Regularly engaging in critical thinking exercises challenges your mind and promotes mental agility. It pushes you to adapt to new information, consider alternative viewpoints, and adjust your thinking accordingly. This flexibility strengthens your cognitive abilities and enables you to approach complex situations with an open and adaptable mindset.

8. **Lifelong learning.** Critical thinking exercises foster a mindset of continuous learning and intellectual curiosity. They encourage you to seek out new knowledge, explore different perspectives, and engage in intellectual challenges. This commitment to lifelong learning keeps your mind active and continually sharpens your critical thinking skills.



Image 4. Source: [Freepik](#)

In summary, critical thinking exercises exercise your mind by enhancing analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, creativity, decision-making skills, logical reasoning, self-awareness, mental agility, and fostering a commitment to lifelong learning. By regularly engaging in these exercises, you can strengthen your cognitive abilities and develop a more adept and agile mind.

2.3.4. Critical thinking helps to make conscious choices and decisions

As was mentioned at the very beginning of this module, critical thinking is the ability to analyse information, understand the context and form your own informed conclusions. Using critical thinking correctly allows you to make informed choices, considering both the positive and negative aspects of a situation, decision, or problem. Critical thinking is a skill that can help you make better decisions. It means analysing, evaluating, and understanding information before taking any action or decision.

When you use critical thinking, you try to approach a subject objectively and with an open mind. This means analysing information from a variety of sources, exploring different viewpoints, and considering both the pros and cons of a situation. In this way, you can avoid one-sided thinking and consider a wide range of factors.

Critical thinking to make informed choices involves applying analytical and evaluative thinking skills to decision-making processes. It involves examining information,

considering different perspectives, and making considered and informed choices based on sound reasoning and evidence. This process consists of several steps. These are:

1. Information gathering
2. Analysis of assumptions and biases
3. Evaluating evidence
4. Consideration of consequences
5. Identification and evaluation of alternatives
6. Weighing risks and benefits
7. Reflection on values and ethics
8. **Iterative** decision-making process

Critical thinking recognizes that decision-making is often an **iterative** process. It involves revisiting and reevaluating choices as new information becomes available or circumstances change. This flexible and adaptive approach allows for continuous improvement and adjustment of decisions based on new insights and feedback.

To make critical thinking an effective process when it comes to making informed decisions, it is useful to follow some of the following tips. They will be helpful in any context where you have to make some important decision. These include:

Questioning the information you receive. Always challenge the information you receive. Inquire about its source, credibility, and purpose. Is there supporting evidence and factual basis? Are there any hidden motives or biases?

Exploring different perspectives. Make an effort to examine the situation from various viewpoints. Understanding different perspectives will provide you with a more comprehensive understanding of the matter and enable you to make more balanced decisions.

Evaluating the evidence. Maintain a sceptical stance toward the evidence and arguments presented. Verify that they are well substantiated and grounded in reliable research or sources. Do not solely rely on emotions or personal beliefs.

Developing the ability to identify manipulation. Stay vigilant against different manipulation techniques, such as emotional appeals, oversimplified reasoning, persuasive language, or misleading statistics. Learn to recognize these techniques and fact-check information to avoid falling into manipulation traps.

Being open to change. Do not hesitate to alter your viewpoint if new information or evidence arises. Critical thinking requires adaptability and a willingness to revise our perspectives based on new facts.

Acquiring reliable information. Strive to utilize a variety of reliable and reputable information sources. Avoid relying solely on a single source or succumbing to misinformation.

Practicing logical thinking. Enhance your logical thinking skills by solving problems, analysing arguments, and employing deductive reasoning. Make decisions based on logical and rational justifications.

In summary, by applying critical thinking skills to your decision-making process, you can make more thoughtful and informed choices that are in line with your values and goals. By incorporating critical thinking into your decision-making processes, you will make objective and effective decisions in various aspects of your life. Critical thinking positively influences decision-making by promoting rational and logical reasoning, analysing a problem in depth, evaluating options, identifying, and assessing assumptions, considering consequences, fostering creativity and innovation, instilling confidence and responsibility, and promoting a mindset of continuous improvement.

Critical thinking provides a systematic and logical framework for decision-making. It enhances objectivity, problem-solving and evidence evaluation skills, and helps to mitigate biases, ultimately leading to more informed and effective decision-making processes.

2.3.5. Critical thinking helps to solve problems

Critical thinking is an iterative process that requires practice and continuous improvement. Critical thinking is a valuable skill that can help you approach problems in a systematic and logical way.

