



Developing students as critical thinkers

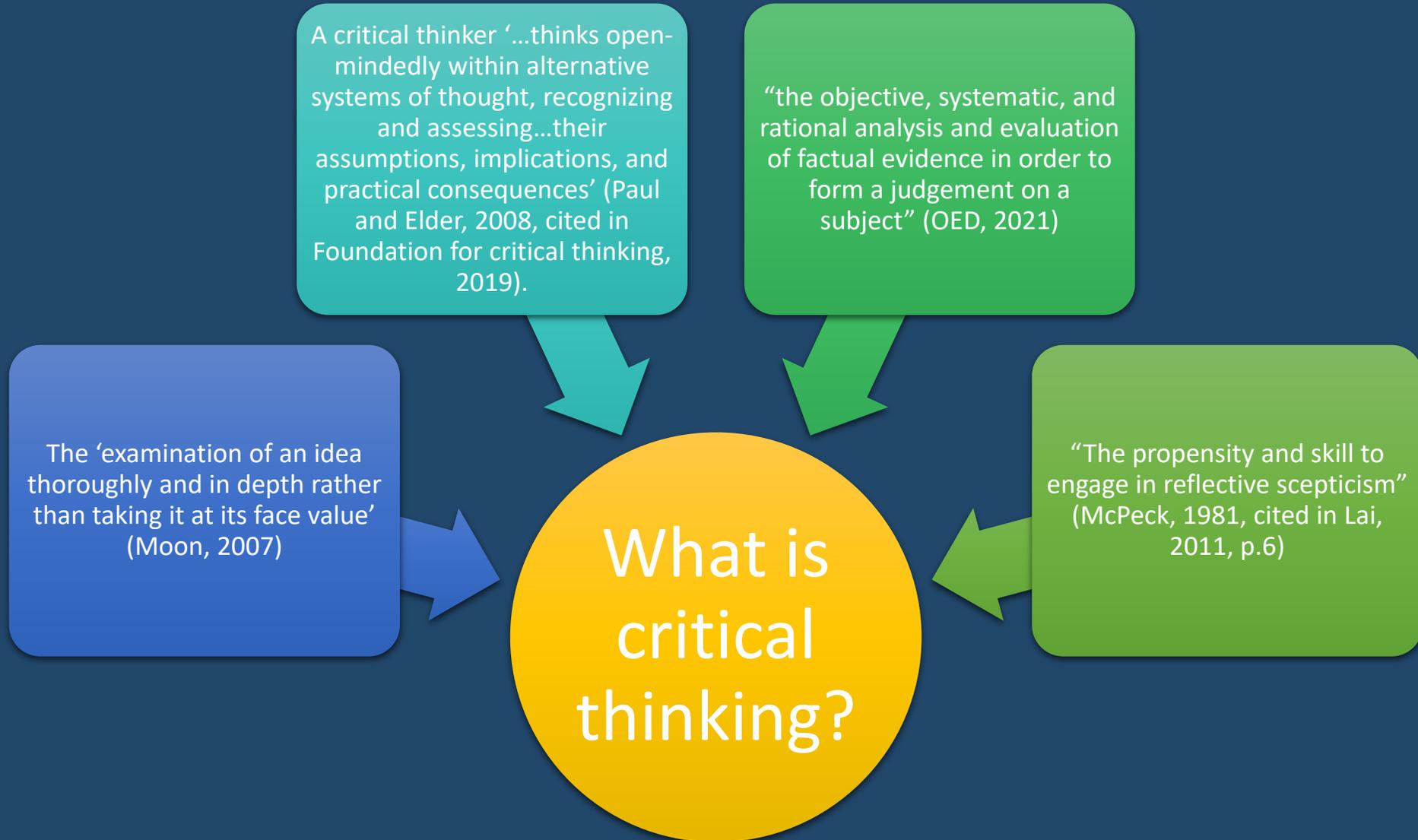
**Anna Richards
(Academic Liaison
Librarian) and Arina
Cirstea (CLaSS)**

Whilst we wait...

