Paul’s Reasoning Practice

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.

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 POV and experiences.

•E.g. $100 for a shirt might be cheap to some, but ridiculously expensive to others

•We need to identify the POV 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?