

Enhancing Critical Thinking Tip #4

Ranee Cervania, Ph.D.

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ASK LEADING QUESTIONS TO GUIDE STUDENTS TO SEE THE PROBLEM, SITUATION OR CONCEPT FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

- *What would happen if...?*
- *How might this issue have looked to the opposing side?*
- *How is _____ related to ...?*
- *What can we do about this?*

Scenario: The teacher asks leading questions to guide students to see the situation from different perspectives.

Reading Passage:

One of the most important factors in the economy is the consumer. Sales of items from candy to cars are a major part of what keeps the economy growing. When people have the money to buy more than just what they need to live, businesses profit.

When interest rates go down, the amount of money people borrow and spend goes up. But when consumers begin to feel a pinch in the pocketbook, they spend less. A decrease in spending hurts business. It often results in unemployment so that people have even less money to spend. Then the economy slows.

T: ***How is consumer spending related to economy growth?***

Ann: The more money consumers spend, the more profit businesses make. The more money businesses make, the more the economy grows.

T: ***What might happen*** to the economy when consumers stop or decrease their spending?

Sam: The economy slows down.

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

Sam: When people stop buying, businesses don't make profits. When they don't make profits, they cannot afford to stay open. As a result, they are forced to lay off workers and eventually close.

Ann: And when workers are laid off, they don't have money to spend on consumer products.

T: ***How might this issue have looked*** to businesses, particularly from a marketing perspective? In other words, what marketing strategies do businesses take to counteract this trend?

Tom: They give out coupons where you get a certain discount if you spend a certain amount. For example, you get a 20% off if you spend \$50 or more.

T: ***What else?***

Sam: They lure you to buy more than you need because the 4th one is free, like "Buy 3, get 1 free" or "Buy one, get the other half price." I've been guilty of that.

Ann: And the smartest strategy that has never failed so far is the 4-letter word, "SALE." A lot of people—both men and women—are hooked into buying things they don't really need simply because "It was on sale!" Guilty!

Tom: And the funny thing about it is these sale purchases are put on their credit cards.

T: ***What's funny about that?***

Sam: Nothing, if they don't leave any balances on their cards. It's funny when they do and can only afford to pay the minimum balance each month. They often do not realize that they are actually paying more than the sale price they initially thought was a bargain.

T: So ***what can we do*** to help our economy grow?

Ann: Make prices affordable to the majority of consumers so people's buying power increases. When more people are buying, more products are sold, which eventually leads to more products manufactured. The increase in manufacturing will lead to increased labor force. The more people are employed, the more people can afford to spend money. It becomes a cycle that eventually helps the economy to grow.