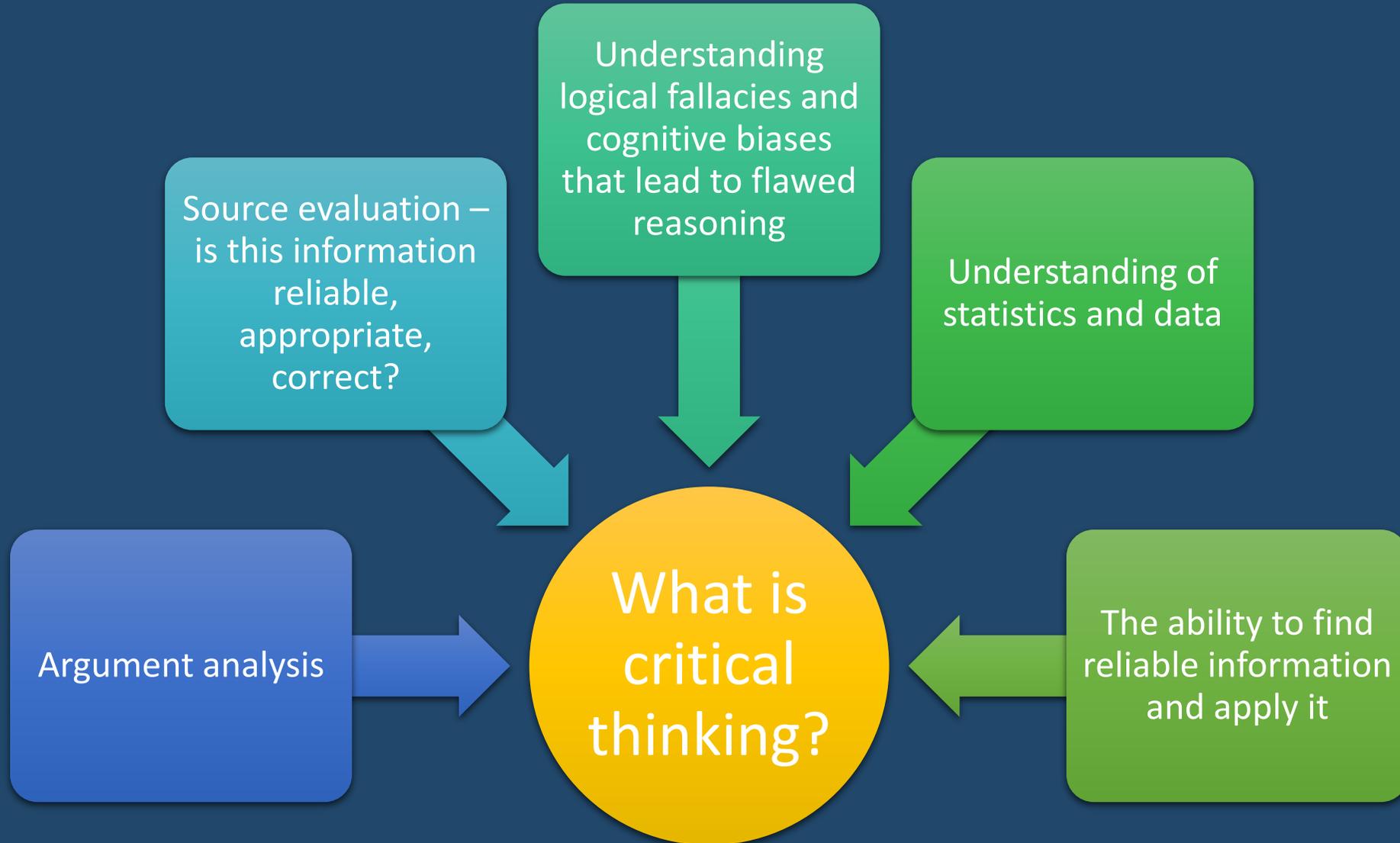
- What aspects of critical thinking do you think your students struggle with the most?
- Answers in on our MS Form:
- <https://tinyurl.com/y38zgzhk>



Theory and definitions



Theory and definitions



What is disruptive pedagogy?

