

What proposition expresses their desired decision?
What issue(s) needs to be addressed?
What claim directly responds (seeks to answer) the issue?
How can the claim be supported argumentatively?

With easy access to the Internet, we find it useful to suggest that students look for editorials in newspapers from other parts of the country than where they live. Particularly, it is useful for them to locate points of view that differ from their own. Evaluating arguments from diverse perspectives is challenging and a useful way to become sensitive to various ways of arguing.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. The intersection of a claim and its support is called
 - a. a syllogism.
 - b. a topic.
 - * c. an argument.
 - d. adherence.

2. Evidence, values, and credibility combine to
 - * a. support a claim.
 - b. confuse the issue.
 - c. demonstrate truth.
 - d. reduce adherence.

3. Stephen Toulmin says the test of an argument is
 - * a. its ability to stand up to criticism.
 - b. its truth value.
 - c. whether people believe it.
 - d. its validity.

4. A critical decision is one that
 - a. rests on true arguments.
 - b. can be criticized.
 - * c. survives the test of a relevant set of criteria.
 - d. proves to be the most effective in action.

5. When sports fans at non-BCS schools argue that their team should compete in the BCS championship game, they often fail to consider
 - a. the true qualities of their team.
 - b. what a championship game really means.
 - *c. who the appropriate decision makers are.
 - d. what makes for a good argument.

6. When you test ideas by having a conversation with yourself, the process is called
 - a. an internal dialogue.
 - b. an internalized conversation.
 - c. an imagined interaction.
 - * d. all of the above.

7. What kind of claim is this: “Medical marijuana use ought to be legalized.”
 - a. fact.

- * b. policy.
- c. comparative value
- d. value-object.

8. The first level of critical thinking to test possible arguments is

- * a. imagined interactions.
- b. formal logic.
- c. gathering facts.
- d. informal logic.

9. Decision making within a context of uncertainty

- a. is rarely accomplished.
- * b. falls within the domain of argumentation.
- c. requires the application of scientific methods.
- d. typically yields mediocre decisions.

10. “The clash of two opposing claims stated as a question,” is the definition of

- a. a comparative-value proposition.
- * b. an issue
- c. informal logic.
- d. Interrogation.

11. Decision making groups with recognizable goals and norms and sets of rules and resources and patterns of interaction under ongoing tension are called, in the text,

- a. fields.
- * b. spheres.
- c. argument systems.
- d. interactional, communities.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the relationship between claims, issues, and propositions.
2. Define and explain critical decision making through argumentation.
3. Discuss the inner dialogue and its role in argumentation. How does it relate to dialectic?
4. Explain the difference between dialectic and rhetoric, and discuss how each contributes to critical decisions.
5. Explain what the text means by “critical decisions,” and how they contrast with uncritical decisions.

EXERCISES/PROJECTS

1. The editorial project at the end of the chapter in the book can be expanded by asking students to respond to these questions:

- a. Does the writer have credibility for you?
- b. Is the claim in conflict with your values?
- c. Would the argument be more likely to get your adherence with better support?

This kind of discussion approach needs to be carefully directed to the key terms, but if you can do that the students will begin to see the concepts functioning in their own lives.

2. Still working with the editorials, it is helpful for students to exchange papers with each other and write critical responses. They will see that different people apply different perspectives to the same issue. They will respond differently to evidence, values, and credibility. If they then discuss in class their different perspectives, they can grow in their grasp of the process of argumentation.

3. Select a topic of contemporary concern and divide the class into teams. Ask them to engage in dialectic on the topic seeking an understanding of the issues that seem to be involved and the propositions that might be advanced. Be sure they practice the open-ended, question-answer inquiry characteristic of dialectic rather than moving directly to rhetoric. They should consider the question of presumption – what will society do in the absence of any argumentation to the contrary?

4. Ask the students to write a one-page paper discussing the difference between dialectic and rhetoric. Use the papers as the basis for an in-class discussion.

CHAPTER 2: APPRAISING ARGUMENTATION

Once students have learned the key terms they are ready to look more carefully at the personal and social ways that arguments are critically appraised. Chapter 2 investigates these. The chapter takes a good deal of time talking about how people make unreasonable decisions. This is difficult material to teach, because most of us are able to see how unreasonable others are, but not ourselves. Encourage students to share some of their worldviews with the assurance that they will not be laughed at, so that they can begin to see how different people hold different worldviews. Then, suggest they do an Internet search on some of the worldviews that come up in class, and report back on the variations that came up in the search. This can help students see that worldviews do not necessarily rest on clearly stated criteria.

We have found that a hypothetical example like the one of the job seeker (at the beginning of chapter 2) is a good opening basis of discussion. From it, students can generate other examples of their own involvement in argumentation and decision making. The exercises/projects at the end of the chapter focus on the job interview process because most students will have been involved in such decisions. When they write their description of a job interview they have experienced, they can use the text example as a model for criticism. When they do the project that directs them to do an Internet search for the career choice they are currently considering, they can draw on the chapter's discussion of unreasonable decision making to explain what that turns up. It will be a good opportunity to confront their own unreasonable decisions and talk about them openly in class without fear of ridicule. Although this project is identified as a written assignment, it could be a basis of class discussion. If so, we suggest a short (a page or less) written assignment to be sure each student has thought about the problem before class.

Additional student activities can be generated by taking the contemporary issue used in class (e.g. gay/lesbian marriage) and asking students to consider it from the perspective of classes they have had in other disciplines such as history, political science, biology, religion or literature. This may help them understand the concept of spheres and sets of criteria.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. A critical decision implies
 - a. the discovery of the correct solution.
 - b. having good arguments in support.
 - c. winning the support of the relevant audience.
 - * d. selecting and applying a relevant set of criteria.
2. What you perceive as commonsense on any occasion is determined by your
 - * a. worldviews.
 - b. innate capacity.
 - c. rational nature.
 - d. authority figures.
3. For many years, cognitive scientists have been aware of a broad human tendency to reinterpret experience in conformity with
 - a. parental values.
 - b. political parties.
 - c. religious values.
 - * d. basic beliefs.
4. A "group of interrelated convictions of truth or statements of perceived reality" is a definition of
 - a. perception.