

Stages of Thinking Introduction Many people think that thinking is a messy and confusing matter. They want to improve their thinking in order to make it simpler and more effective. They want to have thinking as a skill, which they can direct to any matter they choose. The Five Stages of Thinking provides a formal framework for the practical operation of thinking. The stages are designed to be practical and simple to use. Specific de Bono tools are used within each of the five stages of the framework to assist and encourage more effective thinking. Though most teachers aspire to make critical thinking a primary objective of their instruction, most also do not realize that, to develop as thinkers, students must pass through stages of development in critical thinking. That is, most teachers are unaware of the levels of intellectual development that people go through as they improve as thinkers. We believe that significant gains in the intellectual quality of student work will not be achieved except to the degree that teachers recognize that skilled critical thinking develops, only when properly cultivated, and only through predictable stages. Stage One: The Unreflective Thinker