

Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking

Material for Higher Education students in Sierra Leone by INASP, UK



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Unit 1 - Snippet 03

Before we will send more information around critical thinking, some notes about terminology. Within the information that you'll receive you may encounter terms that aren't familiar to you at all or ones you have used in the past with a different meaning.

For example, take the term 'argument', which will be used in connection with critical thinking and reasoning quite often. What different meanings of this term can you find in the dictionary? Research some online dictionaries such as:

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english>

www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary

The meaning of a term is related to the context the term is used in. For example, in your daily life you may say "I had an argument with my friend" and you would mean that you had an exchange of diverging opinions, likely in a rather heated way. If a mathematician speaks about an argument, he/she may mean an independent variable of a mathematical function. You will learn more about the meaning of 'argument' in the context of critical thinking later in the course. But you can look it up now in one of the online dictionaries if you are interested.

Did you know that the meaning of a term may also depend on the culture or country you live in? Ask someone in the UK to explain what a 'monitor' is and most people would likely say a computer screen. But ask someone in Africa and many people would say that it's a quite large lizard.

