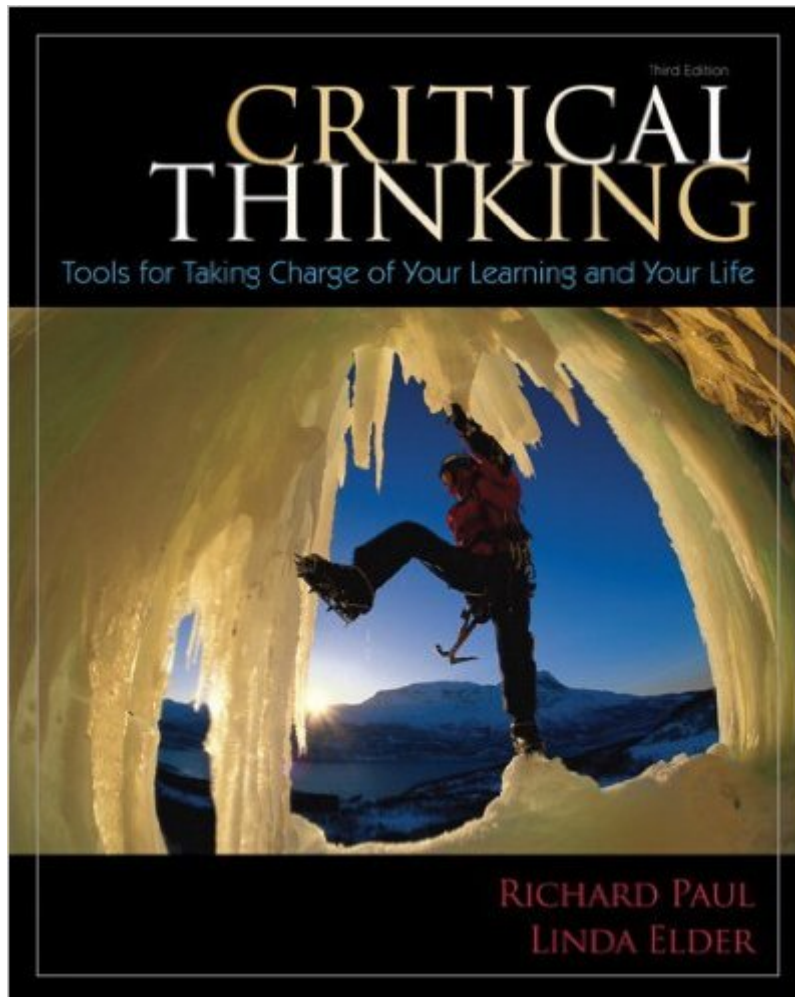


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Critical Thinking: Tools For Taking Charge Of Your Learning And Your Life (3rd Edition)



Synopsis

For Student Success and Career Development, or Critical Thinking courses. Written by two of the leading experts in the field, this book's approach to critical thinking is as a process for taking charge of and responsibility for one's thinking. Critical Thinking is based in theory developed over the last 30 years, it focuses on an integrated, comprehensive concept of critical thinking that is both substantive and practical; it fosters the development of basic intellectual skills students need to think through content in any class, subject, or discipline, as well as through any problem or issue they face. Simply stated, this text offers students the intellectual tools they need for lifelong learning, and rational, conscientious living. In this edition, several advanced chapters were eliminated, many diagrams have been added or enhanced, and the glossary of critical thinking terms has been more strongly developed. The authors' website provides valuable resources to enhance students' development as thinkers www.criticalthinking.org

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Customer Reviews

This book is woefully inadequate as a text for a critical thinking course. What are we to make of a critical thinking text that says almost nothing about objective truth, the central role of argument in critical thinking, the distinction between inductive and deductive arguments, the distinction between truth and validity, or which does not even mention any of the standard deductive forms of argument? It must be seen that there are certain minimum conditions that ANY critical thinking text must meet: (i) an emphasis on the importance of objective truth, and (ii) the use of argument as a means for the discovery of objective truth--neither of which are found in this book. Furthermore, the

authors' emphasis on "Point of View" (one of their "Elements of Reasoning") in the absence of the foregoing conditions fosters the false belief that truth is somehow relative--i.e., the belief that since we all have a point of view, my "point of view" is as good as your "point of view." These major shortcomings cannot be overlooked. What is even more telling is the fact that the authors do not seem to know how their "Standards for Thinking" apply to their own work. Just a few examples should suffice: (i) One of their standards is intellectual fairness (being "fair-minded"). Yet in the chapter entitled "Develop as an Ethical Reasoner," the authors spend three pages laying out the arguments of PETA against the use of animals in medical experimentation, but barely a paragraph presenting the argument in favor of such experimentation. This hardly seems fair-minded to me. It would seem that, for them, being "fair-minded" involves closely arguing one's own position, but ignoring the arguments of your opponent. (One wonders if they themselves are members of PETA.

This book is actually much better than the justifiable drubbing it takes from disgruntled students forced to read the book in a course to get the course credits they want. The strength -- and the idiosyncrasies -- of this book by Richard W. Paul and his wife Linda Elder lie in its departure from the way that critical thinking texts are often a reflection of the preoccupations of the academic discipline of philosophy. This book departs from that and so is better for students in other disciplines. There is also a deeper humanity and deeper ambition to rational and humanize society in this book. I understood that better myself after attending a convention of Paul's critical thinking foundation in Berkeley, California in 2014, which was also a highly emotional moment with the sadly ailing Paul making an appearance in a wheelchair and seeing the love for him of his lively wife Linda Elder. It was also a delight to see 80-year-old consumer activist Ralph Nader receive an award at this convention. So, this is an author and a foundation that sincerely care about promoting rationality and ethics in society, something that has been lost with teaching critical thinking in the education system. However, there is a problem with the rational mission underlying the text and its applicability, which is why students are being so critical of such an impressive text in a way that I would expect from my own students. The very thoroughness of the text creates far too much complexity for students to absorb and even more importantly to apply. The text is also far too long to incorporate into a one-term course. The shorter guides produced by this critical thinking foundation don't solve the problem of applicability either. The shorter guides aren't a simplification of the complexity, just a less thorough version.

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