

Critical thinking development need not be an intimidating process. I believe that nursing students are frustrated and become intimidated about this because the concept itself may be difficult to fully understand. To simplify this process the larger concept of critical thinking needs to be broken down into smaller concepts for more in-depth consideration. The main primary related concepts that originate from the main concept of critical thinking are:

1. The definition of the term. In other words, this means answering questions such as:
 - What are the characteristics of critical thinking?
 - What things need to be considered and utilized for critical thinking to occur?
 - How can one tell when it is taking place?
2. How it is utilized in nursing education
 - a. Academics- how does critical thinking take place in the classroom?
 - b. Clinical skills- how is it used during skills and assessments?
3. How it is utilized to apply knowledge- Throughout your nursing education, knowledge application is emphasized constantly. How do you reach a level where knowledge is not just understood, but able to be applied?
4. How it is evaluated within a nursing program- In other words, how does this fit into the nursing curriculum and what is used to evaluate it? What types of behaviors are instructors looking for?

The concept map accompanying this document helps to explain the thought processes related to all of this and incorporates concepts mapping into the process as well.