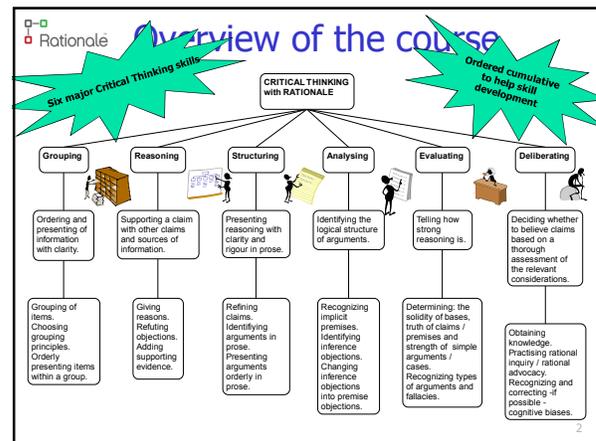


Rationalé

Critical Thinking: The Art of Reasoning

Lecture 6
Refining Claims

© Critical Thinking Skills BV



Rationalé

Problems with Texts

- Can't understand it
- Language not clear
- Reasoning not clear
- Ambiguous
- Can't find conclusion or reasons
- Doesn't make sense
- Too emotionally charged
- Don't know what's going on!

3

Rationalé

What we would like...

- Clarity
- Precision
- No ambiguity
- Simplified
- Reasonable
- Understanding!**

http://www.cartoonstock.com/lowres/pbe01171.jpg

4

Rationalé

A refined claim

*To **refine a claim** is to reformulate it until the claim is as clear and definite as required for argument analysis and evaluation.*

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Rationalé

1. Declarative

- make an assertion, a proposition, something that can be **True or false**
- things to watch:
 - Questions
 - Rhetorical questions
 - Short phrases

Raw:
"Do the two leaders really believe that this demeaning behaviour is what the Australian voters want from their leaders?"

Refined:
Leaders know that demeaning behaviour is not what Australian voters want.

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Rationalé

Your turn...

Unrefined claim

Refined claim

SWAP...

7

Rationalé

2. Simplify

- Simple and compound claims
- claims should be simple for analysis and evaluation
- be careful with "and" and "or" claims.

Philosophy subjects are profound and interesting.

Claims:

- Philosophy subjects are profound
- Philosophy subjects are interesting.
- Philosophy subjects are profound **and** interesting.

8

Rationalé

Mathematics should be undertaken by all students to year 12.

Mathematics should be undertaken by all students to year 12.

Other subjects become easier.

Mathematical understanding aids conceptual knowledge. Hence other subjects become easier.

Mathematical understanding aids conceptual knowledge.

Other subjects become easier.

Mathematical understanding aids conceptual knowledge.

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Rationalé

Your turn...

Unrefined claim

Refined claim

SWAP...

10

Rationalé

3. Literal

- Literal and metaphoric use of language

Examples:

- Patients must not be bargaining chips.*
Herald Sun 22/4
- There are still souls who, when allowed, can work miracles. When one does a deed from the heart, it is felt and remembered with a smile and gratitude.*
The Age, letters 27/4

11

Rationalé

Your turn...

Unrefined claim

Refined claim

SWAP...

12

Rationalé

4. Precise

- A claim is **precise** if only a narrow range of situations would make it true (or false)
- the nature of scientific thinking: Popper
- opposite to vagueness

1. It was freezing this morning
2. Love makes everything alright
3. You should never talk to strangers
4. Everyone agrees that Brunettis coffee is the best.

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Rationalé

Your turn...

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Rationalé

5. Concise

- A sentence is **concise** when it contains no superfluous words or phrases.
- get to the point!!!

1. It is very clear to everyone with rational thoughts that so many people are constantly overwhelmed by the need to do too much work
2. *Today, Victoria's state school students will return after their Easter break. At assemblies, many will recite pledges, intoning pride in their country and school. That 50,000 of them will then file off to such spartan rooms is unacceptable.*
Herald Sun 19/4 Portables in Classrooms

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Rationalé

Your turn...

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Rationalé

6. Unambiguous

- One distinct meaning

1. Jesus was the King
2. I believe it was 40 degrees this morning
3. *For none of woman borne shall harm Macbeth!*
4. *I wish I could fly*
 - I wish I could leave
 - I wish I could go by airplane
 - I wish I could find freedom
 - I wish I had wings
 - I wish I wasn't a human being
 - I wish I could get there quickly
 - I wish I didn't have to wait for a tram.

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Rationalé

Your turn...

18

Rationalé

7. Emotionally measured

- Emotion tone appropriate to argument/issue
- beware of attacking the person (Fallacy)

1. *It is absolutely unfathomable that such ridiculous notions could be conceived.*

2. *This would never be accepted by workers in government offices. State prisons would not countenance such squalor. It is unacceptable, and yet we inflict it daily on the youth of our state.*

Herald Sun 19/4 Portables.

