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## 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)  
within the project AQHEd-SL

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#### Unit 1 - Snippet 20

Could you find a question to the 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*”?

#### **A possible question that probes assumptions could be:**

*You said that you find it more than ever important that we students become critical thinkers; do you assume that's more important for students today than in the past?*

That's the third type of questions:

#### **3) Questions that probe reasons and evidence**

These questions are asked to understand the adequacy, the validity of those reasons and the relevance and reliability of the evidence. Some examples:

- a. What are your reasons for saying that? Why did you say that?
- b. What led you to believe that? Is it reliable? How is it relevant?
- c. What evidence do you have for that? Is there reason to doubt that evidence?
- d. What would you say to someone who said the opposite of what you're saying?



#### **Q&A activity - Questions that probe reasons and evidence**

Imagine this situation: You are arguing with your fellow student Aba about the value of critical thinking. Aba says that 'critical thinking' is just a new buzz-word in education and not a skill which helps students to finish their studies successfully.

Which question could you ask that leads to the following answer from Aba?  
Compose a question that probes reasons and evidence.

**Answer:** *Hm, I was just repeating what other students say. I guess I should ask them why they believe that.*