

Universal Intellectual Standards: Questions that can be used to apply them.

Universal intellectual standards are standards which should be applied to thinking to ensure its quality. To be learned they must be taught explicitly. The ultimate goal, then, is for these standards to become infused in the thinking of students, forming part of their inner voice, guiding them to reason better.

Clarity:

Could you elaborate further on that point? Could you express that point in another way? Could you give me an illustration? Could you give me an example?

Accuracy:

Is that really true? How could we check that? How could we find out if that is correct?

Precision:

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

Relevance:

How is that connected to the question? How does that bear on or relate to the issue?

Depth:

How does your answer address the complexities in the question? How are you taking into account the problems in the question? Are you dealing with the most significant factors?

Breadth:

Do we need to consider another point of view? Is there another way to look at this question? What would this look like from a conservative standpoint? What would this look like from the point of view of...?

Logic:

Does this really make sense? Does that follow from what you said? How does that follow? Before you implied this and now you are saying that, I don't see how both can be true.

Fairness:

Are we considering all relevant viewpoints in good faith? Are we distorting some information to maintain our biased perspective? Are we more concerned about our vested interests than the common good?