Socratic Advising: an effective academic advising approach in leading students to student success

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UNIVERSITY OF **LOUISVILLE.**

WELCOME

Executive Director, Undergraduate Advising Practice

University of Louisville

Roles: Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Sister, Friend, Colleague

Interests: Painting, writing, reading, spending time with family

Passion: Helping people reach their potential

- 23,000 students
- Urban, Research I Institution

Find a partner…

- What is your partner's name and where is he/she from?
- What does your partner do at his/her institution?
- What does your partner want to get out of today's workshop?

At the conclusion of this workshop, you will have an understanding of how to use the Socratic advising approach in your advising practice.

What we will do today…

Agenda

1. Background of Socratic Advising Approach
2. Socratic Advising Approach components
3. Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework
4. Assessing Student Thinking (Self Reflection; Rubric)
5. Socratic Questioning
6. Types of Socratic Dialog
7. Proactive Advising
8. Helping Techniques
9. Teaching and Learning in the Socratic Advising Approach
10. Application of the Approach
11. Pilot Study
12. An example of a Socratic dialog in an advising appointment
13. Case Studies

Background of Socratic Advising

The approach was created in 2010 by U of L Academic Advisors to help at-risk students on academic warning learn to "think things through" so that they could make informed decisions and move to good academic standing.

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE.

Karen: "I want to be a nurse because I like helping people. I have dreamed of this career since I was a child, but I hate my anatomy class and am on verge of failing it."

Michael: "I picked up an extra shift at work; I really need the money. As long as I pass the tests it should be ok for me to miss a few weeks of classes, right?"

Jason: "My professor hates me! He failed me on my paper even though I turned it in on time. It isn't my fault that he didn't like what I wrote. It isn't fair!"

U of L advisors decided to create an advising approach that would help "at-risk" students self reflect and improve their critical thinking skills to address challenges and create a plan for success.

What does Socrates have to do with this approach?

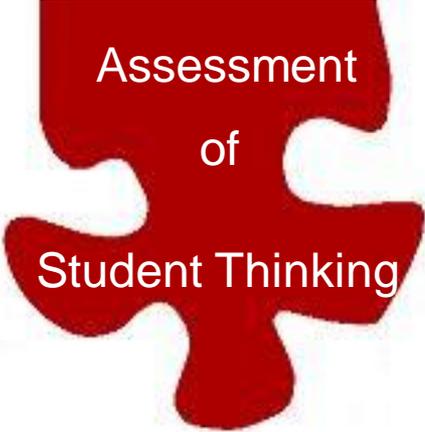# What is the Socratic Advising Approach?

Goal: To teach students to become self-aware thinkers who can analyze their own thought processes, beliefs and behaviors.

Outcome: Students become engaged learners who take responsibility for their own success.

