NEWSLETTER

Foundation for Critical Thinking
www.criticalthinking.org

SEPTEMBER 2009

ANNOUNCING:
New Upgrades to the CT Basic Concepts & Understandings Online Test

As a result of some great feedback from our Members, in September, we are releasing new upgrades and features to our online testing system.

We have focused on meeting the increasing demand from teachers to both manage, test and assess larger number of students over longer periods of time. We are adding new Administration tools to allow for easy management of your students into groups and classes and groups as well as providing more detailed reporting and data collection tools, including the download of student test result data into your spreadsheets.

Have you seen our interactive online tool for learning the Elements and Standards of Critical Thinking?

All thinking is defined by the Eight Elements that make it up. To analyze thinking, we must identify and question its Elemental Structures. <u>Click to View this Learning Tool</u>

We offer an interactive model which details the analysis and assessment of reasoning, and enables you to apply the model to real life problems. This tool may be used in any

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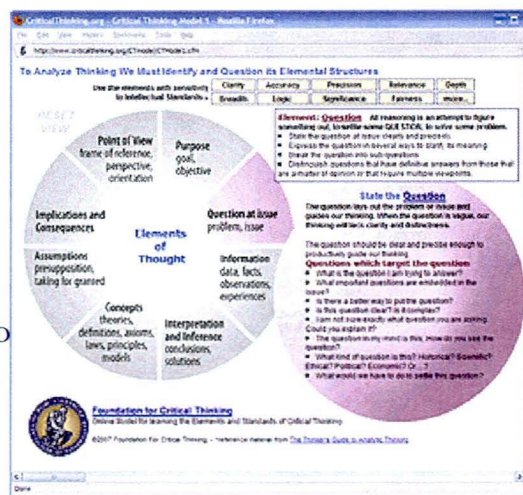
We hope you find these upgrades of value to your instruction.
Read more about our online test

classroom, in a faculty or staff training session, or at home for personal use.

For more information on these learning tools, the CT Basic Concepts & Understandings Online Test, or our Critical Thinking Online Course for Instructors... for visit our online learning center at www.criticalthinking.org.

Cultivate Important Intellectual Traits in Instruction

You should look for opportunities to model intellectual perseverance, intellectual autonomy, intellectual courage, etc. Consider intellectual humility, for example. Students cannot develop as thinkers if they are not willing to critique their thinking and behavior. Unfortunately, through traditional schooling, students are not taught how to identify flaws in their thinking. Rather they are implicitly taught to cover up their weaknesses, to hide them. They are sometimes told that it is OK to make mistakes, but they quickly learn the negative consequences that come from making mistakes and admitting that there are problems in their thinking. Intellectual humility is rarely modeled for them. For example, they rarely hear teachers discussing the limitations of their own knowledge. They rarely, for example, hear teachers say such things as:

"I don't know the answer to that, but let's think through this problem together, realizing that we don't perhaps have all the relevant information we would need to solve the problem." Or, "yesterday I was asked a question to which I answered x, but upon reflection I realized that I answered superficially. There are complexities I should have mentioned. I became a victim of what is a common problem with thinking. We often go with our immediate response rather than taking time to think something through."

Our purpose in "thinking aloud" is, in this context, to demonstrate how intellectual humility might be manifested in everyday exchanges. We want to show students that skilled thinkers readily admit the limits of their knowledge, ask questions when they are unclear, and change their thinking when they hear arguments more reasonable than their own. In short, we want to demonstrate the need for intellectual humility and the danger of intellectual arrogance. Students learn best those things we exemplify for them.

Humility is the foundation of all the other virtues hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance.
- Saint Augustine

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