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## **Unit IV PowerPoint Presentation**

Select and describe an important problem faced by society today (e.g., income inequality, gun violence, online privacy). Once you have selected your problem, be prepared to address the following in your presentation:

1. Provide your own analysis by asking—and answering—a relevant question from at least three domains of thinking. Examples of these can be found on pages 139-140 of your textbook.
2. The intellectual standards will help you better think about your chosen problem. In your answers to the above questions, apply at least three intellectual standards and explain why the standards are important in this context (i.e., the standards of reasoning which apply to the elements). The standards are discussed in Chapter 5 on pages 91-103.
3. Explain why each question you have selected is either a question of fact, preference, or judgment. This information can be located on pages 126-127 of your textbook.
4. Finally, in one paragraph, reflect on your analysis of the problem that you selected, and describe how your consideration of this problem demonstrates deep learning. This information can be located on pages 144-145 of your textbook.

To accomplish this, you must compose a 12 slide PowerPoint presentation that meets the guidelines below. Your PowerPoint slides should be arranged in the following manner:

Slide 1: The problem selected and your description of it.

Slides 2-5: Provide your own analysis by asking—and answering—a relevant question from at least three domains of thinking.

Slides 6-8: Your three intellectual standards and explanation of why they are important in this context.

Slides 9-11: Explain why each question is question of fact, preference, or judgment.

Slide 12: Conclusion slide with your one paragraph that reflects on your analysis and describes your consideration and learning of this problem.

You must also include a title and reference slide (that does not count towards your total slides). Also, all sources used, including the textbook, must be referenced; paraphrased and quoted material must have accompanying citations in APA format.

Information about accessing the Blackboard Grading Rubric for this assignment is provided below.

**EXHIBIT 5.1** *To evaluate thinking, we must apply intellectual standards to the elements of thought.*

**Clarity**

**Understandable; the meaning can be grasped**

Could you elaborate further? Could you give me an example? Could you illustrate what you mean?

**Accuracy**

**Free from errors or distortions; true**

How could we check on that? How could we find out if that is true? How could we verify or test that?

**Precision**

**Exact to the necessary level of detail**

Could you be more specific? Could you give me more details? Could you be more exact?

**Relevance**

**Relating to the matter at hand**

How does that relate to the problem? How does that bear on the question? How does that help us with the issue?

**Depth**

**Containing complexities and multiple interrelationships**

What factors make this a difficult problem? What are some of the complexities of this question? What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with?

**Breadth**

**Encompassing multiple viewpoints**

Do we need to look at this from another perspective? Do we need to consider another point of view? Do we need to look at this in other ways?

**Logic**

**The parts make sense together; no contradictions**

Does all this make sense together? Does your first paragraph fit in with your last? Does what you say follow from the evidence?

**Significance**

**Focusing on the important; not trivial**

Is this the most important problem to consider? Is this the central idea to focus on? Which of these facts are most important?

**Fairness**

**Justifiable; not self-serving or one-sided**

Is my thinking justifiable in context? Am I taking into account the thinking of others? Is my purpose fair given the situation? Am I using my concepts in keeping with educated usage, or am I distorting them to get what I want?

## 6.9 *Think for Yourself*

### CONSTRUCTING A LIST OF PRIOR QUESTIONS

**F**ormulate a complex question to which you would like to find an answer. Then use the procedure of constructing prior questions until you have a list of at least 10 questions. Afterward, see if you have gained insight into how the first question has to be thought through in light of the prior questions you formulated.

