

Critical Thinking & Communication: Mid Semester Notes

WEEK 1

- Argumentation.

- Fallacies.

Good and Bad Thinking.

Healthy Scepticism.

Communication

-Argumentative Essay (diagramming persuasive Writing).

- Persuasive Presentation (debate).

What is Critical Thinking?

- A critical thinker is someone who is appropriately moved by reasons;
 - o Well developed reasoning skills – right and wrong.
 - o Rules of logic – thinking skills.
- Complicated.
- Controversial.
- Do things/not do things.
- Others thinking process.

Propositions

Must have **SUBJECT + PREDICTION**.

- Items to reason with.
- "Truth carriers".
- Declarative statements need "truth value".
- "Propose".
- Claims, states, assert.
- E.g. Fred is 10 years old – The sky is blue.

Propositions are not:

- Commands, questions, prayers.
- "Your mum jokes".

Arguments:

- Made of propositions.
- Names depending on role.

Conclusion:

- Proposition that arguer is trying to establish.

Premise(s):

- Reason(s) given for accepting conclusion.
- Propositions used to support conclusion.

WEEK 2

How the meaning of the proposition can be confused.

Truth Value:

- All propositions must have a truth value.
- Must be possible to be either true or false.
- Difficult to outline boundaries.
- A proposition is too vague if we are unable to determine a truth value.

Sorities Paradox:

- When does a heap of sand stop being a heap of sand when you take away grains of sand?

Whenever a continuous event or characteristic is converted to a discreet function, the value chosen for the breakpoint is arbitrary.

Continuous – discreet.

If you have trouble working out what a person is proposing it is too vague.

What do you mean by _____.

W-rule – Jerk rule.

Ambiguity:

- A small amount of possible meanings.
- Cannot use in argument .
- She saw him duck.
- Biting dogs can be bothersome.

Give a definition.

Definitions should be neutral not persuasive.

Principle of Clarity:

- Someone provides an argument to which multiple interpretations are possible, you should assume they intended the strongest & most persuasive of those interpretations.
- Do not misinterpret (Straw-man Fallacy).

Subjectivity & Objectivity:

- Opinion or not.