

Full Spectrum Questioning for Critical Thinking

Questions that probe the “so what” response	Questions that clarify meaning or conceptual vocabulary	Questions that explore assumptions, sources, and rationale	Questions that seek to identify causes and effects or outcomes	Questions that consider appropriate action
<p>How relevant or Important? To whom? To what constituency? Individuals or groups? What viewpoint would impart importance? Is that me/us/them? What audience is assumed? If we knew all about this, what good would it do?</p> <p>How urgent or Interesting? Is immediate consideration needed? Or, is the detail best left for other times or forums? Is the issue compelling, or tangentially related to my or the group’s task at hand? Is the issue of intellectual merit?</p> <p>What context? Is the issue or question part of a larger view or strategy?</p>	<p>Is there Ambiguity or Vagueness? Are terms clear or meanings commonly shared? What alternative meaning might exist? Can quantifiers be made more explicit? How much? How long? How few? To what extent? Can implicit comparisons be made explicit?</p> <p>Are Concepts Held in Common? Are terms relying on professional or technical understandings? Does meaning shift from ordinary usage to technical sense? Is persuasion confused with definition? What might be a similar example in another area?</p>	<p>What Qualities are Assumed? Is the claim or phenomena assumed to be” Real, unique, measurable, beneficial, harmful, neutral? Might the opposite assumption be equally valid? Are biases or preconceptions evident in gender, audience, and categorization? What does the speaker assume about herself or himself or the audience?</p> <p>Can One Be Sure? What evidence supports the claim? How can it be confirmed? What are reasons for belief or disbelief or assigning value? What procedures or processes give evidence for certainty? What supports any analogies?</p>	<p>Primary v. Secondary? Is the claim/condition a root or secondary cause or effect? Is it a trigger for other mechanisms? What are they?</p> <p>Internal/External v. Systematic Interaction Is the cause/effect mechanism internal or partly external to the system? What external factors affect interactions? Are reputed “causes” perhaps correlations? AT what level might true causes operate? Are consequences long or short-term? For whom? What limits or scenarios might apply? What are worst/best cases? What is most probable? Why? If cause/effects are connected systematically through feedback, what are the key feedback controls?</p>	<p>Who Does What, How, When, with Whom, and Why? Is there a quick fix or is a more considered view needed? Should I/we do something? Together, separately, as a group? Should it be done now? When? What is the commitment? Are those involved too close to act effectively? Are outsiders needed? Who can be engaged? What plans or strategies will be effective? What level/conditions need addressing first?</p> <p>What Comes Next? How is effectiveness evaluated? What ongoing monitoring or re-evaluating of intervention is needed? Is there a backup plan? Who directs it? Under what conditions is it operative?</p>