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Rationalé

Example

Footy trials 26Apr04

THERE is no room for the type of sickening, uncivilised behaviour displayed by small sections of the football public on the weekend. Football is an Australian institution loved by its passionate and tribal followers. But police, the AFL and clubs must show zero tolerance to those overstepping the mark – as it was in ugly fashion by spitting spectators who shame the code, their teams and themselves.

http://www.heraldsun.news.com.au/common/story_page/0,5478,9387629%255E24218,00.html

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Rationalé

Raw Claims

- THERE is no room for the type of sickening, uncivilised behaviour displayed by small sections of the football public on the weekend.
- Football is an Australian institution loved by its passionate and tribal followers.
- Police, the AFL and clubs must show zero tolerance to those overstepping the mark.
- Spitting spectators shame the code, their teams and themselves.

Refined Claims

- Spitting by spectators at football matches should not be tolerated.
- Spitting is uncivilised behaviour.
- Football is a loved Australian institution.
- The police, the AFL and football clubs should have a zero tolerance policy against spitting spectators.
- Spitting spectators bring shame upon football, their teams and themselves.

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Rationalé

Football is a loved Australian institution.

supports

Spitting spectators bring shame upon football, their teams and themselves.

supports

supports

The police, the AFL and football clubs should have a zero tolerance policy against spitting spectators.

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Rationalé

Your turn...

Unrefined claim

SWAP...

Refined claim

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Rationalé

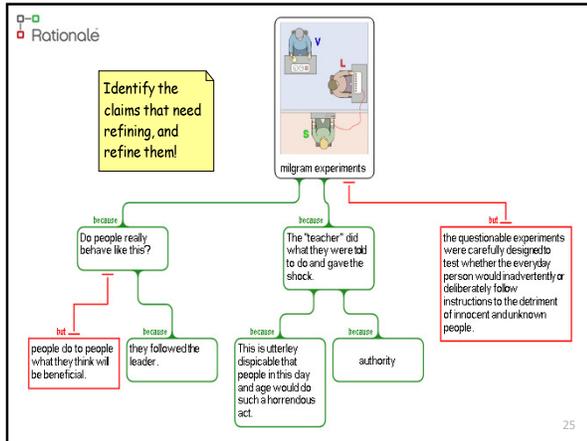
A movie....

Milgram's obedience classic experiment

In May 1962 Dr. Stanley Milgram conducted a psychology experiment at Yale University.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymgfjQ_sFs

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Rationale

Exercise Refining

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Raw Claim	Refining Required	Refined Claim/s
1. ... should resign		
2. Jacques flew to Djibouti.		
3. The Australian Army has never let the Australian people down		
4. However you look at it, it is abundantly clear that we have far more to gain by reducing greenhouse gas emissions than we have to lose.		
5. Crown roast of lamb - modern, American		
6. Do we want a nuclear rubbish dump next to our crops?		
7. It is warmish today		
8. A GST (Goods and Services Tax) is regressive, and it is too burdensome for business.		
9. The company's heinous subterfuges are destroying the worker's livelihoods.		
10. Karl Kruszelnicki lumps all astrologers and astrology into one basket.		
11. Elizabeth left because she was embarrassed.		

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Raw Claim	Refining Required	Refined Claim/s
1. ... should resign	Declarative	The Governor General should resign.
2. Jacques flew to Djibouti.	Unambiguous/literal	Jacques traveled to Djibouti by airplane. Jacques escaped by going to Djibouti.
3. The Australian Army has never let the Australian people down	Precise	The Australian Army has never lost a battle. The Australian Army has always performed well.
4. However you look at it, it is abundantly clear that we have far more to gain by reducing greenhouse gas emissions than we have to lose.	Concise	We would gain far more than we lose by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Crown roast of lamb - modern, American	Declarative	Crown roast of lamb is a modern American dish.
6. Do we want a nuclear rubbish dump next to our crops?	Declarative	We do not want nuclear waste dumped near our crops.
7. It is warmish today	Precise	The temperature is around 30 degrees Celsius today.
8. A GST (Goods and Services Tax) is regressive, and it is too burdensome for business.	Simple	A GST is regressive. A GST is too burdensome for business.
9. The company's heinous subterfuges are destroying the worker's livelihoods.	Emotionally measured	The company's dishonest tactics are reducing the workers' wages.
10. Karl Kruszelnicki lumps all astrologers and astrology into one basket.	Literal	Karl Kruszelnicki treats all astrologers and astrology as if they were the same.
11. Elizabeth left because she was embarrassed.	Simple	Elizabeth left. Elizabeth was embarrassed.

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