

Enhancing Critical Thinking: Tip #3

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ASK PROBING QUESTIONS TO ENCOURAGE SPECIFIC RESPONSES AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS' VIEWPOINTS.

- *Can you be more specific?*
- *Why do you think that?*
- *What exactly do you mean by that?*
- *What reasons do you have?*
- *What facts would you select to show...?*
- *What evidence can you find to?*

Scenario: The teacher asks probing questions to encourage specific responses and support for students' viewpoints.

Reading Passage:

Some workers skip breakfast and try to make up for it by eating a big lunch. Studies show that workers who do this lose as much efficiency at work as people who've missed a whole night's sleep. Workers who eat a high-protein breakfast and a light lunch, on the other hand, tend to be energetic and efficient throughout the day. Furthermore, a separate study proved that teens who eat breakfast do far better in school than their classmates who don't.

T: Which is the most important meal of the day?

Ann: Breakfast.

T: ***Why do you think that?***

Ann: Because we go without food for a long time.

T: ***Can you be more specific?***

Ann: Depending on how long we sleep in, we can go without food for 6, 8 or even 12 hours.

T: That's right. And how do you think people who do not eat breakfast but instead eat a big lunch perform at work or at school?

Sam: They would do poorly.

T: ***What exactly do you mean by that?***

Sam: If a student, for example, takes a test without eating breakfast, he or she would likely not do very well. Just like a car that needs fuel to run, our brain needs food to be able to perform well.

T: ***What evidence can you find in the passage to support your answer?***

Sam: The last sentence says, "a separate study proved that teens who eat breakfast do far better in school than their classmates who don't." This would imply that students who do not eat breakfast would not do as well on tests.

T: Sounds like a logical conclusion.

In the passage, with whom are these non-breakfast eaters compared?

Tom: They are compared with those who do not get a whole night's sleep.

T: Going back to the passage, ***what facts would you select to show*** support for your statement?

Tom: "Studies show that workers who do this lose as much efficiency at work as people who've missed a whole night's sleep."

T: "...workers who do this..." ***What exactly does "this" mean?***

Ann: "This" means "skip breakfast and eat a big lunch to make up for it."

T: Drawing from your own experience, ***what other reasons do you have*** for advocating breakfast eating? Work together in groups of 4 and make a list.