FACTORS AFFECTING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

- Factors
  - Conquering Limitations and Hindrances to Critical Thinking

MEMORY

- It is an active system that receives information from the senses, organizes and alters
  information as it stores, and then retrieves the information from storage.

- Psychologist have developed several techniques in evaluating individual skill in memorizing
  things.

- Methods are normally objective in character.

- Examples:

  - Multiple choice and True or False

  - Recall and Recognition memory:

    - Recall memory – the subject is tasked to produce a remembered set of items which were
      previously given or reviewed.

    - Paired associates recall (i.e. Book-Pencil)

    - Serial recall (Alphabet)

    - Free recall (list of items but in any order)

  - Recall and Recognition memory:

    - Recognition memory – the individual is tasked to recognized a particular item/concept from the
      other items.

    - I.E. Multiple choice

    - Recall + Recognition = cued recall

    - I.E. Fill in the missing letters.

    - Procedural memory – works as implicit memory because it involves recognition and awareness
      of techniques and procedures.

    - I.E. How to ride a bicycle

    - Declarative memory – involves recognition and understanding of the content of an article,
      speech or any form of factual information.
Explicit memory – refers to a kind of memory in which the subject is aware that he performs a particular memory task.

Implicit memory – refers to a kind of memory in which the subject is not aware that he performs such memory task.

Include activities that requires skills such as reading, riding a bike, and writing an essay.

TESTIMONY

It refers to a statement that is either spoken or written by other people for the purpose of giving information to the issue at hand.

- Most of the time, a deceptive testimonial appears to be a perfect argument/claim. Critical thinkers should be able to identify the essence and real purpose of such testimony.
- Sometimes, deceptive testimonials are believable because people choose to believe them.
- Usually, critical thinkers (i.e. natural and social scientists) do not usually rely on testimonials.
- Since it is easy for people to deceive themselves. That is why testimonials made by paranormal and supernatural experts have no scientific value.

IGNORANCE

It refers to the condition of being uneducated, unaware or uninformed.

It also refers to being unaware of the important points involved in the subject matter at hand.

It should not be viewed as stupidity.

Stupidity is the quality of being incompetent to apply intelligence in any given task.

They represent man’s conviction about the reality of things and are shared ideas about how the world operates.

Hindrances to critical thinking process:

THE BELIEF THAT INTELLIGENCE IS INHERENT, IT RUNS THROUGH GENES
- People who agree to this kind of belief are afraid to fail. They think that failure is synonymous with being dumb, stupid, and weak.

- **THE BELIEF THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE PLACED ON THE WRONG SIDE OF INTELLIGENCE USUALLY HAVE A HARD TIME GRASPING A SET OF KNOWLEDGE AS COMPARED WITH INTELLIGENT PEOPLE WHO CAN LEARN EFFORTLESSLY**

- **SELF-HANDICAPPING**
  - This refers to an attitude in which the individual pretends to be smart (or pretends to avoid looking dumb). Normally, this individual is preoccupied with his reputation rather than working/developing on something.

  - Wishful thinking – a manner of interpreting a particular thing the way we want it to be.
  - Self deception – a kind of attitude where we try to look at a particular thing to be true when it is not.
  - Conformity, susceptibility to suggestions and admiration for experts and authorities form part of our challenge to attain higher critical thinking skills.
  - Critical thinkers are healthy skeptics --- they are cautious on what to believe, act and think.
  - As mature individuals, we should be mindful whether or not these claims are within the bounds of rationality and objectivity.
  - Laziness – an attitude that drives us to think uncritically for it encourages us to conform and accept the claims made by authorities.

  - **Lazy people tend to think in terms of stereotypes and slogans.**
    - Stereotypes – generalizations that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group, based on an image about what people in that group are like.
    - Americans are arrogant, domineering, impatient.
    - Asians are shrewd and alert, but reserved.
    - Products made in China have substandard qualities
    - **Lazy people tend to think in terms of stereotypes and slogans.**
      - Slogan – refers to oversimplification of things that are complex.
      - For Sigmund Freud, sex is what we are as human beings.
      - Pride, just like laziness, minimizes our skill in critical thinking.
Communal Reinforcement

It refers to a collective behavior in which the members of the community consider a claim to be correct even if it has been poorly researched and not supported by pertinent evidence and data.

Communal reinforcement would likely emerge in the society where claims are repeatedly asserted to be true.

Examples:

- Alternative health practice
- Bermuda triangle
- Santa Claus
- Exorcism

Prejudice

It refers to the strongly held opinion about some topic or a group of people.

A positive prejudice often stems from a strong sense of ethnocentrism --- a belief that one’s cultural group is vastly superior to the beliefs held by others.

It may also be derived from ignorance, misinformation, past experiences, and fear.

Confirmation Bias

A type of selective attention in which the individual tends to relate a particular situation/phenomenon to something in order to confirm/support his beliefs/preconceptions without looking at the different factor that may have contributed to the occurrence of such belief.

It is related to the fallacy of false cause in which it involves a presumption that the existence of something is brought about by the existence of another thing.

Example: Jane bought a meticulously tailored jacket. A day after she bought the item, she decided to look for the same jacket in a more expensive store to confirm that she has bought a bargain.