

Thinking/reasoning (critically)

Writing critically Reading critically Other activities

- What is your, my, their purpose in doing _____?
- What is the objective of this assignment (task, job, experiment, policy, strategy, etc.)?
- Should we question, refine, modify our purpose (goal, objective, etc.)?
- What is the purpose of this meeting (chapter, relationship, action)?
- What is your central aim in this line of thought?
- What is the purpose of education?
- Why did you say...?

- Further helpful tips
- Take time to state your purpose clearly.
 - Distinguish your purpose from related purposes.
 - Check periodically to be sure you are still on target.
 - Choose significant and realistic purposes. ?

- What is the question I am trying to answer?
- What important questions are embedded in the issue?
- Is there a better way to put the question?
- Is this question clear? Is it complex?
- I am not sure exactly what question you are asking. Could you explain it?
- The question in my mind is this: How do you see the question?
- What kind of question is this? - Historical, Scientific, Ethical, Political, Economic etc.?
- What would we have to do to settle this question?

- What information do I need to answer this question?
- What data are relevant to this problem?
- Do we need to gather more information?
- Is this information relevant to our purpose or goal?
- On what information are you basing that comment?
- What experience convinced you of this? Could your experience be distorted?
- How do we know this information (data, testimony) is accurate?
- Have we left out any important information that we need to consider?

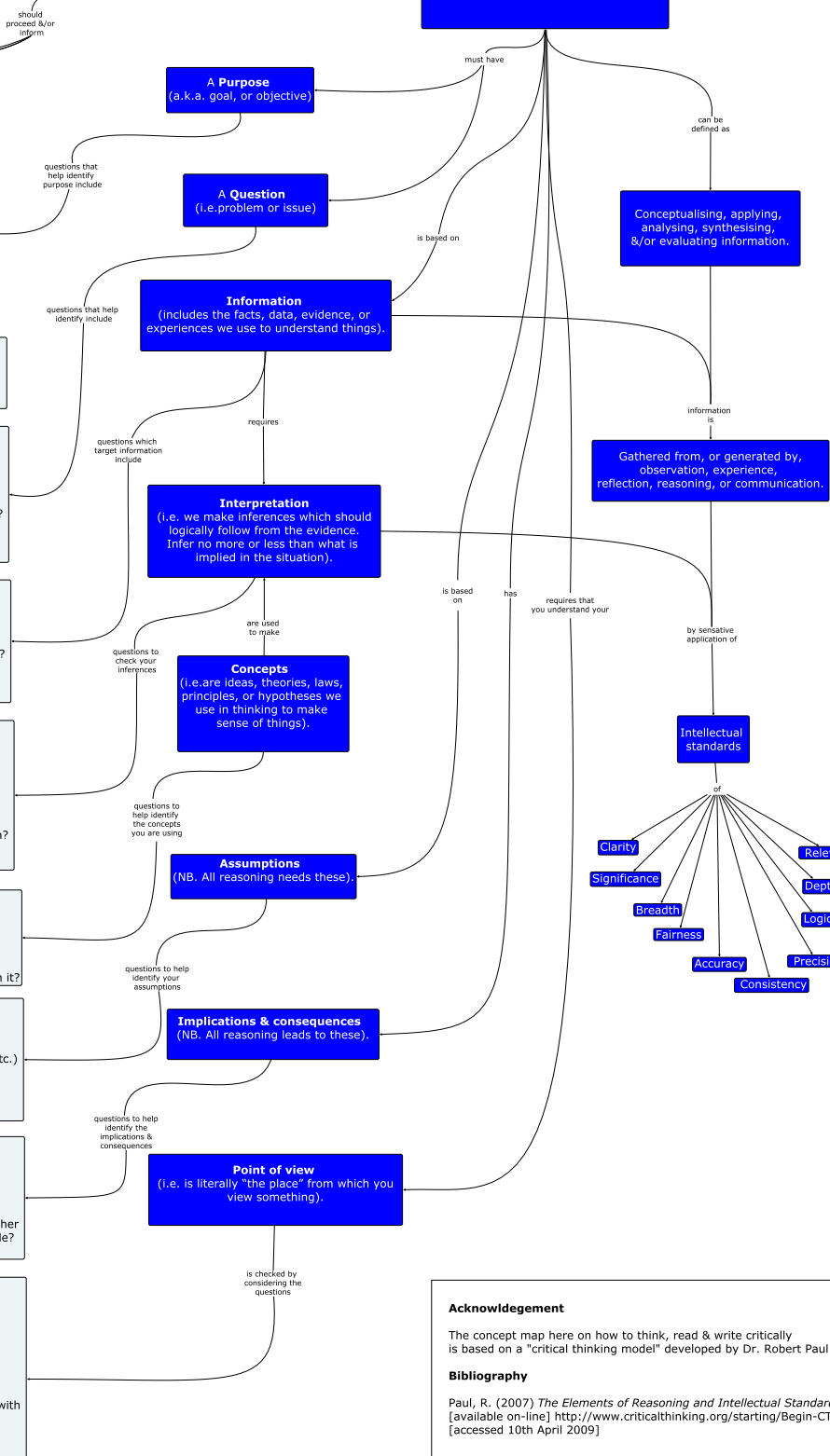
- What conclusions am I coming to?
- Is my inference logical?
- Are there other conclusions I should consider?
- Does this interpretation make sense?
- Does our solution necessarily follow from our data?
- How did you reach that conclusion?
- What are you basing your reasoning on?
- Is there an alternative plausible conclusion?
- Given all the facts what is the best possible conclusion?
- How shall we interpret these data?

- What idea am I using in my thinking? Is this idea causing problems for me or for others?
- I think this is a good theory, but could you explain it more fully?
- What is the main hypothesis you are using in your reasoning?
- Are you using this term in keeping with established usage?
- What main distinctions should we draw in reasoning through this problem?
- What idea is this author using in his or her thinking? Is there a problem with it?

- What am I assuming or taking for granted?
- Am I assuming something I shouldn't?
- What assumption is leading me to this conclusion?
- What is... (this policy, strategy, explanation) assuming?
- What exactly do sociologists (historians, mathematicians, etc.) take for granted?
- What is being presupposed in this theory?
- What are some important assumptions I make about my roommate, my friends, my tutors, my country?

- If I decide to do "X", what things might happen?
- If I decide not to do "X", what things might happen?
- What are you implying when you say that?
- What is likely to happen if we do this versus that?
- Are you implying that...?
- How significant are the implications of this decision?
- What, if anything, is implied by the fact that a much higher percentage of poor people are in jail than wealthy people?

- How am I looking at this situation? Is there another way to look at it that I should consider?
- What exactly am I focused on? And how am I seeing it?
- Is my view the only reasonable view? What does my point of view ignore?
- Have you ever considered the way - (e.g. Japanese, Muslims, Americans, etc. view this)?
- Which of these possible viewpoints makes the most sense given the situation?
- Am I having difficulty looking at this situation from a viewpoint with which I disagree?
- What is the point of view of the author of this story?
- Do I study viewpoints that challenge my personal beliefs?



Acknowledgement

The concept map here on how to think, read & write critically is based on a "critical thinking model" developed by Dr. Robert Paul (2007)

Bibliography

Paul, R. (2007) *The Elements of Reasoning and Intellectual Standards* [available on-line] <http://www.criticalthinking.org/starting/Begin-CTModel.cfm> [accessed 10th April 2009]