Using critical thinking to solve problems involves applying logical and analytical thinking skills to identify, analyse and deal with challenges or obstacles. It involves a systematic approach to problem solving that emphasises evaluating evidence, considering different perspectives, and generating innovative solutions.

Problem solving is a process. Therefore, a number of steps need to be taken to find the right solution and each step needs to be carried out properly to make the whole process effective. Below is what an example of a problem-solving process using critical thinking might look like:

1. Critical thinking begins with identifying and defining the problem accurately. This requires careful observation, gathering information, and understanding the context and underlying factors contributing to the problem. Critical thinkers ask probing questions to gain a comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand.
2. This type of approach involves breaking down the problem into its component parts and analysing them systematically. This stage involves examining the causes and effects of the problem, identifying patterns, and assessing the relevance and reliability of the information gathered. Critical thinkers evaluate evidence and consider multiple perspectives to gain a holistic understanding of a problem.
3. Critical thinking encourages the generation of multiple alternative solutions or approaches to solving a problem. This process involves creative thinking, exploring different possibilities and considering unconventional or innovative ideas. Critical thinkers challenge assumptions and constraints to broaden the range of alternative solutions.
4. Evaluating the feasibility, effectiveness and potential consequences of each alternative is extremely important. Critical thinkers weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each option, consider available resources and constraints, and

make informed judgements based on logical reasoning. They select the most viable solutions that are consistent with the desired outcomes.

5. Critical thinking involves developing an action plan to implement the chosen solution. This may include breaking down the solution into smaller steps, assigning responsibilities and setting timelines. Critical thinkers also anticipate potential challenges and develop contingency plans. Implementing the solution allows them to test its effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments.
6. One phase of the problem-solving process using critical thinking involves reflecting on the problem-solving process and evaluating its results. Critical thinkers evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their approach, identifying lessons learned and areas for improvement. This reflective practice contributes to continuous learning and enhances problem-solving skills for future challenges.
7. As already mentioned in the context of making choices and decisions, critical thinking recognises that problem solving is also often an iterative process. If the initial solution does not produce the desired results, critical thinkers reassess the problem, gather additional information and change their approach. They are prepared to adapt and modify their strategies based on new insights or changing circumstances.
8. Critical thinking can be enhanced through collaboration and effective communication. Engaging with different perspectives and seeking input from others can enrich problem-solving efforts. Critical thinkers actively listen, engage in constructive dialogue, and clearly articulate their reasoning and solutions to facilitate understanding and collaboration.

It is worth bearing in mind that every problem is different, but the solution presented is as universal as possible.

In a nutshell, using critical thinking to solve problems involves identifying the problem, analysing, generating alternative solutions, evaluating, and selecting solutions, implementing, and testing solutions, reflecting and learning from the process, and engaging in collaborative communication. Using critical thinking skills, individuals can approach problems in a systematic and logical manner, leading to effective problem solving and innovative solutions.



Image 5. Source: [Freepik](#)

2.3.6. Critical thinking and teamwork

Teamwork and critical thinking are closely linked and mutually beneficial. Both are extremely important for effective teamwork and high performance. Furthermore, teamwork can have an impact on the development of critical thinking.

Teamwork involves cooperation and interaction between team members to achieve a common goal. In this context, critical thinking refers to the ability to analyse, evaluate and distinguish, and then formulate and make rational decisions based on these analyses.

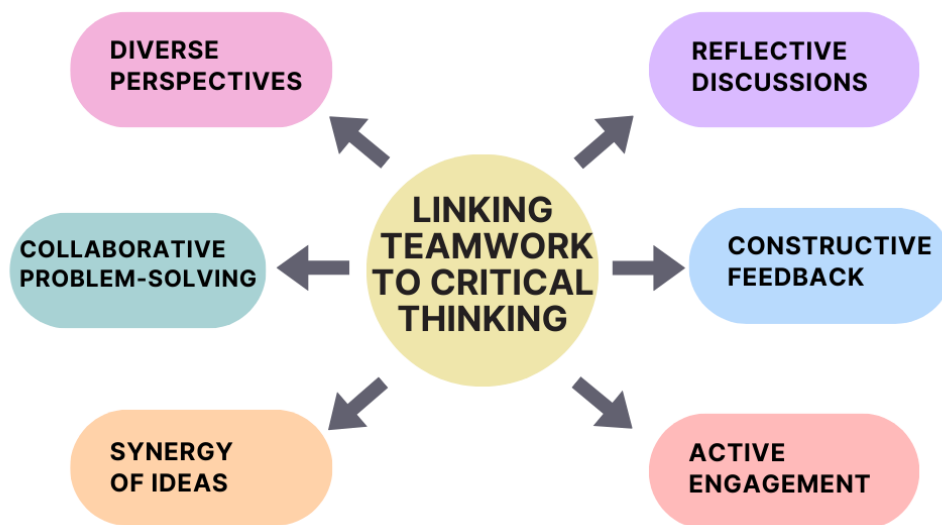


Image 6: Created by ADES

Teamwork contributes to the improvement of critical thinking in various ways:

