
INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC:

Hold up pictures that depict various topics, such as alcohol use/abuse, news items causing controversy, etc. When the pictures or articles are presented to the class, ask the students if they can identify how their opinion developed on this issue:

- Was it from what their parents' said?
- Was it from their friends' views?
- Was it from the media's interpretation?
- Was it from their own observations and conclusions?

Opinions can be influenced or developed before, during, or after an event has occurred. Unless our opinions are closely examined, we are prone to think the way those around us think. Sometimes, in order to gain approval and acceptance from others, we take the views of the group or our peers. However, these views or opinions may limit or block our opportunities for personal growth, block us from participating in new and worthwhile experiences, and/or prevent us from making logical choices through the use of the critical thinking process.

The critical thinking process can help us differentiate between fact and opinion when subjects are examined and pondered.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES:**1. Identify the components of the critical thinking process.****1-1 Critical Thinking Process**

Using the teacher background information on pages I-D-19 and I-D-20, define the term, *critical thinking*, and discuss the role and importance of critical thinking during the personal decision-making process.

CRITICAL THINKING: Testing existing ideas and/or solutions for flaws and errors. Being able to apply logic and make one's own decisions.

(An overhead transparency pattern of this definition is provided on page I-D-21.)

Identify the following parts of the critical thinking process:

- 1. Identify and describe a problem or situation**
- 2. Discriminate between fact and opinion**
- 3. Think of possible solutions and their consequences**
- 4. Identify personal and/or family values that conflict with the situation**
- 5. Take a defensible position based on logic.**

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

The teacher can use the overhead transparency from page I-D-22 to illustrate the critical thinking process and/or make a bulletin board using the patterns provided on pages I-D-23 to I-D-28.

Some questions for students to ask themselves during the critical thinking process are:

- Is it against the law, rules, or the teachings of my family or religion?
- Is it harmful to me or to others?
- Would it disappoint my family or other adults that are important to me?
- Is it wrong to do? Would I be sorry afterward?
- Would I be hurt or upset if someone did this to me?

NOTE: Individual student cards with these questions and the critical thinking process can be reproduced on brightly-colored cardstock from resource pages I-D-29 and I-D-30 (back to back), and given to the students for handy reference. If laminating facilities are available, it is recommended that the cards be laminated for increased durability.

1-2 Knowledge/Ignorance Illusion

Using an overhead transparency of the graphic on page I-D-31, have the students try to find the words "knowledge" and "ignorance". This illustrates that the difference between knowledge and ignorance about something is frequently due to our perception, which can become more accurate through the use of the critical thinking process.

NOTE: The concept from this illusion can be used again during the activities supporting competency 5 (Analyze how the critical thinking process can enhance and/or block human relationships and how attitudes influence judgments.) on pages I-D-10 to I-D-12 to reinforce the importance of applying the critical thinking process.

2. Identify situations for applying the critical thinking process.**2-1 Critical Thinking Situations**

In a brainstorming session, lead the students in identifying situations for applying the critical thinking process, listing the situations on the board or a large piece of butcher paper at the front of the room. It is important that the students understand that critical thinking is best used during the decision-making process before a situation occurs because then it can be a source of problem prevention as well as a solution.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

Some situations might include:

- date rape
- when to date
- driving without a license
- use of seat belts
- single vs. double dating
- gang or group membership
- choice of friends
- choice of _____
- use of drugs, alcohol
- setting goals
- etc.

2-2 Critical Thinking: My Position

Discuss how many people may like a movie, music, or TV show not because they have determined for themselves that they like it, but because everyone else does. Many movies, television programs, commercials, songs, etc., do not always bring out the best values to live by or promote a wholesome lifestyle. Some also give the wrong impression concerning love, school, gender, etc. More specific instructions are provided on page I-D-32.

Using television sitcoms, music, commercials, movies, etc., taped for class, show some excerpts from the various media sources. Have the students apply the five (5) steps in the critical thinking process to analyze the message the source is delivering. Students can use the **CRITICAL THINKING: MY POSITION** student activity guide (page I-D-33) for this analysis.

NOTE: It is recommended that the teacher use either very current movies, music, or TV shows for this activity, or some classics such as Bach.

3. Examine how using the critical thinking process can help manage and/or prevent problems.**3-1 Fears and Phobias**

Using the teacher background information **PHOBIAS** on page I-D-34, discuss how fears and phobias can impede and obstruct the thinking process. Differentiate between a fear and a phobia, using the following definitions :

FEAR: A feeling of anxiety caused by the presence of danger, evil, or pain.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

PHOBIA: A persistent fear that is irrational and not based on sound judgment.

(Overhead transparency patterns for these definitions are provided on pages I-D-35 and I-D-36.)

