
Questioning as we learn: An introduction to critical thinking

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



Provided by the Critical Thinking Taskforce (CTTF)
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Unit 1 - Snippet 19

Could you find a question to the answer “*When I say ‘that’s not rocket science’, I mean the subject is not very complex and actually quite easy to understand.*”?

A possible clarification question could be:

Could you please explain what you mean when you say ‘that’s not rocket science’?

That’s the second type of questions:

2) Questions that probe assumptions

Questions that probe assumptions are intended to help you understand what someone takes for granted, without spelling it out, what you are expected to accept without proof. Some examples of such questions are:

- a. What are you assuming? What is the author of this text assuming?
- b. Do I understand you correctly that you are assuming this?
- c. How would you justify your assumption?
- d. What makes you think your assumption holds here?



Q&A activity - Questions that probe assumptions

Imagine this situation: Your lecturer mentioned in a lesson that she finds it more important than ever that her students become critical thinkers.

What question could you ask your lecturer to lead to the following answer? Compose a question that probes assumptions.

Answer: *Yes, I assume critical thinking skills must be even more important for young people today than in the past as we have access to so much more information and often don’t know the source of the information.*