Components

Helping Techniques

Assessment of Student Thinking

Proactive Advising
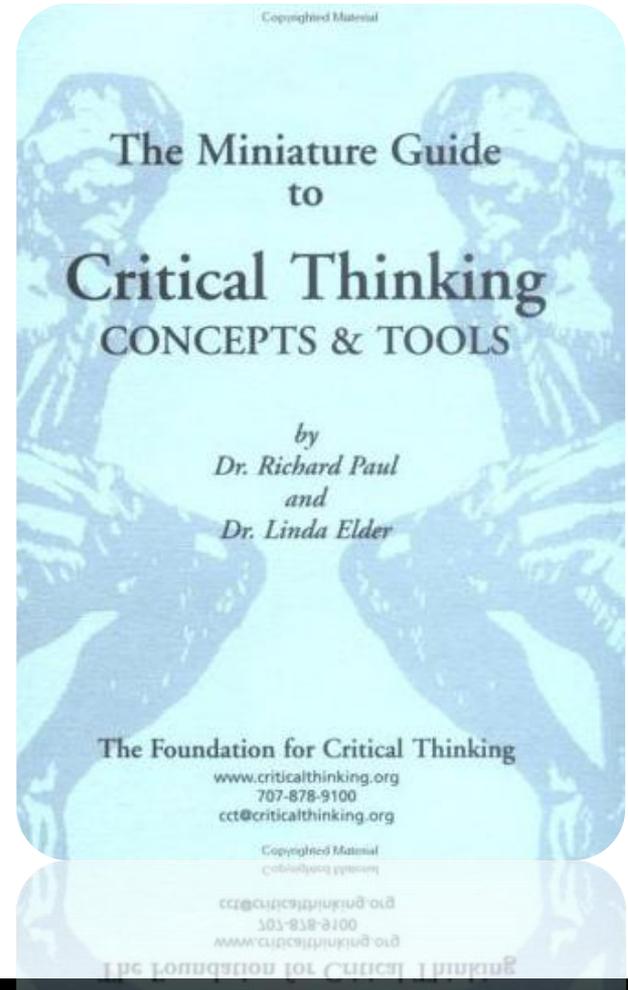
Teaching & Learning Approach
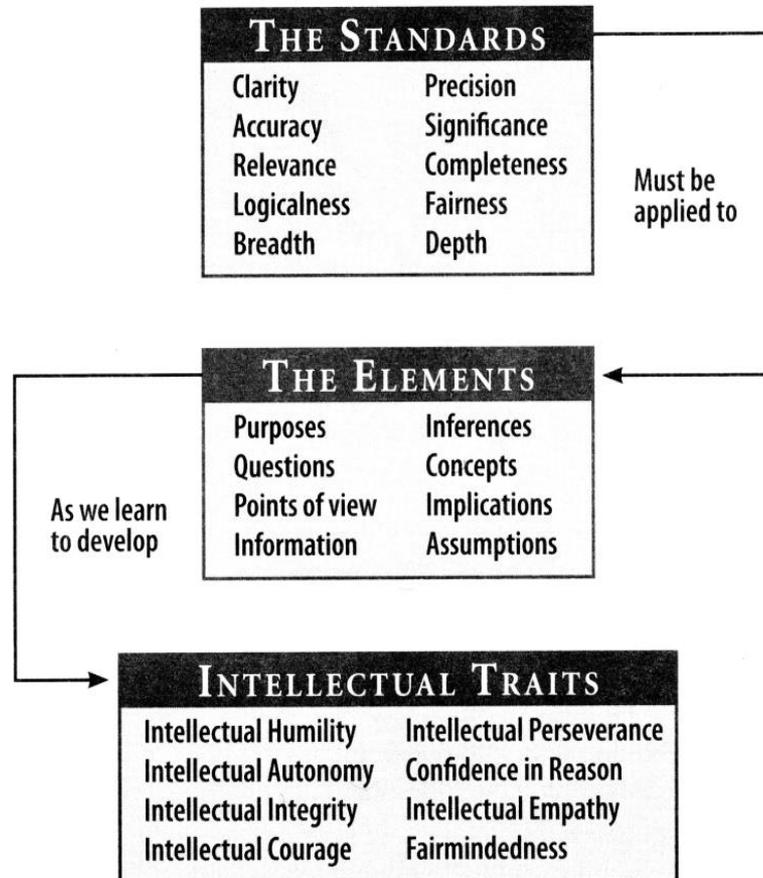
Socratic Questioning

Critical Thinking

Paul and Elder Critical Thinking Framework

To become a self aware thinker, one must understand how the intellectual standards are applied to the elements of thought to develop intellectual traits.

Critical thinkers routinely apply intellectual standards to the elements of reasoning in order to develop intellectual traits.

THE STANDARDS

Clarity	Precision
Accuracy	Significance
Relevance	Completeness
Logicalness	Fairness
Breadth	Depth

Must be applied to

THE ELEMENTS

Purposes	Inferences
Questions	Concepts
Points of view	Implications
Information	Assumptions

As we learn to develop

INTELLECTUAL TRAITS

Intellectual Humility	Intellectual Perseverance
Intellectual Autonomy	Confidence in Reason
Intellectual Integrity	Intellectual Empathy
Intellectual Courage	Fairmindedness

Purpose

Question at issue

Information

Interpretation and inference

Concepts

Assumptions

Implications and consequences

Point of view

Clarity

Accuracy

Relevance

Logicalness

Breadth

Precision

Significance

Completeness

Fairness

Depth

Humility (vs Arrogance)

Autonomy (vs. Conformity)

Integrity (vs. Hypocrisy)