Fears are a natural part of life and are not necessarily unhealthy. But, when the fears dominate our lives to the point that we cannot function effectively, such as a phobia, then it becomes unhealthy.

Have the students complete the student activity guide, **FEARSOME PHOBIAS (Everyone Is Just Like Me)**, (page I-D-37).

3-2 Phobias of the Famous

Examine some of the phobias that famous people have using the student activity guide, **PHOBIAS OF THE FAMOUS**, (page I-D-39). Emphasize how everyone has fears. Discuss how the quality of life is lessened when fears are allowed to control one's life. Using the critical thinking process can help an individual put his/her fears in the proper perspective and remain a functional, productive human being.

It would be good reinforcement if the teacher could share an illustration of using the steps in the critical thinking process to overcome a phobia. This could be from personal experience or knowledge.

3-3 A New Start for Sylvia

Have the students complete the student activity guide, **A NEW START FOR SILVIA**, (pages I-D-41 and I-D-42) to identify ways that we can use the critical thinking process to help manage situations and/or prevent problems.

3-4 Julio's Big Decision

Have the students complete the student activity guide, **JULIO'S BIG DECISION**, (pages I-D-43 and I-D-44) to identify ways that we can use the critical thinking process to help manage situations and/or prevent problems.

4. Examine how the human brain can be trained to think critically and creatively.**4-1 Introductory Activity: About the Brain...**

Introduce the students to the following concepts and information regarding the brain:

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

- The brain is a marvelous organ that impacts all of the decisions that we make everyday.
- The brain can be trained to think creatively and critically.
- Einstein stated that genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration.
- He stated that often he would lay in bed and just let thoughts play upon his mind.
- When he died, scientists discovered that his brain was different than the average brain. Not only was it larger, but the gray matter was denser than that of most people. This meant that he did a lot of thinking.

What does all of this have to do with the critical thinking process? The creative part of our brain is housed on the right side. This side helps us:

- interpret body language,
- respond to emotion and feeling,
- be intuitive when solving problems,
- grasp uncertain truths,
- and deal simultaneously with several problems at the same time.

All of these abilities are essential when using the critical thinking process; however, many people have to learn how to think on the right side as the majority of people think on the left.

4-2 Brain Teasers: Creative Thinking

Using an overhead transparency of the **BRAIN TEASERS: CREATIVE THINKING** resource (page I-D-45), have the students figure out some of the commonly used phrases or sayings depicted with the clues provided in the boxes. After the class has solved some of the puzzles, provide the students with a list of some additional phrases or sayings (page I-D-47) and have each student or group of students depict one of these on a piece of paper. Be sure the students make them large enough so they can be seen by other class members. Upon completion, have the students share their depictions.

4-3 Physical and Non-Physical Self-Description

Have the students write a physical description of themselves in one paragraph. Then, using the same paper, have the students write a non-physical description of themselves (e.g., personality, attitudes, etc.). This time, however, the students must write with the opposite hand than they normally write with. Upon completion, have the students note the atmosphere of the room and their feelings during the second exercise (noisy compared to the first exercise, concentration lost, frustrated, etc.).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

SUMMARY CONCEPT: When tasks are difficult for us, concentration tends to be lost. When relationships are difficult for us, many times we ignore or lose communication with the people involved. Critical thinking requires a concentrated effort to understand people and situations. That skill can be developed through practice.

4-4 Mental Pictures

Give each student a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. Darken the room and have the students close their eyes for this activity--the whole exercise is done with the eyes closed! Have the students draw these items in this order:

- a lake
- a boat on the lake
- a man in the boat fishing
- a tent on the shore of the lake
- a campfire with flames
- a dog by the campsite
- mountains in the background
- a wolf howling on top of the mountain
- the sun peaking through the mountains
- clouds in the sky.

Turn on the lights and have the students show their drawings.

SUMMARY CONCEPT: Active listening involves concentration. For example, were the students able to picture the things in their minds as they drew? Explore the concept of how mental pictures of what an individual tells you enhances the level of communication.

4-5 The Brain Trainer

To further help the students learn to develop right brain thinking, lead them through the creative listening exercise, **THE BRAIN TRAINER**, on page I-D-49. Have the students close their eyes and visualize what you are describing as you read the activity.

Upon completion, explain to the students that they have experienced how the mind is able to block out external noise when they are concentrating intensely on something. Ask the students to explain how this ability can assist them in developing interpersonal skills.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

5. **Analyze how the critical thinking process can enhance and/or block human relationships and how attitudes influence judgments.**

5-1 Introductory Activity: Historical Tidbits

Read the following historical tidbits and explain how we often tend to look at others through our own eyes and determine that we know what is best because "our way is better".