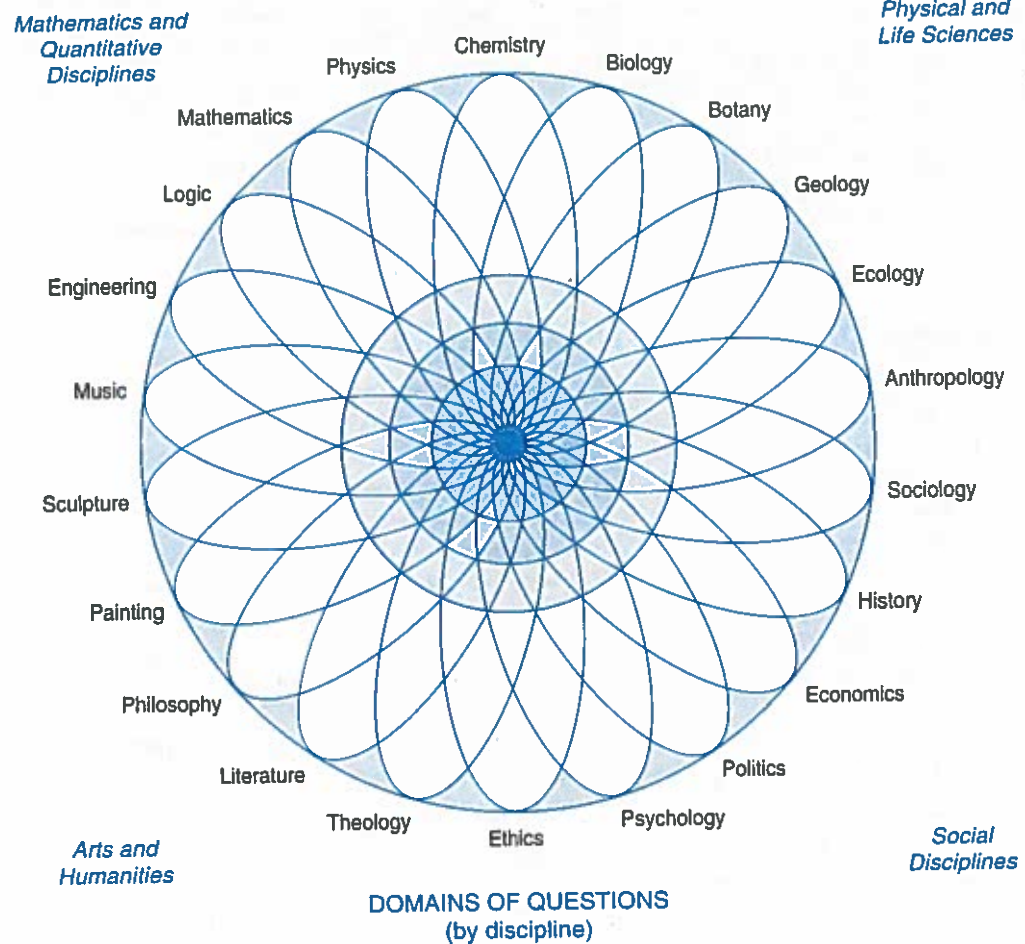
### Focus Your Questions on Domains of Thinking

When you are addressing a complex question that covers more than one domain of thought, you can target your prior questions by figuring out the domains of thinking inherent in the question. Does the complex question, for example, include an economic dimension? Does it include a biological, sociological, cultural, political, ethical, psychological, religious, historical, or some other dimension? For each dimension of thinking inherent in the question, you can formulate questions that force you to consider complexities you otherwise may miss. Consider the following question, some of the domains imbedded in the question, and some of the questions imbedded in those domains.

Complex question: What can be done about the number of people who abuse illegal drugs?

Domains inherent in the question, along with some questions we would have to address within each domain before we could answer our complex question, are:

1. Economic
  - What economic forces support drug use?
  - What can be done to minimize the influence of money involved in drug sales?
2. Political
  - What possible solutions to drug abuse are politically unacceptable?
  - Are there any realistic solutions that the power structure would accept?
  - To what extent does the political structure exacerbate the problem?
3. Social/Sociological
  - What social structures and practices support drug abuse?
  - How does gang membership contribute to drug abuse?
  - How does membership within any group contribute to the problem or, conversely, insulate group members from abusing drugs?
4. Psychological
  - How do factors such as stress, individual personality differences, and childhood traumas support drug abuse?
  - What role, if any, does human irrationality play in drug abuse?

**EXHIBIT 6.4** *Complex questions have multiple domains.*

5. Biological
  - How do genetics play a role in drug abuse?
  - What biological changes in the body resulting from drug abuse contribute to the problem?
6. Educational
  - What role are educational institutions now playing to support or diminish the problem?
7. Religious
  - What can religious institutions do to reduce the incidence of drug abuse?
  - What role are they now playing in regard to drug abuse?
8. Cultural
  - What cultural beliefs support the drug-abuse problem?
  - What can we learn from cultures that have a low incidence of drug abuse?



The three categories of questions are:

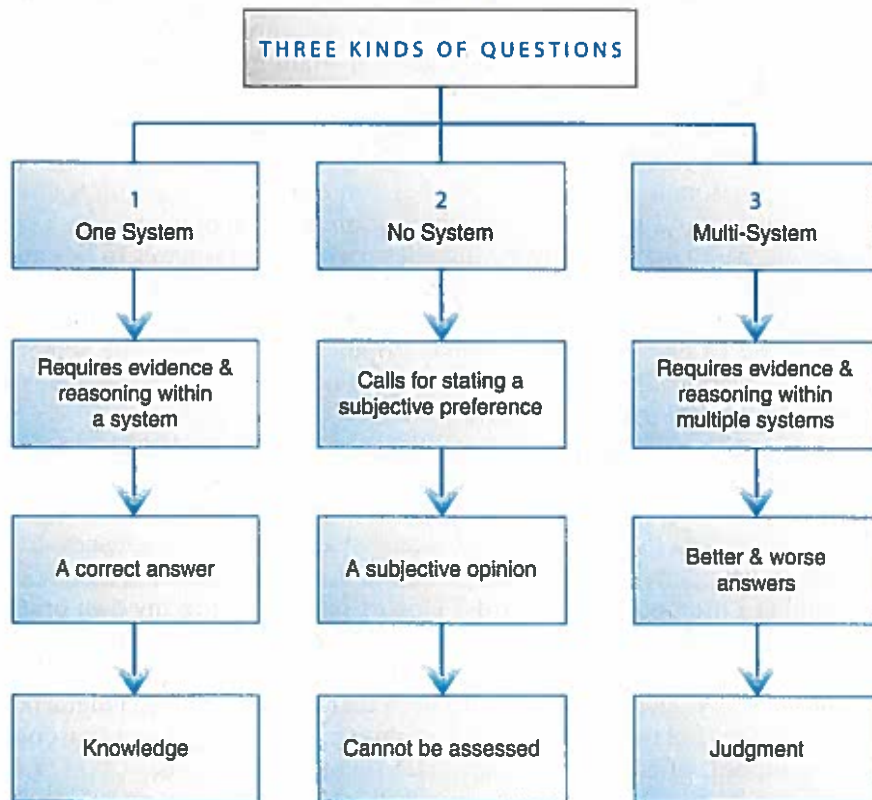
1. **Questions of fact.** Questions with one right answer (Factual questions fall into this category.)

- What is the boiling point of lead?
- What is the size of this room?
- What is the differential of this equation?
- How does the hard drive on a computer operate?

2. **Questions of preference.** Questions with as many answers as there are different human preferences (a category in which mere subjective opinion rules). These questions ask you to express a preference.

- Which would you prefer, a vacation in the mountains or one at the seashore?
- How do you like to wear your hair?

**EXHIBIT 6.1** *In approaching a question, it is useful to figure out what type it is. Is it a question with one definitive answer? Is it a question that calls for a subjective choice? Or does the question require you to consider competing answers?*



- Do you like to go to the opera?
- What is your favorite type of food?

3. **Questions of judgment.** Questions requiring reasoning but with more than one defensible answer. These are questions that make sense to debate, questions with better-or-worse answers (well-reasoned or poorly reasoned answers). Here we are seeking the best possible answer given the range of possibilities.

- How can we best address the most basic and significant economic problems of the nation today?
- What can be done to significantly reduce the number of people who become addicted to illegal drugs?
- What is the best thing we can do to save the earth?
- Is abortion morally justifiable?
- Should capital punishment be abolished?

Only the second kind of question (a question of preference) calls for sheer subjective opinion. The third kind is a matter of reasoned judgment. We should rationally evaluate answers to the question by using universal intellectual standards—such as clarity, depth, consistency, and so forth. Some people think of all judgments as either fact or subjective preference. They ask questions that elicit either a factual response or an opinion. Yet, the kind of judgment most important to educated people—and the kind we most want to be good at—falls into the third, now almost totally ignored, category: reasoned judgment.

A judge in a court of law is expected to engage in reasoned judgment. He or she is expected to render a judgment and to base that judgment on sound, relevant evidence and valid legal reasoning. A judge is under the ethical and legal obligation not to base his or her judgments on subjective preferences or on personal opinions.

Judgment based on sound reasoning goes beyond, and is never to be equated with, fact alone or mere opinion alone. Facts are typically used in reasoning, but good reasoning does more than state facts. Furthermore, a position that is well reasoned is not to be described as simply “opinion.” Of course, we sometimes call the judge’s verdict an “opinion,” but we not only expect but *demand* that it be based on relevant and sound reasoning.

When questions that require reasoned judgment are treated as matters of preference, counterfeit critical thinking occurs. In that case, some people come to uncritically assume that everyone’s subjective opinion is of equal value. Their capacity to appreciate the importance of intellectual standards diminishes, and we can expect to hear questions such as these: What if I don’t like these standards? Why shouldn’t I use my own standards? Don’t I have a right to my own opinion? What if I’m just an emotional person? What if I like to follow my intuition? What if I think spirituality is more important than reason? What if I don’t believe in being “rational”? When people reject questions that call for reasoned judgment and deep thought, they fail to see the difference between offering legitimate reasons and evidence in support of a view and simply asserting the view as true.

Intellectually responsible people, by contrast, recognize questions of judgment for what they are: questions that require the consideration of alternative



- to conquer our egocentrism, we must understand, and exercise some control over, the three basic functions of the human mind: thinking, feeling, wanting.
- because we humans spend most of our time thinking about what we personally want or value, we need to question our personal values.