Courage (vs. Cowardice)
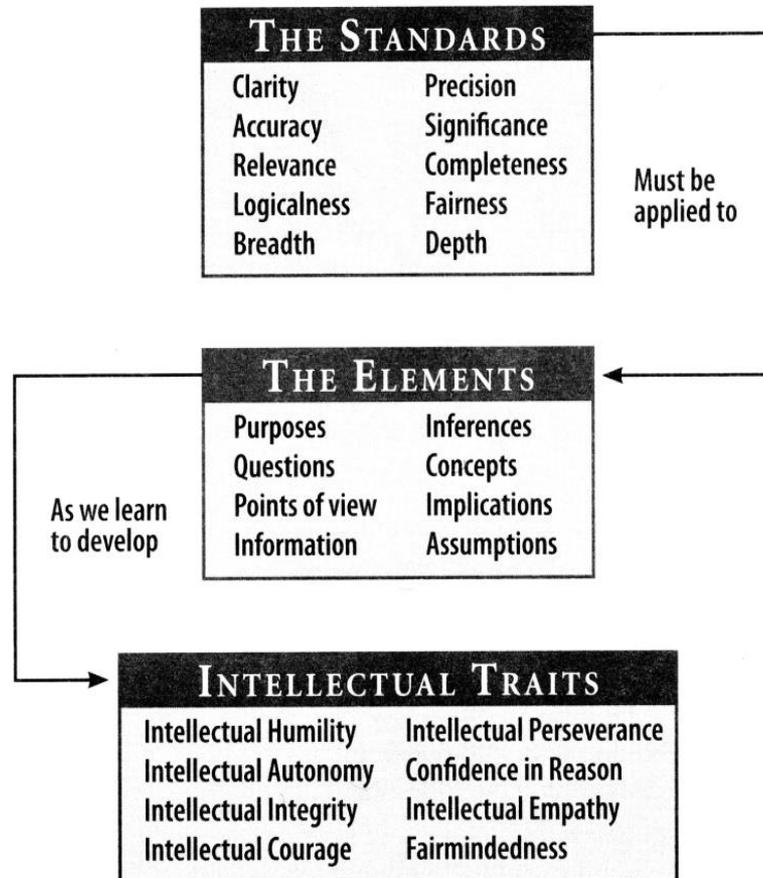
Perseverance (vs. Laziness)

Confidence in Reason (vs. Distrust of Reason and Evidence)

Empathy (vs Narrow-mindedness)

Fairmindedness (vs Unfairness)

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How is the critical thinking framework used in the Socratic Advising Approach?

- Naïve

- Externally-Focused

- Self-Aware

- Unaware

- May go through their academic experience without understanding the ways institutional policies and resources affect them.

- Does not analyze information and often make assumptions without checking the facts.

- Expresess egotistical thought processes and adhere to an external focus.

- Uses language indicating a belief that poor outcomes happen "to" them.

- Does not take responsibility for their situations

- May blame others for negative consequences

- Is fairminded and actively seeks to improve his ability to solve problems and make good decisions.

- She has given thought to her situation and takes responsibility for the outcomes.

- Advisors conduct an assessment of the student's levels of reasoning before they meet with the student.

- Students are asked to complete a self reflection.

Dear Student:

This information is necessary for your academic advisor to help you develop a plan to return to good academic standing. Please print neatly and be thoughtful in your answers. If you need more space you may write on the back or attach another piece of paper.

1. Full name and student id #:

2. What is your current major? (if undecided are there any majors you would like to learn more about?

3. As a student on academic warning, explain what you know about the university's academic warning status.

4. What factors do you think led to your being placed on academic warning?

5. What are the strategies you intend to undertake to improve your grade point average so that you can return to good academic standing?

6. What are your expectations about your participation in the AIM program?

Through their interactions with students in the AIM program, advisors continually gauge students' thinking by using a rubric.

The rubric helps advisors track students' cognitive growth, acceptance of responsibility, engagement in academic life, and needed improvements.

The art of sound Socratic questioning is fundamental to the successful application of the approach.

Create a Socratic Questioning Toolbox

3 Kinds of Questions

One-System Question

No-System Question

Conflicting Systems Question

One-System Question Example:

"What is the minimum grade-point average required for your major?"

No-System Question Example

"Why did you decide to major in nursing?"

Conflicting Systems Question Example

"What are the main factors that led to your being placed on academic warning?"