Diversity of perspectives. When individuals from different backgrounds, experiences, and areas of expertise come together in a team, their unique viewpoints foster a more comprehensive analysis of problems. By considering diverse perspectives, team members challenge assumptions, evaluate evidence, and explore alternative solutions, thus stimulating critical thinking.

Collaborative problem-solving. Teamwork often involves working together to solve complex problems. Through active engagement, team members can exchange ideas, brainstorm solutions, and engage in healthy debates. This collaborative process nurtures critical thinking skills as individuals analyse and evaluate different options, anticipate challenges, and consider the consequences of their decisions.

Synergy of ideas. Collaborative teamwork allows team members to build upon each other's ideas, leading to innovative and well-rounded solutions. By synthesizing different perspectives and leveraging individual strengths, cognitive biases, limitations, and blind spots that hinder critical thinking can be overcome.

Reflective discussions. Regular discussions and reflections within a team provide opportunities for critical thinking to thrive. Team members can examine their approach, identify strengths and weaknesses, and consider alternative strategies for future

endeavours. Through these reflective sessions, critical thinking skills are honed, enabling individuals to refine their problem-solving abilities and decision-making processes.

Constructive feedback. Teamwork provides a supportive environment for receiving feedback from peers. Evaluating each other's ideas or work helps refine critical thinking skills. Constructive feedback encourages individuals to question assumptions, challenge reasoning, and improve problem-solving approaches. Incorporating feedback into the thinking process allows individuals to enhance their critical thinking abilities and develop a stronger analytical mindset.

Active engagement. Active engagement in teamwork enhances critical thinking by promoting collaboration, analysis, and evaluation of ideas. Through active participation, team members are encouraged to voice their opinions, challenge assumptions, and contribute to discussions, which stimulates critical thinking. Engaging in meaningful exchanges with team members allows individuals to evaluate different perspectives, consider diverse solutions, and weigh the merits of various options, fostering a more comprehensive and thoughtful approach to problem-solving. Ultimately, active engagement in teamwork cultivates an environment that encourages critical thinking and enables individuals to refine their analytical skills.

Teamwork encourages active engagement, diverse perspectives, collaborative problem solving and constructive feedback, all of which contribute to improving critical thinking skills. Working together, individuals can challenge their own assumptions, consider different viewpoints, and develop more robust and effective approaches to problem solving.

2.3.7. Critical thinking helps with financial management

Critical thinking in the context of financial management refers to the ability to analyse, evaluate and interpret financial information and make sound decisions based on logical reasoning and evidence. It involves examining financial data, considering various factors and assessing potential risks and opportunities before making informed judgements. Critical thinking is an important part of business and finance; without critical thinking, one may not be able to clearly articulate and demonstrate the skills and solutions needed by a company or client. Critical thinking plays a significant role in financial management by providing people with the skills necessary to analyse complex financial situations, make informed decisions, and mitigate risks.

What does effective financial management using critical thinking and viewing consist of? Some of the most important steps in this process are:

- Analysing financial data
- Evaluating financial decisions
- Overcoming challenges and problems
- Considering alternative perspectives

- Continual learning and adaptability

In financial management, critical thinkers engage in careful analysis of financial statements, reports, and relevant data to detect trends, patterns, and discrepancies. They utilize financial ratios, benchmarks, and industry comparisons to gain insights into an organisation's financial health, paying meticulous attention to details.

When making financial decisions, critical thinkers assess the potential consequences and outcomes. They evaluate short-term and long-term impacts, conduct cost-benefit analyses, and consider the associated risks and rewards of various options. Through critical evaluation of alternative courses of action, they determine the most favourable outcome for the organization.

Addressing complex problems and challenges in financial management, critical thinkers break them down into manageable components. They gather pertinent data, identify potential solutions, evaluate their feasibility, and select effective strategies to resolve financial issues.