- DMU defines it in terms of technology and teaching delivery (“dynamic, creative and chaotic delivery at its best”)
- An alternative is to consider it a way to question the status quo and give students the skills to do this
- Fellmayer (2018) argues for this definition, basing her discussion on the work of Freire, bell hooks and James Baldwin
- ‘...creating self-directed learners that can ask the right question at the right time...to affect the kind of change that lasts’ (Heick, 2020)

Context

- Critical thinking has been described as the bedrock of higher education (Moon, 2007) and a key graduate attribute (Davies, 2016)
- In formal and informal interactions with LLS teams, **criticality** is often mentioned by both DMU academics and students as a high priority cognitive skill for teaching, learning and assessment
- All LLS teams (CLaSS, MLC, and Librarians) have long engaged with dimensions of critical thinking relevant to their expertise in all aspects of their provision (in-curriculum sessions, self-selecting workshops and one-to-one support) but not in a co-ordinated way or to the same extent

Sample CLaSS workshops: Critical writing category

- Introduction to critical writing
- Improving your critical writing skills
- Masterclass in...critical writing
- Developing an argument in [...]
- Being original in [...]
- Using evidence in your writing

The image displays a grid of eight workshop cards, each representing a session in the 'Critical writing' category. Each card includes the date, time, and location, followed by a title and a brief description. The cards are arranged in two columns and four rows.

Date	Time	Location	Title
FEB 4	Mon, 12:00 - 13:00	Multiple Locations	Improving your critical writing skills [webcast available]
FEB 4	Mon, 13:00 - 14:00	Multiple Locations	Finding your voice: from reading to writing and back again
MAR 6	Wed, 12:00 - 13:00	Multiple Locations	Writing your dissertation
MAR 7	Thu, 12:00 - 13:00	Multiple Locations	Developing an argument in your dissertation or extended reports
MAR 7	Thu, 13:00 - 14:00	Multiple Locations	Using evidence in your writing
APR 4	Thu, 11:00 - 12:00	Multiple Locations	Improving your critical writing skills
JUN 4	Tue, 13:00 - 14:00	Multiple Locations	Masterclass in...critical writing
JUN 6	Thu, 11:00 - 12:00	Multiple Locations	Being original in your assessment at postgraduate level

Open Programme statistics (1.01.2019-1.12.2020)

Category Distribution

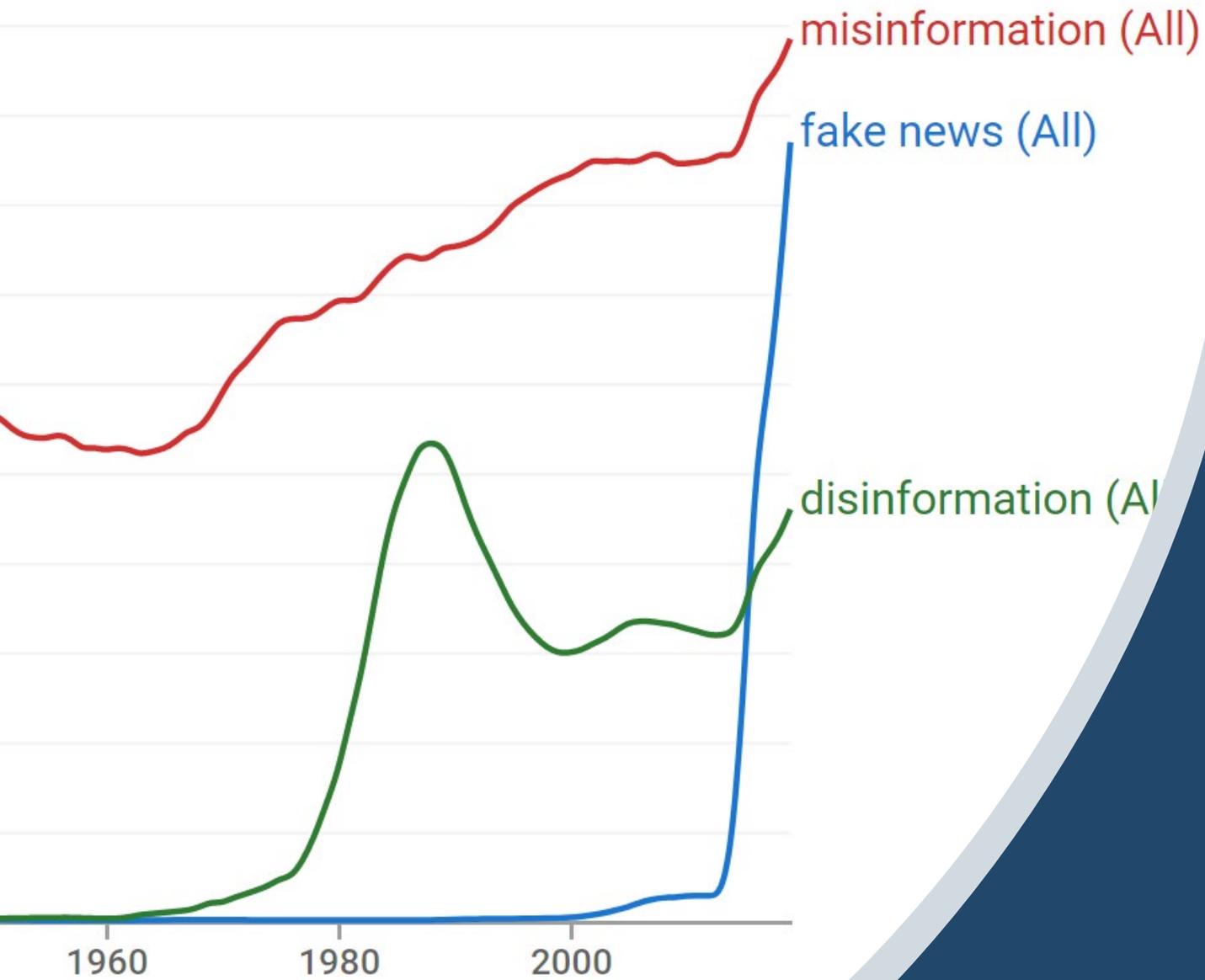
'Critical writing' category:

Number of events: 27 (6.7% of total events)

Registrations: 1,026 (**19.2%** of total registrations)

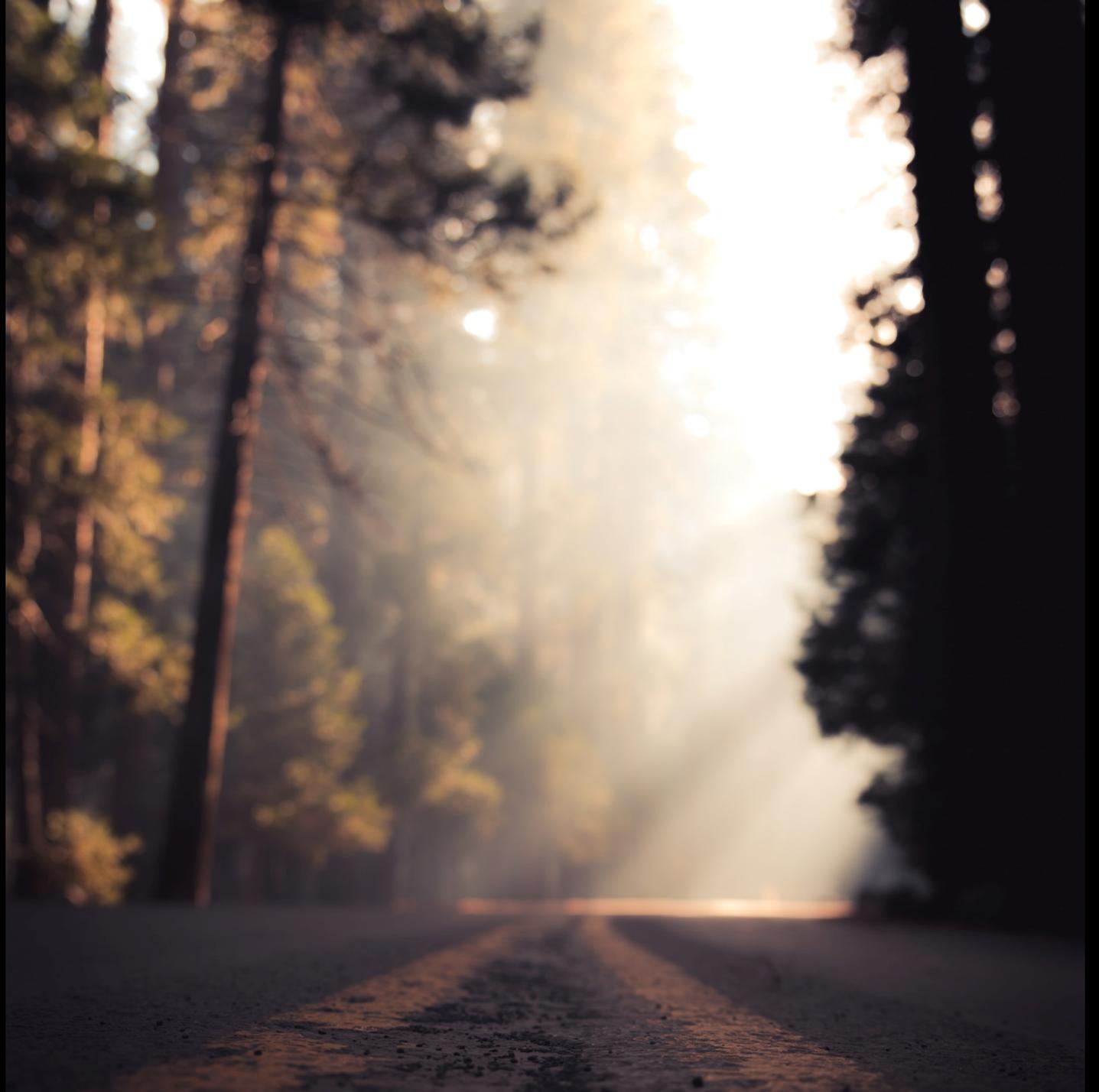


Critical thinking
is far from easy
and
encompasses
many skills



Outside of
academia...

Enter the
Critical
Thinking
Project



Evaluating reliability

- Take 5 minutes to compare two websites
 - <https://tinyurl.com/ACPweb2>
 - <https://tinyurl.com/AAPCyber>
- **Do you think either of these are reliable sources of information on bullying, its causes and means of prevention?**
 - I'm not asking whether they should be used in an assignment but whether you think they are reliable
 - You could say one is and one isn't or that both are reliable or both are unreliable, it's up to you
 - Answers via this link