Example # 1: When the Europeans discovered the island of Japan, they were appalled that the Japanese would bathe several times a day. At that time, Europeans thought that bathing was unhealthy. The Japanese could not believe that these intruders did not bathe. They could smell them coming for miles as their odor was very offensive. Much later it was determined and recognized that frequent bathing was healthy and necessary for good hygiene, and it did indeed prevent disease and infection, thereby contributing to longer life. The Japanese knew this all along!

This is clearly a case where the attitude "my mind is made up so don't confuse me with the facts!" prevented the early explorers from improving their health.

Example # 2: Take the muu-muu style of dress, for example. When the early explorers came to the Hawaiian Islands, they were shocked to find that these people were running around naked. They knew what was best, or so they thought! So they developed a loose fitting smock that was patterned after their European dress with a scoop neck and leg-of-mutton sleeves. This outfit covered the native's nakedness--thus, the muu-muu was invented not by Hawaiians, but by Europeans!

Again, the critical thinking process can help us differentiate between fact and opinion when issues are objectively examined and pondered.

5-2 Attitude Trail

Using an overhead transparency of page I-D-50, introduce the term *attitude* to the students and discuss how attitudes are formed, where they come from, etc..

ATTITUDE: The position or posture assumed in connection with an action or feeling.

Continue by using an overhead transparency of the **ATTITUDE TRAIL** diagram on page I-D-51 or a bulletin board from the patterns on pages I-D-52 to I-D-60, and discussing the following concepts that illustrate how attitudes affect our ability to think critically and how various factors influence our attitudes.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

- Your attitudes influence the decisions you make.
- Attitudes influence or cause prejudice.
- Different individuals, religions, backgrounds, societies and cultures have varied limits and expectations.
- Individuals must learn to adapt and be flexible within those groups and allow for differences in order to fit comfortably into a wide variety of situations.
- Your attitude toward yourself reflects your attitude toward other people.
- A positive attitude towards oneself leads to self-respect which can lead to respect for others.

5-3 Ethnocentrism

Define the term *ethnocentrism* and discuss how it affects our attitudes and decision making.

ETHNOCENTRISM: When an individual views his/her ethnic group and/or social standards as being superior to others.

(An overhead transparency pattern of this definition is provided on page I-D-61)

The teacher can also have the students identify some societal problems that are the result of ethnocentrism. Have the students complete the student activity guide, **ETHNOCENTRISM**, (I-D-62) and then discuss some of the student answers as a class.

5-4 C. S. Ford's 33 Customs

Using the teacher background information, **C. S. FORD'S 33 CUSTOMS**, on page I-D-63 as a guide, introduce the students to C. S. Ford's study of U.S. customs around the world using an overhead transparency of the list that C.S. Ford developed (page I-D-64). Discuss each item on the list to make sure that the students understand the terms.

Have the students work in groups and try to determine what five customs all of the cultures agreed upon, using the student activity guide, **C. S. FORD'S 33 CUSTOMS**, (page I-D-64). Have them write those five customs in the space provided on the guide. Let each group select a spokesperson to report their findings to the class. After the groups have completed their work, discuss their findings and the findings of C. S. Ford.

5-5 Customs, Manners, Culture

Discuss some of the customs and manners from other countries as given in the **CUSTOMS, MANNERS, AND CULTURE** resource materials (page I-D-66).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

Pictures from National Geographic magazines, cultural artifacts, or other tactics can be used to show how socially acceptable and expected customs vary throughout the world (tattooing, rings through the nose and ears, plate lips, etc.) and make the information interesting for the students. Additional areas of difference could be explored, e.g., food, music, money, etc.

The **THOUGHT QUESTIONS** provided on page I-D-67 can be used as an assignment and/or a discussion guide.

NOTE: As a closing to the activities for this competency, refer back to the Knowledge/Ignorance Illusion activity 2-1 on page I-D-31 to reinforce the importance and advantages of using the critical thinking process.

6. Implement the critical thinking process in contrived situations.**6-1 Introductory Activity: Excerpt from Life Boat**

As an introduction to The Life Boat activity (6-2), show an excerpt from Alfred Hitchcock's Life Boat, using the clip where the boat members decide to throw Willie overboard.

6-2 The Life Boat

Discuss how critical thinking involves the following techniques:

- Surveying the limits
- Taking responsibility
- Adapting to the situation.

Using these techniques, have the students work in small groups and complete **THE LIFE BOAT** student activity guide (page I-D-68).

As the students give their group verdict, keep a tally of the individuals selected.

Note any patterns of selection. The following questions might be posed:

- What criteria was used in making the group selection?
- Did ethnocentrism play a part in the decision?
- Were any individuals placed in a stereotype?
- Was it hard to determine whether a person was to stay or go? Why?
- What individual would be the hardest to let go? the easiest? Why?
- How often do we need to make decisions on a daily basis?
- How do we make these decisions?
(Flip a coin? Use the same process every time?)
- What is the impact of some decisions that we make?
(Good and bad decisions)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

- Are solutions to problems shaped by luck and faith?
- Are decisions out of your control? Explain your answer.