Critical thinkers in financial management value diverse viewpoints and perspectives. They foster open discussions and actively seek input from stakeholders to obtain a comprehensive understanding of financial matters. By considering multiple perspectives, they uncover potential risks, identify hidden opportunities, and make well-informed decisions.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of financial markets and regulations, critical thinkers continuously seek new knowledge and stay updated on industry trends, emerging technologies, and evolving financial practices. They adapt their thinking and decision-making processes to incorporate new information and effectively respond to changing circumstances.

In summary, critical thinking in financial management enables analysis of financial data, informed decision-making, risk management and effective communication. It enables financial managers (but not only) to navigate complex financial landscapes and contributes to financial success in their lives and their organisations.

2.3.8. Critical thinking helps to communicate more effectively

Critical thinking plays an important role in effective communication. This helps individuals analyse information, evaluate arguments, and make rational decisions. Applying critical thinking to communication improves clarity, consistency, and reliability.

Critical thinking helps improve communication. And good communication influences critical thinking.

Key aspects of critical thinking that can contribute to more effective communication include:

- Questioning assumptions
- Evaluating evidence
- Recognising biases

- Exploring alternative viewpoints
- Reflecting on assumptions and conclusions

Critical thinking involves questioning assumptions. By challenging assumptions, one can uncover biases, identify logical fallacies, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject. This facilitates more accurate communication and helps avoid misleading statements.

Critical thinking requires evaluating the quality and validity of evidence supporting a claim or argument. When communicating, it is important to present reliable and credible evidence to support one's points. Critically assessing evidence helps avoid baseless claims and increases the persuasiveness of the message.

It also involves being aware of one's own biases and recognizing them in others. By acknowledging biases, one can strive for objectivity and honesty in communication. This aids in presenting balanced perspectives, fostering constructive dialogue, and avoiding unnecessary conflicts.

It encourages individuals to consider multiple perspectives and seek diverse opinions. When communicating, it is important to listen to others and understand their viewpoints. By considering alternative perspectives, one can broaden their understanding, engage in meaningful discussions, and build stronger arguments.

Critical thinking also involves reflecting on one's own assumptions and checking the validity of conclusions. Taking time for reflection during communication allows for refining the message, clarifying any ambiguities, and ensuring coherence. It also helps in recognizing potential biases or logical errors that may affect the effectiveness of communication.

Critical thinking and viewing improves communication by promoting intellectual rigor, logical reasoning, and the ability to evaluate and convey information effectively. By applying critical thinking skills, individuals can become more articulate, persuasive, and open-minded communicators.

Critical thinking emphasises clear and precise communication. By organising your thoughts, logically constructing arguments, and using appropriate language, you can communicate your message effectively. Clarity in communication reduces misunderstandings and increases the impact of your ideas. Critical thinking and strong communication skills improve problem-solving ability. These skills allow you to focus on the goal and think rationally.

2.4. CHANGING ONE'S MIND AFTER RECEIVING NEW EVIDENCE USING A CRITICAL VIEW

In the age of easily accessible and rapidly disseminated information, the ability to be critical of it is becoming increasingly important. As new evidence is presented, it is necessary to adjust our opinion and approach to take the new information into account. It is not possible to always be biased, as this distorts the correct perception of many things. Critical thinking is a process that allows us to analyse and evaluate information

objectively and rationally. Hence, it is an essential skill needed to analyse what we see (e.g., online), to draw rational conclusions and to be cautious about making judgements if the evidence in a given context is not sufficient.

Critical thinking requires flexibility and a willingness to change our beliefs in the light of new evidence. There are several steps we can take to adjust our critical thinking:

- **Familiarisation with new evidence (reading, viewing, etc.).** This involves carefully examining the new evidence and assessing its impact on your current beliefs. Seek to understand the context, credibility and implications of the information presented.
- **Analysis of the particular evidence.** You should place great emphasis on assessing the credibility and strength of the evidence. Determine whether they are well supported by credible sources and whether they contradict other established facts or evidence.
- **Re-evaluation of beliefs.** Based on the new evidence, review your existing beliefs, and consider whether they need to be adjusted. Consider whether the new evidence is sufficiently compelling to warrant a change of perspective. Explore alternative explanations that may exist.
- **Careful and thorough consideration.** It is extremely important to take into account all available information and consider different points of view. Be aware of potential flaws or limitations in the new evidence. Remember that critical thinking requires consideration of alternative explanations and potential fallacies.
- **Updating your opinion based on all available evidence and information:** Finally, if the new evidence is convincing, credible and the analysis leads to the conclusion that a change is warranted, be prepared to change your point of view. Do not hesitate to update your beliefs based on the new evidence and information available.

