

Discussion Forum Assignment: Physical Punishment

Critical Thinking

The purpose of these discussions is for students to practice and develop critical thinking. You will discuss controversial psychological issues in these forums, but the critical thinking skills you develop are applicable to any topic in addition to everyday personal interactions.

Critical thinking involves analyzing thinking by breaking it down into its elements (the *purpose, question, information, inferences, concepts, assumptions, implications, and point of view*) and then evaluating each element in accordance with standards for high quality thinking (*clarity, precision, accuracy, depth, breadth, relevance, significance, logic, and fairness*) for the purpose of improving it.

Review the document titled "What Is Critical Thinking?" each time before participating in this discussion forum.

Psychological Thinking

The primary purpose of this course is to learn how psychologists think. The best way to learn how psychologists think is to practice how psychologists think. Therefore, it is expected that students will approach the questions and issues from a scientific perspective by using scientific information (that is objective observations of events as they occur in the natural world) to explain their positions on the issues rather than referring to metaphysical forces and entities (such as God or spirit).

Religion and science are two different ways of understanding human experiences. Both are valuable, and these two ways of thinking are compatible. Since this is a social science course, however, the focus should be on scientific, or more specifically psychological, thinking.

Discussion Topic

The use of physical punishment (for example, spanking) as a disciplinary technique for children varies amongst families and cultures and has both strong proponents and opponents. In this forum, you will have the opportunity to develop breadth and depth of thinking on this issue by considering different points of view and the variety of factors that influence parents' decision whether or not to use physical punishment.

Initial Post (IP)

In your first post, respond to the following questions:

1. Do you use physical punishment with your children, do you plan to use physical punishment with your future children, or do you support parents' use of physical punishment?
2. Why do you or don't you think physical punishment is a valuable disciplinary technique for children?

To assist in answering the second question, find some scientific information from an online source relevant to the issue. Provide a rationale (i.e., a set of reasons) in support of your conclusion to the question incorporating specific information found from the online source. Provide a reference for the online source that includes the complete web address, organization, and author (no particular format for the reference is required).

Your **IP must be posted by Tuesday at 11:59 PM** to receive full credit and is **worth up to 2 points**. To receive maximum credit, it must answer the question thoroughly.

Please title your IP in a specific way. Type the words "Initial Post" followed by a three- to four-word descriptor capturing the essence of your posting.

In order to encourage you to think about this issue on your own and develop your own ideas, I have set the settings for this forum so that you will not be able to view other students' postings until you submit your own IP.

Level 1 Replies (R1)

Read your classmates' IPs as they are posted in the forum. **By Wednesday at 11:59 PM, you are required to post replies to two IPs submitted by your classmates.** These are termed Level 1 Replies (R1). **Each R1 is worth 2 points**, for a maximum possible of 4 points.

Seek out IPs that present a conclusion or viewpoint different from your own, as that will allow for the greatest potential in developing critical thinking abilities. **Immediately after you have selected an IP for response, reply to the IP with a brief message that you have selected the IP for response and will post an R1 at a future time.** The purpose of this is to reserve the IP and prevent students from receiving more than two R1s and other students receiving fewer than two R1s. Once you have written your R1, submit it as a reply to the post you submitted earlier reserving the IP for response.

The Blackboard system records the time of submission of posts to the nearest minute. When I look at those records at the time of grading the assignment, **students who submitted R1s to IPs that already had two replies submitted reserving the IP for response will be receive a -1 point deduction.**

If a situation arises where all of the IPs already have two replies reserving the IP for response, then students are permitted to submit an R1 that already has two replies without penalty.

Each R1 should include the following: (1) a **quote of the specific statement(s)** you are responding to; (2) a paraphrasing of the statement(s) to communicate to your classmate how you interpreted the statement(s); (3) an explanation of how your thinking on the question is different from your classmate's thinking; (4) an essential question that targets a specific **element of thought** along with a specific **intellectual standard** (see the "What Is Critical Thinking?" document for examples); and (5) an explanation as to why you thought that specific intellectual standard was lacking in your classmate's thinking. To receive full credit, **each R1 must be at least 150 words in length.**

Level 2 Replies (R2)

By Thursday at 11:59 PM, you are required to reply to the two R1s submitted to your IP. These replies to R1s are termed Level 2 Replies (R2). **Each R2 is worth 1 point, for a maximum possible of 2 points.**

If a situation arises where you received more than two R1s to your IP, you are only required to submit two R2s. (If students don't have two R1s by Wednesday at midnight, I will submit my own by Thursday at midnight, and students will have until Friday to submit an R2.)