## GO BEYOND SUPERFICIAL MEMORIZATION TO DEEP LEARNING

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**A**s a student, it is important that you think seriously about what you want to accomplish in each of your classes and in college in general. If you simply want to get by, to do no more than pass your courses, you know the logic of how to do so: You go to class. You find out the minimal requirements of the course. You fulfill those requirements with the least effort possible. You get the grade. You move on to the next semester. After four years and a certain number of course hours, you get a degree. Using this kind of thinking, you think of college merely as a vehicle to get a job. The problem with this “minimalist” strategy is that, in using it, you miss the opportunity to develop skills and insights that you can use for a lifetime. You graduate, but you do not become a lifelong learner.

If, however, you look at college as an opportunity to learn how to learn, to develop your mind, to seek out new ways to look at things, to expand your knowledge, to learn ideas that will help you figure out the problems of your life, you must seek to internalize a set of intellectual skills that will enable you to learn more deeply and more permanently in every one of your courses. With the proper vision of what you are after, you can begin to practice effective thinking in all your classes. And if you strive to develop certain habits of thought and characteristics of mind, such as intellectual humility, perseverance, and fairmindedness, you can transform the way you operate in every challenging context and situation. You will acquire the tools of good thinking and learning. You then will go into each class with powerful questions on the tip of your tongue. You will ask these questions whenever possible. You will ask them while you are silently reading, while engaged in writing, while speaking, while listening.

You will recognize, then, that the content that defines college instruction can be learned only through thinking. You will recognize that when you think poorly while learning, you learn poorly, and that when you think well while learning, you learn well. So, if you are serious about acquiring powerful tools for learning, you must be committed to developing your ability to think well, to reason your way into any body of content, to organize content in your mind, to relate it to your experience, to assess it using appropriate standards.

If, however, you have become subconsciously habituated to rote memorization as your principal tool of learning, if your mode of preparing for an exam is to cram bits and pieces of content into your head, you may get by temporarily, but you will retain little of what you learned. The result, in the long run, will be poor performance, poor learning, and poor habits of thought. You will be of little value to an employer who wants to hire people who can systematically pursue important



goals, recognize and analyze significant problems, communicate important meanings, and assess their own performance on the job.

## 7.1 *Think for Yourself*

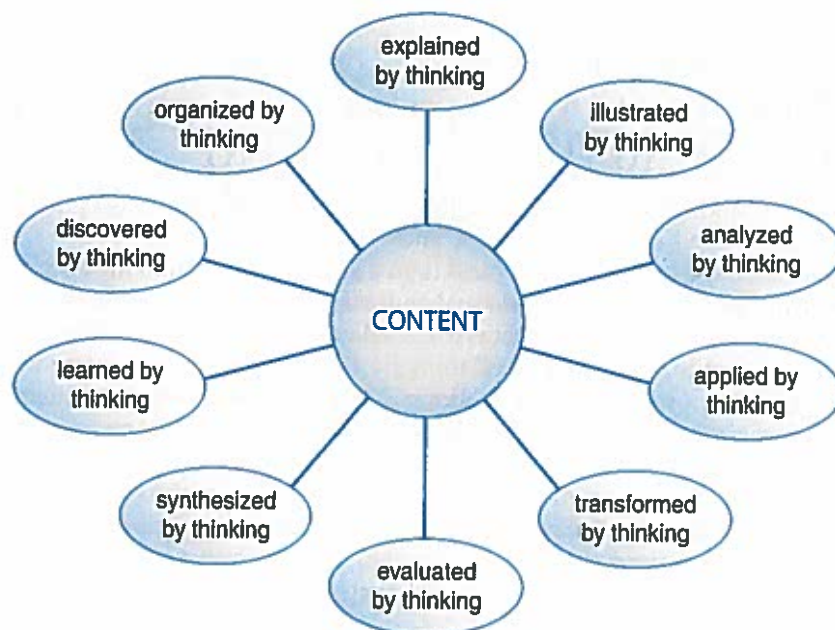
### THINKING DEEPLY ABOUT WHY YOU ARE IN COLLEGE

**W**hat are you trying to accomplish in college? Are you committed to developing your thinking in a deep way? Or are you going to college simply to get a job that requires a degree? Are you going to college just because your friends are going? Are you after the social life that college offers? Or are you not sure what your real motivation is? If you had to complete the following statements, what would you say? My fundamental purpose in going to college is ... I am committed to.... Write out your answer or explain orally.

### THE RELATION OF CONTENT TO THINKING

**A** key insight into content—and into thinking—is that all content represents a distinctive mode of thinking. Math becomes easier as one learns to *think* mathematically. Biology becomes easier as one learns to *think* biologically. History becomes easier as one learns to *think* historically. Parenting

**EXHIBIT 7.1** *Thinking is the key to all content.*





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