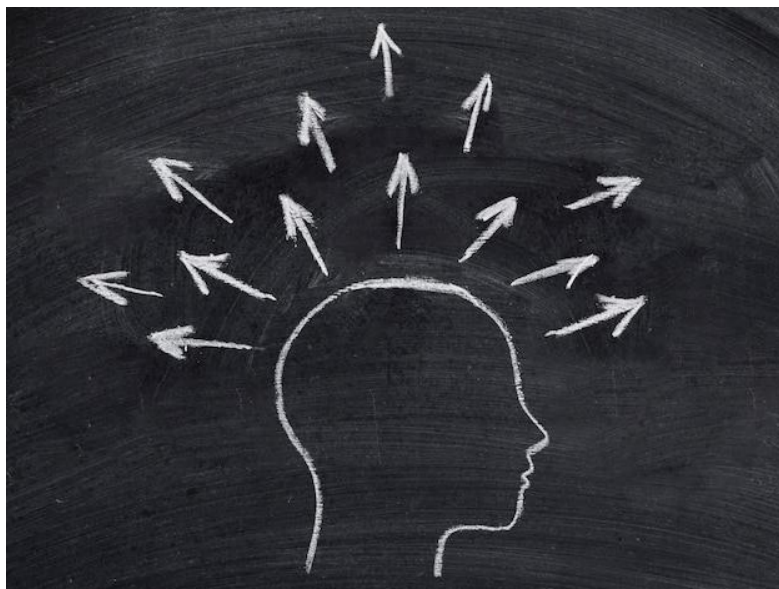


Image 7. Source: [Freepik](#)

Changing one's mind when new evidence is presented is a fundamental aspect of critical thinking. Critical thinkers understand that their beliefs and opinions should be based on evidence, reason, and logical analysis, rather than stubbornly clinging to preconceived notions.

When new evidence emerges, critical thinkers are open to reassessing their perspectives. They carefully evaluate the credibility, reliability, and relevance of the new information. They consider whether the evidence challenges or supports their existing beliefs and opinions.

Critical thinkers prioritize the pursuit of truth and accuracy over personal biases or emotional attachments to their previous views. They are willing to admit when they were mistaken or lacked complete information, as they value intellectual integrity and growth.

Changing one's mind based on new evidence is not seen as a weakness but as a strength in critical thinking. It demonstrates intellectual flexibility, a commitment to evidence-based reasoning, and a willingness to refine one's understanding of a subject. By being open to changing their minds, critical thinkers continuously refine their knowledge, make more informed decisions, and foster intellectual growth.

Among the positive aspects of changing one's mind based on new evidence, we can include **intellectual development**, greater **rationality and objectivity**, **adaptability** and **better decision making**.

Despite these benefits, there may be potential negatives associated with changing one's mind too often or changing one's mind without sufficient evidence. These negative aspects mainly include **inconsistency**, **lack of due conviction**, so-called **confirmation bias** (the tendency to seek out and prefer information that supports our preexisting beliefs²) and **social pressure**.

To summarise, changing one's mind when presented with new evidence is an overall positive aspect of critical thinking. It promotes intellectual development, rationality and adaptability. However, it is important to approach new evidence with a balanced attitude, to evaluate it critically and to avoid succumbing to confirmation bias or excessive rejection without sufficient justification.

Critical thinking skills develop over time, but with a little effort and patience you will be able to apply objective and analytical thought processes to all situations. Critical thinking is one of many soft skills that effective team members, managers and employees possess. It comes in handy on a daily basis, and allows you to look a little differently from others at all sorts of aspects that you are able to subject to your own analysis.

²Source: <https://www.scribbr.com/research-bias/confirmation-bias/>



3. FURTHER READING

Here we present additional resources that you can use to deepen your knowledge related to the module:

- 11 Benefits of Critical Thinking That Rapidly Improve Your Life – <https://www.magneticmemorymethod.com/benefits-of-critical-thinking/>
- Critical Thinking - Critical Thinking in Communication – <https://youtu.be/mnbYd3eexdQ>
- Critical thinking and adult education: A conceptual model for developing critical thinking in adult learners – https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240528387_Critical_thinking_and_adult_education_A_conceptual_model_for_developing_critical_thinking_in_adult_learners
- Critical Thinking Skills – <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/critical-thinking.html>
- Critical Viewing – https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306080494_Critical_Viewing
- Why Is Critical Thinking Important? A Survival Guide – <https://www.uopeople.edu/blog/why-is-critical-thinking-important/>
- Why should we learn critical thinking? – <https://youtu.be/Bo2Up1-rlls>

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