Purposes & Types Of Definitions
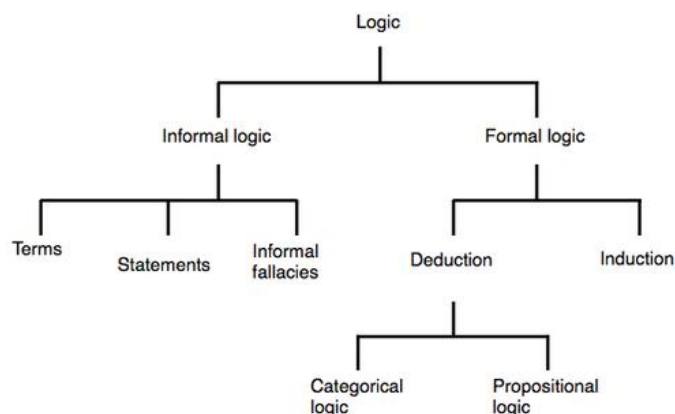Come Let Us Reason Together: Learning To Love God With All Thy Mind
Student Notes
5/18/25

Branches Of Logic

Formal & Informal Logic

- _____— "deals directly with reasoning, by considering the means of distinguishing between proper and improper modes of reasoning." (5)
- _____— "deals with operations of thinking that are indirectly related to reasoning, such as defining terms, relating terms to each other, and determining relationships between statements." (5)
  - Informal Fallacies are not "formal methods of reasoning," therefore they are included under the branch of informal logic. Examples of informal fallacies include:
    - _____
    _____

Induction & Deduction

- _____— "deals with arguments that are valid or invalid. If valid, the conclusion follows from the premises, and it does so with certainty. A valid conclusion is one that is contained within the premises; if the premises of a valid argument are true, then the conclusion must be true." (5)

- Example:

  - If it rains, the ground will be wet.
  - It is raining.
  - ∴ The ground is wet.

How To Argue: Philosophical Reasoning (Crash Course Video)

- _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Induction & Deduction

- _____— "deals with arguments of likelihood and probability. By induction we draw conclusions from facts or experience, conclusions which go beyond those facts. Inductive conclusions are never certain, but only probable. As such they can be considered strong or weak, depending on how well experience supports the conclusion." (5)

How To Argue: Induction & Abduction (Crash Course Video)

- _____
  _____
  _____
  _____
  _____

Categorical & Propositional

- _____— "deals with the syllogism, which is a type of deductive argument in which the conclusion connects one category (or term) with another, hence the name categorical logic." (5)

- _____— "connects entire propositions together in arguments." (6)

Term(s)

- Term— "a concept with a precise meaning expressed by one or more words." (9)

  o Exact synonyms represent the same term.

  o English word "girl" and the Latin word "puella" represent the same term.

- Likewise, a single word can represent different terms.

- What does the word *mad* mean?

  o _____

Definition(s)

- Definition(s) — "a statement that gives the meaning of a term." (9)

  o "Lawyers must continually define their terms. Many use precise, technical langue to do so. The same is true for teachers, scientists, philosophers, theologians, and most other professionals." (9)

- There are six purposes and five types of definitions.

- Definitions show relationships between terms.

  o Man is often defined as "a rational animal." What relationships does this definition imply?

  o _____
     _____

- Definitions remove ambiguity.

  o Lexical Definition—"A definition that shows relationships or reduces ambiguity by providing a single, established meaning of a term is called a lexical definition. This is the sort of definition one would find in a dictionary."

- How is the word "love" being used in the following statements?

  o I love pizza. _____

  o Love your enemies. _____

Definition(s)

- Definitions reduce vagueness.

  o _____— "seeks to make more precise what was previously vague or fuzzy."

  o What is the difference between a "tall" person and a "tall" tree?

    ▪ _____
       _____

- Definitions increase vocabulary.

    o What are some new words you have recently learned or heard being used?

        ▪ _____

    o _____ — "when a new word is invented, or an existing word is applied in a new way."

Definition(s)

- Definitions can explain concepts theoretically.

    o What is H2O? _____

    o _____ — "accepting a theory about the term being defined."

    o If you accept a theoretical definition, you accept the theory behind it; if you accept the definition of man as an evolved ape, you accept the theory of evolution.

- Definitions can influence attitudes.

    o How would you define the word "abortion?"

    o _____ — "definitions aim[ed] at persuading the listener one way or another toward the term being defined."

Summary & Practical Advice

- "Definitions give meanings for terms. Definitions can show relationships between terms, remove ambiguity, reduce vagueness, increase vocabulary, explain concepts theoretically, and influence attitudes. Along with these purposes are five types of definitions; lexical, precising, stipulative, theoretical, and persuasive." (13)

- Defining terms is one of the most important things you can do when engaging in a dialogue with someone.

- Do not accept someone else's premise until they have adequality defined their terms.

Works Cited

Introductory Logic: The Fundamentals of Thinking Well. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2014.

EXERCISE 1 (16 points)

1. Write lexical definitions of the words *child* and *adult* that show the relationship between them.

   _____

   _____

2. The word *grace* is an ambiguous word. Write two lexical definitions for the word *grace*, giving two of its different meanings.

   _____

   _____

3. Write a precising definition of the word *soon* to clarify the vagueness in the sentence "I will be home soon."

   _____

4. Invent a stipulative definition for the word *ploff*.

   _____

5. Write a persuasive definition of the word *television* from the point of view of a mother who thinks her children watch too much of it.

   _____

6. Write a short, imaginary dialogue between two people having a verbal dispute about the word *believe*. Then introduce a third person who settles the dispute by presenting lexical definitions for the word that eliminate the ambiguity. (Continue on the back if needed.)

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____