<https://tinyurl.com/y38zgzhk>

The Critical Thinking Toolkit



12% COMPLETE

☰ What causes confirmation bias? ○

☰ How to counteract confirmation bias ○

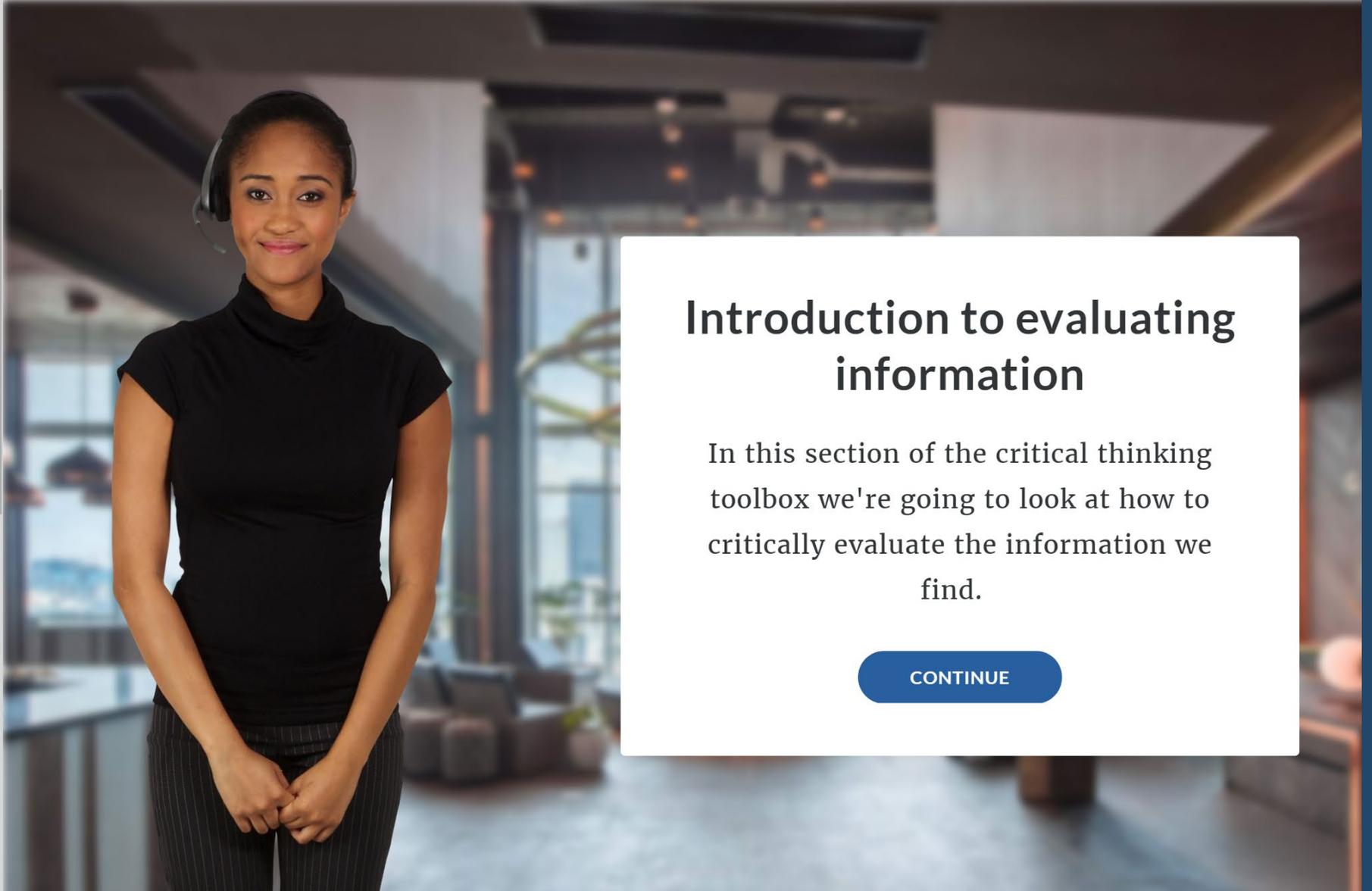
▼ CRITICALLY EVALUATING INFORMATION

☰ Introduction ✓

☰ Who's behind the information? ✓

☰ What's the evidence? ○

☰ What do other sources say? ○



Introduction to evaluating information

In this section of the critical thinking toolbox we're going to look at how to critically evaluate the information we find.

CONTINUE

Sample Lesson: Identifying critical writing

- A scaffolding approach to the process of developing critical academic writing:
- -reading academic books and journal articles
- -identifying themes in texts
- -making effective reading notes
- -building a synthesis of information
- -developing critical comments ('critical voice')
- -structuring a critical paragraph

CRITICAL READING

- ≡ Introduction
- ≡ Identifying themes
- ≡ Note making
- ≡ Synthesis

CRITICAL WRITING

- ≡ Introduction to critical writing
- ≡ Three voices
- ≡ Critical Paragraph Writing

Sample Lesson: Identifying critical writing

- Explore the lesson using the link in the chat box
- What aspects of the lesson would you consider using with your current student cohorts (e. g. specific level, or module?)
- What changes would you make to make this lesson more relevant to them?
- Add your comments to the chatbox

“ Critical writing draws together other aspects of critical thinking in order to present a forceful case to readers.

Stella Cottrell (2011)

Critical writing

Stella Cottrell (2013, p188) identifies the processes involved in critical writing

- 1 Being clear on **your position** on the subject
