



Clear Thinking Short Course Instructor's Guide

The strategic purpose of this short course is to improve students' clear-thinking skills, enhance their decision-making, enrich their communication strategies, and encourage meaningful self-reflection. We use the Clear Thinking Protocols for two broader objectives: 1) a foundation for analyzing case studies, and 2) a basis for teaching a wide-range of more specific topic areas.

Approach

In my experience, students learn best when they have the opportunity to iteratively engage with core ideas. To enhance learning, the process below has worked well for my students:

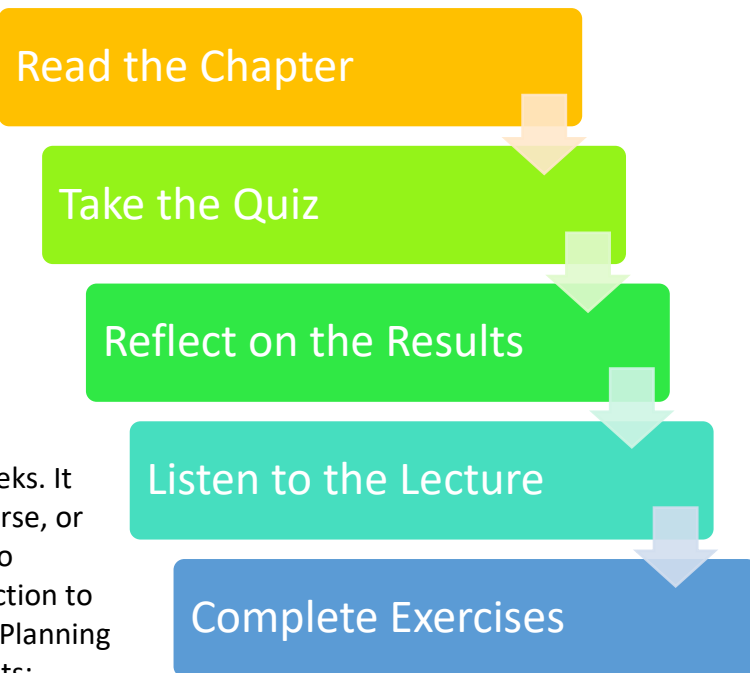
1. Read the designated chapters
2. Take the related quizzes
3. Reflect on the quiz results (see Appendix 1)
4. Listen to the lecture and discuss ideas
5. Complete exercises

Timeline

This short course can be taught in two to three weeks. It is designed to be either a: 1) stand-alone, mini-course, or 2) a module of a longer course (e.g., Introduction to Communication, Cases in Public Relations, Introduction to Human Resources, Marketing Strategies, Strategic Planning Capstone). The content can be delivered in five units:

- Unit 1 – Foundations of PMQ Thinking
- Unit 2 - Developing Hacks
- Unit 3 – Deciding Hacks
- Unit 4 – Communicating Hacks
- Unit 5 – Reflecting Hacks

Details on the content for the units are provided below.



Unit 1 – Foundations of PMQ Thinking

Objectives

- Create awareness of the value of clear thinking
- Promote the understanding of the fundamental clear-thinking components (Plus, Minus, Question)s
- Lay the foundation for crafting useful PMQ charts (Plus, Minus, Questions)

Topics

- The fundamentals of clear thinking
- Why clear thinking is Important
- Plus
- Minus
- Questions
- Ruminations

Teaching Aids

- Power Point Slides
- Quizzes
- Videos
- Unit 1 Exercises

Unit 2 -Developing Hacks

Objectives

- Show how to craft a solid first draft of a PMQ chart
- Demonstrate how to enhance the quality of the initial PMQ chart
- Illustrate how to add more options to PMQ charts

Topics

- Zooming out to quantify your PMQ chart
- Flipping the entries in the plus and minus columns
- Seeking second opinions on your PMQ chart
- Time stamping your PMQ chart and project into the future
- Scaling up the number of choices on your PMQ chart

Teaching Aids

- Power Point Slides
- Quizzes
- Videos
- Unit 2 Exercises

Unit 3 – Deciding Hacks

Objectives

- Show how to scrutinize hidden features of PMQ charts
- Create awareness of alternative decision-making methods
- Demonstrate how to use decision-making methods

Topics

- Seeking out hidden synergies
- Identifying time horizons of your PMQ bullet items
- Describing four methods for making decisions: (a) Ben Franklin's method, b) weighting formula, c) intuition, or d) dialogue

Teaching Aids

- Power Point Slides
- Quizzes
- Videos
- Unit 3 Exercises

Unit 4 – Communicating Hacks

Objectives

- Lay the foundation for effectively communicating about a decision or perspective
- Present major communicative options after deciding or adopting a perspective
- Demonstrate how to pack and unpack core messages emerging from a decision or perspective

Topics

- Identifying and analyzing audiences
- Deciding whether to share your PMQ chart
- Packaging your PMQ messages

Teaching Aids

- Power Point Slides
- Quizzes
- Videos
- Unit 4 Exercises

Unit 5 – Reflecting Hacks

Objectives

- Encourage self-reflection about the use of PMQ thinking in your daily life
- Foster the use of robust, clear thinking in your daily life
- Summarize key action points for the future

Topics

- Searching for underlying patterns
- Visualizing how PMQ charts can be helpful as a media consumer
- Identifying situations where the PMQ process works best

Teaching Aids

- Power Point Slides
- Quizzes
- Videos
- Unit 5 Exercises

Appendix 1

Guidelines on Quiz and Commentary

Purpose: Over the years I've discovered that students learn best when they actively reflect on their progress. Crafting a brief commentary on your quiz results encourages that kind of reflection. Although I want you to do well on the quizzes, I'm less concerned with your "grade" than I am with what you learned from the results. For a more complete explanation of the process please see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HFEDAhnChY&feature=youtu.be>

Process: This is how I would approach this task:

1. Take the on-line quiz after you read the chapter.
2. Review the score you received.
3. Reflect on the answers you got correct and determine what helped you learn that material.
4. Reflect on the answers you got incorrect and determine the reason(s) for getting the question incorrect.
5. **Briefly summarize your "reflections" (Bullets points work fine). The following format works well:**
 - a. **Statement of your scores ("I earned a 9 out of 10 on quiz X")**
 - b. **Statement about your correct answers ("The reasons I scored well on this quiz were x, y, z")**
 - c. **Statement about your incorrect answers ("I missed questions 1 and 2 because I misunderstood x, y, z")**
 - d. **Statement about how the ideas in the chapter apply to you personally**
 - e. **Submit the above (a-d) on XXX**

What You Can Expect: Remember that I'm looking for you to demonstrate that you are "learning how to learn" the material. Some examples of what NOT to do:

1. "I aced this quiz. I feel great!" (Comment: I love the emotion but there is no reflection.)
2. "I bombed this quiz. I just don't get it." (Comment: The emotions are understandable but there is no reflection on how to improve.)

Evaluation: Your Quiz/Commentary grade will be determined by two factors:

1. Timeliness – Did you meet the deadline?
2. Successfully met criteria 5a – 5d above
3. **Your grade is NOT based on the score of your quiz.** Grading is simple: 95 = Met deadline, successfully met criteria 5a – 5d above. 85 = Missed deadline by 12 hours and/or failed to complete 5a-5d. 0 = Completed after deadline.