In each R2, respond to your classmate's essential question with further elaboration of your thinking. Explicitly acknowledge how your thinking in the quoted statement lacked the intellectual standard identified by your classmate, or explain in a polite and non-defensive way why you think your statement did not lack the intellectual standard. In addition, if you think your classmate applied the critical thinking concepts inaccurately in her/his essential question, explain why you think that is the case. To receive full credit, **each R2 must be at least 100 words in length.**

Final Post (FP)

By Sunday at 11:59 PM, you are required to submit a Final Post (FP), which is **worth up to 2 points**. For this post (which must be submitted as a new thread, not as a reply to your IP), complete the following:

1. Read all of your classmates' IPs, count the number of individuals (including yourself) who supported the use of physical punishment and the number who did not, and **present the exact results of your tally**. Then compile and present a listing of all the reasons mentioned by your classmates on each side of the issue.
 2. Was your conclusion to the question on the side of the majority of students in this class or not? Which reasons on the opposing side did you not consider or had least awareness of prior to participating in this discussion?
 3. How has your thinking on this issue developed from reading the information on the website and the postings in the discussion forum? When answering this question, evaluate your own thinking in accordance with the **intellectual standards** and **present two specific, quoted statements** (one from a classmate's R1 submitted in response to your own IP and one from a classmate's R2 submitted in response to one of your R1s) that led to a development in your own thinking. Reference the quoted statements by identifying the student's name and whether the post was an R1 or R2.
- For example, you can state that Statement X allowed you to develop a **clearer** (or **deeper** or **broader**) understanding of Issue X. The purpose of the evaluation is not to state how great your thinking (as presented in your forum postings) was but to reflect upon how it improved or could be improved. The critical thinker is always striving to improve her/his thinking, just like a skilled athlete or musician always strives to be better athlete or musician.

Your FP should be three paragraphs in length, one paragraph for each set of questions.

Please title your FP in a specific way. Type the words "Final Post" followed by a three- to four-word descriptor capturing the essence of your posting.

Important Note

If someone writes a statement that you perceive as lacking civility (e.g., it comes across as rude, condescending, offensive, mean, angry, etc.), please point that out to your classmate in a polite and friendly way. Explicitly state that you perceived Statement X as offensive and provide a reason as to why. Then, request that your classmate present her/his thinking in a different way.

If the recipient of such as a message fails to respond with a restatement of the ideas and an apology for any intentional or unintentional offense that the earlier statement(s) caused, the recipient of such as message will receive a 0 on the discussion forum assignment, despite the number or quality of any other postings submitted.

Grading

The number of required posts sums to a maximum of 10 possible points. Point deductions may be applied to the student's score after the end of the Lesson when I review a listing of each student's postings. **No credit will be received for posts submitted after the deadlines, regardless of the quality of those posts or how soon after the deadlines they were submitted.** In addition, the following point deductions may be applied:

- IP did not address a question presented in the instructions (-0.5 for each)
- IP did not address a question thoroughly (-0.25 for each)
- IP did not include information from an online source along with a reference (-1)
- R1 did not present a quoted statement (-0.5)
- R1 did not paraphrase the quoted statement (-0.25)
- R1 did not present an essential question (-0.5)
- R1 did not use terms for critical thinking concepts (-0.25 for each missing term)
- R1 did not meet the length requirement (-0.5)
- R1 was posted third, when other IPs had fewer than two R1s. (-1)
- R2 did not explicitly address the essential question (-.25)
- R2 did not meet the length requirement (-0.5)
- FP did not address a question presented in the instructions (-0.5 for each)
- FP did not address a question thoroughly (-0.25 for each)
- FP did not contain two quoted statements from an R1 and R2 (-0.5 for each)
- FP did not contain a reflection that used terms for intellectual standards (-1)
- All posts together contained 5+ writing errors (-1)

This grading rubric is designed to assist me in evaluating the quality of your work. I reserve the right to modify this grading rubric at any time.

Final Note

Please let me know if you have any questions about these instructions by submitting a post in the General Forum. Also, please feel free to email me if you would like further explanation or assistance with any part of this assignment.