**Richard Paul’s Eight Elements of Thought – The Wheel of Reasoning**

*A useful critical thinking tool to question claims, ideas, perspectives*

**Question at Issue**

When we attempt to reason, there must be a question at issue or a problem to be solved.

We should be able to formulate the question to be answered or the issue to be addressed when we reason.

Likewise, we should be able to identify the question at hand in articles when we read.

**Purpose**

What is the purpose of the article/presentation?

What was the author’s intent or motivation to share the information?

**Evidence/Data**

We must be able to support our point of view with reasons or evidence.

The presence of evidence distinguishes mere opinions from reasoned judgment.

We can evaluate the strength of an argument by examining the supporting data/evidence.

**Assumptions**

We need to be aware of the assumptions we make as well as the assumptions of others.

Does our audience share our point of view?

Do we share the point of view of the writer?

Are claims made simply assumptions or supported by evidence?

**Point of View**

As we take on an issue, we are influenced by our own point of view and experiences.

For example, $100 for a shirt may be cheap to some, but ridiculously expensive to others.

We need to identify the point of view of the writer and his frames of reference.

**Concepts**

What are the key ideas/theories presented?

Are they logical?

Are they significantly subscribed to in the academic community?

**Implications**

What are the consequences of the course of path we support?

What are, for example, the implications of writing an essay portraying Adolf Hitler as a great, moral leader?

**Inferences**

Are we making reasoned and logical inferences/conclusions based on the raw data that we have?

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