
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 39



Practical activity – Identify the text purpose? (4)

Here is the next text. What does it focus on and what frame is the best fit?
Remember to write down your findings and thoughts in your learning diary.

“Global warming” or “climate change”?

The growing threat of rising levels of greenhouse gases has been in the news for over 30 years now, and a range of terms have been used to describe the consequences: “climate change,” “global warming,” “climate disruption,” etc. The scientific community tends to use “climate change” in peer-reviewed literature, and many large international organizations, first and foremost the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, tie their identity to that term. Some politicians – especially the less environmentally-minded – seem to favour “climate change” over “global warming”, because the former sounds less alarming than the latter. Journalists, on the other hand, often use the two terms interchangeably, the implicit assumption being that readers understand them to mean the same thing and that they have the same connotations. Nonetheless, a survey conducted in 2013 and 2014 in the USA found that “global warming” was associated with events such as melting glaciers, world catastrophe and other extreme phenomena, while “climate change” was associated more with general weather patterns.

A study published in 2014 entitled *What’s in a Name? Global Warming Versus Climate Change* notes that despite being used widely to describe the same set of phenomena, “climate change” and “global warming” are indeed different. “Global warming” refers to the increase in the Earth’s average surface temperature since the Industrial Revolution, primarily due to the emission of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels and land use change, whereas “climate change” refers to the long-term change of the Earth’s climate including changes in temperature, precipitation and wind patterns over a period of several decades or longer.