Chapter 13
Critical Thinking, Critical Looking:
Key Characteristics of an Educated Person

Richard C. Emanuel
Alabama State University, USA

Siu Challons-Lipton
Queens University of Charlotte, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Critical thinking involves the comprehension and expression of the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations, data, events, judgments, conventions, beliefs, rules, procedures, and criteria. One important aspect of critical thinking is the analysis, interpretation, and understanding of images. This is generally known as visual literacy. Visual literacy may be initially demonstrated at the basic levels of recognition and understanding – recognizing an image, telling what a symbol means, indicating the name of a painting and/or its artist. As one becomes more skilled at analyzing and interpreting the meaning of visuals, they are maturing toward visual fluency. Studying a cultural artifact provides students an opportunity to put things in context and to practice critical thinking. Two works of art—the Coffee Cup print and The Death of Marat painting—are provided along with example analysis.

SETTING THE STAGE

The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and tell what it saw in a plain way.... To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion, all in one. - John Ruskin (1872, p.268)

And then remember…the biggest word of all – LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. - Robert Fulghum (1986, p.5)

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a liberating force in education and a powerful resource in one's personal and civic life. It involves the comprehension and expression of the meaning or significance of a wide variety of experiences, situations, data, events, judgments, conventions, beliefs, rules, procedures, and criteria. A critical thinker is able to interpret, analyze, evaluate and infer. Strong critical thinkers can also effectively explain what they think and how they arrived at that judgment. They can apply their ability to think critically and thereby advance earlier opinions.

Critical thinkers demonstrate:

- Concern to become and remain well-informed,
- Alertness to opportunities to use critical thinking,
- Trust in the processes of reasoned inquiry,
- Self-confidence in their own abilities to reason,
- Open-mindedness regarding divergent world views,
- Flexibility in considering alternatives and opinions,
- Understanding of the opinions of other people,
- Fair-mindedness in appraising reasoning,
- Honesty in facing their own biases, prejudices, stereotypes, or egocentric tendencies,
- Prudence in suspending, making or altering judgments,
- Willingness to reconsider and revise views when honest reflection suggests warranted change.

Critical thinkers strive to achieve:

- Care in focusing attention on the concern at hand,
- Clarity in stating a question or concern,
- Orderliness in working with complexity,
- Diligence in seeking relevant information,

2

17 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/critical-thinking-critical-looking/107143

Related Content

A User-Aware Multi-Agent System for Team Building
Pasquale De Meo, Diego Plutino, Giovanni Quattroneand Domenico Ursino (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 2004-2010).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/user-aware-multi-agent-system/11094

Enclosing Machine Learning
Xunkai Wei (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 744-751).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/enclosing-machine-learning/10903

Supporting Imprecision in Database Systems
Ullas Nambiar (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1884-1887).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/supporting-imprecision-database-systems/11076

Document Indexing Techniques for Text Mining
José Ignacio Serrano (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 716-721).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/document-indexing-techniques-text-mining/10899

Semi-Supervised Learning
Tobias Scheffer (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1787-1793).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/semi-supervised-learning/11060