

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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About the Speaker

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Overview

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- Some vocabulary
- Anatomy of an argument
- Inductive vs causal vs moral vs legal reasoning
- Identifying Rhetorical Devices
- Some common fallacies
- Let's practice

Some Vocabulary

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- **Issue:** any matter of controversy or uncertainty
- **Claim:** a position taken on an issue
- **Argument:** an attempt to provide reasons for accepting a claim
- **Conclusion:** the final claim supported by an argument
- **Premise:** the interim claim(s) used to build and support an argument

Anatomy of an Argument

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- It isn't about attacking people
- It is about:
 - ▣ Issues and Claims
 - ▣ Relevant considerations
 - ▣ Good reasoning
 - ▣ Defining our position
- It requires us to be level-headed and objective

Anatomy of an Argument, continued

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- It is *not* necessarily an attempt to persuade (nor is an attempt to persuade necessarily an argument).
- It is *not* an attempt to explain
- It *does* try to prove, establish, or confirm a claim, and *always* has a conclusion

Anatomy of an Argument, continued

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- Factual ≠ True
- Factual issues meet the following criteria:
 - ▣ If two people disagree about the issue, at least one of them must be mistaken
 - ▣ There are established methods for settling the matter.
- Generally, business conflict does not arise from factual issues

Anatomy of an Argument, continued

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- All opinions are not equal—it depends on how well argued the opinion is.
- Words have emotional weight.
- Using inflammatory words make it harder to judge how well argued the opinion is.
- There is nothing wrong with this; it simply makes critical thinking harder—and more important.

Anatomy of an Argument, continued

- Four basic principles of organization:
 - ▣ Focus: make the issue clear at the beginning
 - ▣ Stick to the issue: include only those points that are relevant to your argument
 - ▣ Use logic: arrange the components of your essay so they build upon each other
 - ▣ Be complete: don't raise points you don't intend to cover, and make sure you reach a conclusion

Anatomy of an Argument, continued

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- Comparative Claims:
 - ▣ Is important information missing?
 - ▣ Is the same standard of comparison being used?
 - ▣ Are the items comparable?
 - ▣ Is the comparison expressed as an average?

Tips for Evaluation

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- Clarify the structure of the argument
- Differentiate “argument” from “window dressing”
- Determine whether premises support the conclusion
- Determine whether the premises are reasonable

Inductive vs Causal vs Moral vs Legal Reasoning

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Inductive	Causal	Moral	Legal
<p>Offers premises which, if true, <i>support</i> the truth of the conclusion.</p> <p>True premises in a strong inductive argument offer a high probability that the conclusion is true, while true premises in a valid deductive argument guarantee the truth of the conclusion</p>	<p>Argues that one thing <i>caused</i> another thing to happen.</p> <p>The key to analyzing causal arguments is to clearly define what the two things are and what their relationship is.</p>	<p>Rests on a <i>framework</i> of thought rather than absolute</p> <p>Strength of the argument depends on how much the argument differs from or remains consistent to the framework</p> <p>Typically used to clarify the ethical meaning of an act or situation</p>	<p>Examines the foundation of law in general and the interpretation of specific laws</p>

Identifying Rhetorical Devices

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- 1. Find the conclusion.**
- 2. Note evidence cited and how it applies**
 - ▣ Is it relevant?**
 - ▣ Are there unwarranted assumptions?**
- 3. Specific names for types of pseudoreasoning (fallacies) were created to fit common sorts of fallacious reasoning.**

Some Common Fallacies

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- From outrage (scapegoating)
- By force (scare tactics)
- From envy/pride (apple polishing)
- From popularity/common practice/tradition
- Wishful thinking
- Peer pressure/Group think
- Red Herring/Smokescreen
- Slippery Slope
- Begging the Question
- Ad hominem:
 - Personal attack
 - Inconsistency
 - Circumstantial
 - Poisoning the Well
- Genetic fallacy
- False Dilemma:
 - Perfectionist
 - Line-drawing
- Burden of Proof
 - Appeal to ignorance