SUMMARY CONCEPT: Problem solving is a critical component in all aspects of life. The outcome of problem solving may not be as dramatic as this situation, but the process of arriving at a conclusion is the same.

NOTE: This activity could get into some sensitive issues in some communities. It is recommended that it be used with maximum discretion and district approval.

More Life Boat (Optional)

After the students have completed the Life Boat activity, the following information can be given to the students if desired.

John Smith was on the lifeboat because all of the crew members had been killed.

Abdul Rahman was defecting to the United States.

Rose Kelly had terminal cancer.

Wendi Jones completed her Eagle Scout Award.

Col. Richard Blade was a double amputee.

Jim Kelly won several transoceanic sailing awards.

Rev. Robert Whittaker did time in the federal penitentiary for stealing church funds.

The question to pose: Would this information have made any difference in your decisions?

6-3 Judge and Jury

Have students do the **JUDGE AND JURY** activity described on resource pages I-D-69 and I-D-70 by setting up the classroom like a court room and assigning a student to each of the player parts. Give the players the facts of the case (or let them read the facts of the case). Allow the players a few minutes to prepare their cases. While they are preparing, the teacher can brief the jury (the rest of the class) on their job. Be sure NOT to give them the facts of the case; let the attorneys do that. The teacher's role is to keep the court on task and maintain order, if necessary. Upon completion, review the application of the critical thinking process as the decisions were made.

NOTE: Other cases from recent issues or events in the news that are related to teens, families, etc., can be developed and used.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES/TEACHING STRATEGIES - CONT'D.

6-4 Up, Up and Away

Have students complete the **UP, UP AND AWAY** activity described on resource pages I-D-71 through I-D-73. This activity applies the critical thinking process in a decision-making situation. It is an excellent example of using the critical thinking process and communications skills as tools for survival. Upon completion, review the application of the critical thinking process as the decisions were made.

6-5 What Would You Do?

Read the story, **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**, (page I-D-74) and have the students think through and address the major concerns. Upon completion, review the application of the critical thinking process as the decisions were made.

ALTERNATE STRATEGY: The story of the Swiss Family Robinson could be used as the basis for this activity if preferred.

7. Develop a plan for applying the critical thinking process to personal situations.**7-1 Critical Thinking: My Situation**

Have the students develop a plan for applying the critical thinking process to a personal situation he/she is currently dealing with. Some types of situations for application might be:

- settling differences of opinions with integrity
- overcoming ethnocentrism
- living with parents' rules or belief structure
- overcoming a phobia
- eliminating a self-defeating behavior

To begin with, the students need to identify the problems or situations they are facing and the decisions that need to be made, and then apply the critical thinking process to help them make their own logical decisions. Incorporate some type of mechanism for them to track their progress. The students can follow the steps on the student activity guide, **CRITICAL THINKING: MY SITUATION**, (page I-D-75), or the teacher can devise his/her own.

7-2 What If...?

Have the students complete the student activity guide **WHAT IF...?** (page I-D-76), and identify ways they can handle difficult situations and settle differences through the use of the critical thinking process. Upon completion, the students can compare strategies and solutions.

RESOURCES:**Articles:**

Human Decorations: African Customs, National Geographic, February 1991.

Books:

Fruehling, Rosemary T. and Neild B. Oldham, *Your Attitude Counts*. Paradigm Publishing International, 6436 City West Parkway, Eden Prairie, MN 55344. 1990. ISBN: 1-56118-073-4.

Wallechinsky, David and Amy Wallace Little, *People's Almanac Presents The Book of Lists - The '90's Edition*. Little, Brown & Company, New York. ISBN: 0-316-92079-7.

Phobias and Panic, DHHS Publication No. (ADM)86-1472, Department of Health and Human Services, Rockville MD 20857.

Videos:

Racism, Power Surge Series, Media International, 5225 San Fernando Road West, Los Angeles, CA 90039, 1-800-477-7575.

Racism sparked the biggest riots in L.A. history, and the feelings begin at a young age. Just listen to Matt who hated black people, and then had to live with one in college. Now they're best friends! Teenage Asians, Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites all appear in this video to say the same thing: "I'm a lot like you. Get to know me!"

To Climb A Mountain, Paulist Productions, Box 1057, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. A video on overcoming prejudice, starring Emilio Estevez.

Song (cassette tape):

Attitude Adjustment, recorded by Hank Williams, Jr. 1985, Warner Bros. Album: Greatest Hits.

WHEN MAKING DECISIONS,

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO ALWAYS USE YOUR HEAD
IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR HEART.**