Week 3

Elements of Reasoning

Tonya

Eight (8) Elements of reasoning/parts of thinking/elements of thought/structures of thought

1. **Purpose**
   1. **I would briefly define purpose as** the reason for engaging in thought/problem solving
   2. **In other words,** the purpose behind your thinking might inform your hope for the outcome of the reasoning, or the intentions you have for making a decision or engaging in thought
   3. **For example,** I might be in a situation with a colleague where we had a heated argument and the purpose for our next meeting is to make amends. Or I might be finishing next year’s budget and I want it to be transparent and goal driven so that is the general purpose of my thinking to complete the task. If I’m not being fair-minded, my purpose for an interaction might be to make someone feel bad...
2. **Question/Problem at hand**
   1. **I would briefly define question as** the question(s) we are asking as we reason through a situation
   2. **In other words,** all reasoning follows lines of questioning. To be clear in our thinking, we should have a well defined overarching question.
   3. **For example,** when guiding our reasoning through next year’s budget, we could ask, “How can we collaboratively write an annual budget that is transparent, within WA State guidelines, and tied to our annual goals?”
3. **Point of view**
   1. **I would briefly define point of view as** the position from which you’ve reasoned through a problem
   2. **In other words,** point of view can be made up of numerous elements including, but not limited to socio-economic positionality, business interest, political interest, role in situation, etc.. Once you’ve reasoned through a situation, you may need to consider other points of view from which to reason.
   3. **For example,** the POV of a white, middle-class, woman who was once pulled over for having a tail-light out and given a verbal warning may reason through problems with the US system of incarceration differently from a black, lower-class, man who was once pulled over for having a tail-light out, removed from car, hand-cuffed, and ticketed. Or someone who believes strongly in full transparency of budgets may reason through the annual budget process differently from someone who cares more about efficiency of completing the budget process.
4. **Assumptions**
   1. **I would briefly define assumptions as** what we take for granted in our reasoning
   2. **In other words,** if we are reasoning through a problem, what we don’t choose to define, breakdown, or do further research on (look for more information about) would be our assumptions. We believe we have the right information and enough information to work through our reasoning. We may not be aware of how our assumptions are impacting our decisions.
   3. **For example,** perhaps we assume that we have all the budgeting data and policies and people necessary to make our decisions. We assume others will understand the format we’ve chosen. We assume working within a single year for budgeting is the best way to go and have never questioned it.
5. **Information**
   1. **I would briefly define information as** the data, statistics, theories that inform the reasoning
   2. **In other words,** all thinking includes a wide variety information. Sometimes we need more, less, or different information to make ‘informed’ decisions. We need to be aware of the quality of the information we use, as well as our ability to understand the information we use.
   3. **For example,** in the example of creating a budget, some of the information would be the total budget for the year, the input from others in the unit, dates, annual goals, State policies, ...
6. **Concepts**
   1. **I would briefly define concepts as** how the information is used to form concepts- theories, definitions, laws, principles
   2. **In other words,** concepts are what happens when ideas enter the mind and form together to make theories, definitions, laws, principles.
   3. **For example,** ‘transparency in annual budgeting’ combines two concepts – one of annual budgeting. When we say ‘annual budget’, every individual’s mind will have a complex reaction to defining what that is, what is looks like, what its purpose is. And further would be ‘transparent’. That is a word that has multiple meanings and applications. In business, it has a particular meaning, so as a concept, a business person’s mind would create different meanings than say, an artist’s use of the concept of transparency.
7. **Interpretation & Inferences**
   1. **I would briefly define interpretation as** how the reasoning leads to conclusions
   2. **In other words,** we need to land our thoughts at various points along the route of reasoning. Those landing points may include how we interpret parts of a situation, or infer meaning.
   3. **For example,** As we are creating a transparent budget, we make final decisions based on whetherwe interpret or infer something as adequately transparent. We might be asking ourselves questions as we created a transparent budget (How will others interpret the budget? Will they also interpret it as transparent?)
8. **Consequences and implications**
   1. **I would briefly define purpose as** where the reasoning stops, or where it leads to, what might happen next.
   2. **In other words,**  all reasoning leads somewhere. That somewhere are the implications. If this, then that. If not this, then that. Once someone acts on the reasoning, there will be consequences.
   3. **For example,** Once we decide to conclude the budget planning process, we believe that others will accept the budget, we will be ready for the new year, others will feel like we are not hiding anything, we will have a positive impact on the morale of our colleagues. Once the new year starts, and we follow (or not follow) the budget, then consequences will start.