



Critical Thinking Questions (Reference)

Critical Thinking Questions	Explanation	Examples – Critical thinking about Prensky
<p>What is the point of argument?</p>	<p>Describe a basic point of argument in the article. This could be the main argument or a smaller point within the discussion.</p> <p>We have defined many of these as part of our summary work.</p>	<p>Here’s one point he argues:</p> <p>He argues that “today’s students have changed radically,” so that the education system cannot meet their needs.</p>
<p>What evidence is used to support the argument?</p>	<p>Writers can use different kinds of evidence to support their arguments and ideas.</p> <p>Critical reading includes assessing what kinds of evidence a writer uses to support and argument.</p> <p>We can look for three kinds of evidence:</p> <p>Reasons are used to explain why something is needed or makes sense.</p> <p>Examples can be used to illustrate key points.</p> <p>Claims to the authority of other writers can be used to support ideas.</p>	<p>Let’s look at the evidence Prensky uses to support this point that today’s students have “changed radically.”</p> <p>Reason:</p> <p>Today’s students have “changed radically” because they have grown up with digital technology.</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Prensky notes they have “spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, And all the other toys and tools of the digital age” and provides statistics on the number of hours in front of screens.</p> <p>Claim to authority:</p> <p>Prensky cites Dr. Perry to suggest that student brains have physically changed as a result of this exposure to technology.</p>



Critical Thinking and Comparison

<p>What assumptions does the writer make as the basis of the argument?</p>	<p>When making an argument a writer must begin somewhere. Any point of argument, however, depends on certain things being true.</p> <p>A writer must make assumptions, and hope that the reader will agree to these assumptions.</p> <p>When reading critically, we must consider not only the arguments being made, but also the assumptions on which those arguments are based.</p> <p>If the assumptions don't make sense, the argument will have its limits.</p>	<p>Prensky's overall argument is that the older generation teachers have a responsibility to learn to teach in a suitable way for the younger generation of students.</p> <p>His whole article is based on a key assumption:</p> <p>That all younger people are fluent users of digital technology and that all older people use technology in a less fluent way.</p> <p>Prensky assumes that the ability to use digital technology is a result of age, rather than a result of individual opportunity in life.</p> <p>What do you think about this assumption? Is this true? Do you think all young people naturally have the digital literacy Prensky writes about?</p> <p>What other factors do you think might shape our ability to use digital technology?</p>
<p>What are the consequences or implications of the arguments offered by the writer?</p>	<p>Finally, critical thinking includes considering the consequences or implications of what a writer is arguing.</p> <p>If a position on a particular social debate leads to detrimental consequences for some people, for example, then it needs to be considered.</p>	<p>Prensky assumes that all younger people are digital natives. We can identify several implications of this argument.</p> <p>First, this idea hides the fact that younger students of different social classes or in different geographical areas may have different access to digital technology.</p> <p>Second, his argument assumes that there is no value in holding on to ways of thinking and learning that exist before the pervasive use of digital technology. Is it possible that some of what the older generation has to say might be valuable?</p> <p>These points and more are discussed in Henry Jenkin's critical response to Prensky's article "Reconsidering Digital Immigrants," which you can find at http://henryjenkins.org/2007/12/reconsidering_digital_immigran.html.</p>