
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 41



Practical activity – Identify the text purpose? (6)

Here is the last text. What does it focus on and what frame is the best fit?

Local governments are joining together to clean up the Anacostia River

The Anacostia River is polluted but cleaning it up is hard because three authorities – of Washington DC, Maryland and Virginia – are jointly responsible for it. In October, a formal commitment was signed to support one another's efforts to work with regional businesses, individuals, and organizations to find ways to clean up the entire length of the Anacostia and to keep it clean.

Trash in the Anacostia has long been a problem. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, uncontrolled tobacco farming caused the once-navigable river to fill in with sediment, choking off the prosperous port at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac. When trash gets into aquatic ecosystems, it's a problem not only because it causes direct damage to the organisms living there, but also because it will continue to do so as it decomposes in the future.

In the past decade, individual regulations in Washington DC and elsewhere have been targeted at large sources of pollution. The effort has largely been successful, greatly reducing the presence of single items or categories of litter like plastic bags or styrofoam in the river. DC's plastic bag tax was one such effort. Since the city started charging a five cent fee for plastic bags in stores in 2010, DC residents report using 60% fewer bags per week.

Also, in 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency and some regional organizations advocating for stricter enforcement of the Clean Water Act reached a settlement that sets limits on how much trash can be in the river. Removing litter was at the top of the list, and in 2011, policymakers settled on a bold plan to deploy a trash trap in the country, located along the Watts Branch tributary. This trash traps and the data it provided led to further-developed regulations that have prevented thousands of tons of trash from reaching the Anacostia.