Spontaneous or Unplanned Dialog

Exploratory Dialog

Focused Dialog

What is Proactive Advising?

- Jennifer Varney's definition:

"Proactive advising involves intentional institutional contact with students such that personnel and students develop a caring relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence."

Varney, J. Proactive Advising (2013) In J.K. Drake, P. Jordan, & M.A. Miller (Eds.), *Academic Advising Approaches*: *Strategies That Teach Students to Make the Most of College.*
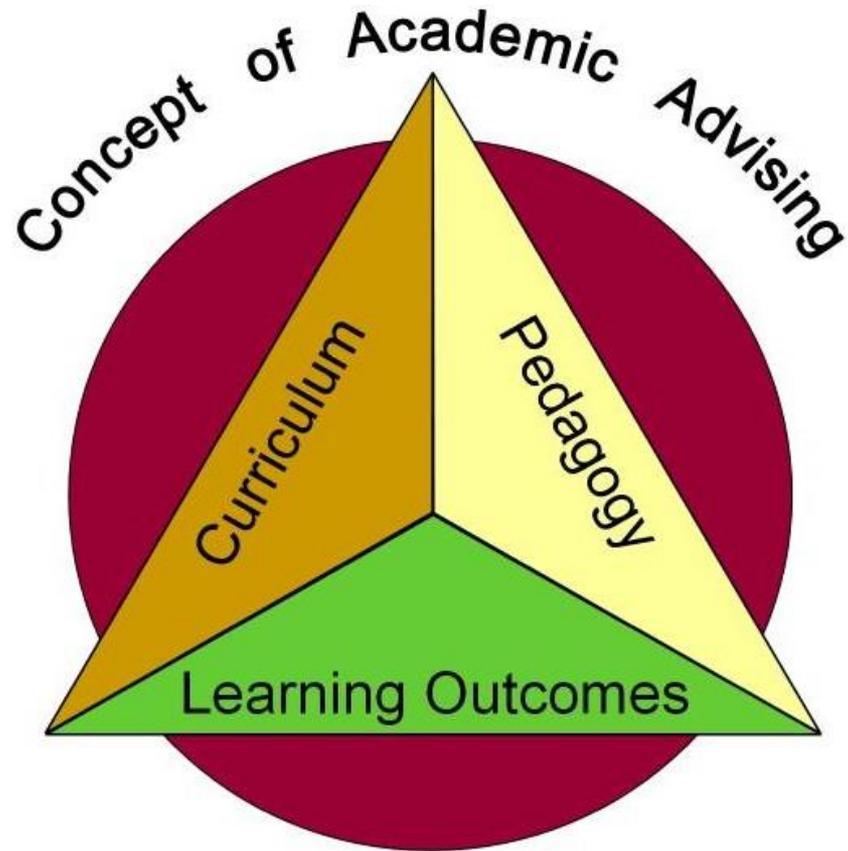
Listening

Paraphrasing

Clarifying

Summarizing

Information-Sharing

Silence

To learn more about Helping Techniques:

– Corey and Corey (2007), *Becoming a Helper* (5th ed.)

– Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, and Ivey (2011), *Essential Interviewing* (8th ed.)

– Okun and Kantrowiz (2008), *Effective Helping* (7th ed.)

Curriculum:

- Student success strategies
- student development theories
- institutional policies and procedures
- degree program requirements
- Paul and Elder's Elements of Thought.

Pedagogy:

- Socratic questioning
- Proactive advising
- Helping techniques
- Paul and Elder's Intellectual Standards

Learning Outcomes:

- Growth among Paul and Elder's Intellectual Traits

- Ability to engage in contemplative self-reflection

- Competency in making informed decisions

See Socratic Advising Process Handout

- Exploratory Students
- First-Year Students
- Transfer Students
- At-Risk Students

The AIM pilot program (Academic Improvement Model) in 2012 was created by UofL academic advisors in order to improve student persistence by using the Socratic Advising approach with students on academic warning

Non-AIM
- 35%

AIM
- 59%

For the students who participated in AIM, 59% returned to good standing one year later compared to 35% of the students in the control group.

An example: Using the Socratic advising approach in an advising appointment

What type of student thinker was the student in this example?

Why?

What did the advisor do to help the student use his critical thinking skills to solve his dilemma?

Case Studies

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