

Compared with adolescent thinking, adult thinking becomes more personal, integrative, and practical in response to the individual's life experiences and commitment to the responsibilities of career and family.

Schaies stages of thought.

Postformal thought – thinking is less abstract and less absolute than formal operational thought. Postformal thought recognizes that one's own perspective is only one of many potentially valid views and that life entails many inconsistencies. (i.e., Hyde Park salutorian)

Dialectical thought – the most advanced form of cognition, involves considering both sides of an idea simultaneously and then forging them into a synthesis that integrates the original idea (thesis) with its opposite (antithesis).

In daily life, dialectical thinking recognizes that most of life's important questions do not have a single, unchangeable, correct answers.