**Honing critical thinking skills**

**Critical thinking skills are skills that people require in order to solve problems. These skills include analysing and evaluating information obtained through learning: observation, experience or communication. The crux of critical thinking is being responsive to information and not simply accepting it. Questioning is the most important part of critical thinking. It is part of scientific, historical, mathematical, economic and philosophical thinking. Critical thinking is necessary for the future development of our society.**

**Six steps to improve critical thinking:**

1. Observe and draw conclusions.
2. Compare and contrast items and topics.
3. Discuss and analyse what you observe and read.
4. Learn cooperatively and work collaboratively.
5. Probe with questions to become better at defending your own opinions:
* Keep the discussion focused
* Keep the discussion intellectually-responsible
* Periodically summarize what has and what has not been resolved
* Draw others into the discussion.
1. Analyse the arguments of others by:
* Identifying a problem, premise or a statement.
* Searching or discussing possible solutions or counter-arguments.
* Judging the credibility of information and its sources by ensuring that:
	+ The authority must be identified
	+ The authority must be respectable
	+ The subject must be in this authority's field of expertise
	+ The subject must be one on which there is a consensus of experts.
* Clarifying the difference between opinion, judgment and fact.
* Explaining how to avoid common fallacies related to the topic.

