

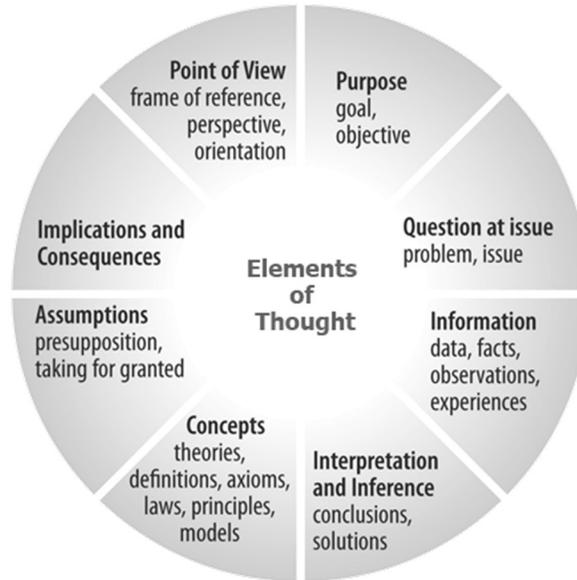
Evaluating Reasoning & Improving on the Essential Intellectual Traits

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"Never accept things as they're portrayed." ~ Anthony Shadid, journalist, 1968-2012

Elements of Reasoning (Paul & Elder, 2006):

- ◆ "To analyze our thinking we must identify and question its elemental structures" ("Elements of Thought", 2007, ¶ 1). See link in the reference section below for interactive (mouse-over) model.



Universal Intellectual Standards (Bensley, 1998; Paul & Elder, 2006): Apply these to the Elements of Reasoning above.

- ◆ **Clarity**: If statement doesn't make sense, then we can't determine its relevance or accuracy.
- ◆ **Accuracy**: A statement can be clear but not accurate. Ask yourself "is that really true?"
- ◆ **Precision**: Ask for more details when a statement is vague (e.g., "Deborah is overweight").
- ◆ **Relevance**: Is the statement relevant to the question. How is it connected to the issue?
- ◆ **Depth**: Is the statement superficial (e.g., "Just say NO")? What are the most significant factors?
- ◆ **Breadth**: The argument appears one sided. Seek another point of view or standpoint.
- ◆ **Logic**: If combo of thoughts don't come together or make sense, then they're not mutually supportive.
- ◆ **Significance**: Is the problem/central facts the most important one to consider or focus on?
- ◆ **Fairness**: Is my thinking justifiable and am I being sympathetic to all viewpoints?

Intellectual Traits: Must be applied to "all of the above", as described by Paul & Elder (2006).

- ◆ Intellectual Humility vs. Intellectual Arrogance
- ◆ Intellectual Courage vs. Intellectual Cowardice
- ◆ Intellectual Empathy vs. Intellectual Narrow-mindedness
- ◆ Intellectual Autonomy vs. Intellectual Conformity
- ◆ Intellectual Integrity vs. Intellectual Hypocrisy

- ◆ Intellectual Perseverance vs. Intellectual Laziness
- ◆ Confidence in Reason vs. Distrust of Reason and Evidence
- ◆ Fair-mindedness vs. Intellectual Unfairness

References

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Bensley, D. A. (1998). *Critical thinking in psychology: A unified skills approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Elements of Thought. (2007). *Foundation for Critical Thinking* [Interactive graphic]. Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthinking.org/ctmodel/logic-model1.htm>

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