
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

Unit 2 - Snippet 30

Reading strategy SQ4R

Step 1: Survey the text

- Survey the reading material to determine how the information is organized and how much of the topic is covered in that one source
- For books: Scan the table of contents and any chapter headings that seem relevant to your topic. Survey the introduction and conclusion of a chapter. For journal articles: Survey the abstract (the summary), the introduction, and the conclusion
- Briefly scan graphs, charts, images, and skim their descriptive captions

Step 2: Write Questions for each heading

- As you survey the information, turn each heading and subheading into a question. For example: "A description of critical thinking" becomes "How can I describe critical thinking?" Ask yourself what you already know about those questions

Step 3: Read a section at a time

- Read one section of the text at a time, and refer back to your questions as you read to actively search for the answers in the text

Step 4: Record notes while you read

- As you read, write down definitions, details, facts, explanations of concepts mentioned, or answers to the questions you'd come up with earlier

Step 5: Recite the important information

- When you finish each paragraph or section read your notes out loud to yourself
- Imagine you're explaining what you've just read to a small child. How would you simplify or summarize the information to make it comprehensible?

Step 6: Review your questions

- After you finish a few paragraphs or sections, look back at your original questions and make sure you can answer them