- 2 Constructing a clear **argument**
- 3 Presenting **evidence** to support your argument
- 4 Examining the subject from **multiple perspectives**
- 5 **Synthesising** ideas to construct your position

Descriptive vs Critical Writing

Sometimes students get feedback that their writing is too descriptive and not critical enough. It can be sometimes be difficult to pinpoint exactly what means in relation to your work.

Below are a number of statements relating to types of writing you may find in an assignment. Read each statement and decide if it is an example of critical or descriptive writing.

Reception

We run Open Programme workshops as well as the toolkit – In November, we had 218 registrations across 5 workshops.

Of those who left feedback, 90% rated the sessions as Good or Excellent



Representative
critical thinking
feedback
comments (LLS
Survey, 2020)

- I understood perfectly what critical thinking is and ways to improve my personal critical thinking ability (Confirmation bias workshop, 24 November 2020)
- Really great and informative workshop that helped me to understand the difference between a **critical voice** and **descriptive voice**. Thank you! (Turning critical thinking into critical writing, 14 October 2020)
- With this service, I am more confident with my writing skills and **critical analysis** skills. I'm so glad that DMU offer this kind of service. More power! (Tutorial, 27 November 2020)
- The session was really helpful and I am grateful for Anna as I learnt some new techniques, such as lateral reading. My confidence has grown when critically evaluating sources of information which will help me when preparing and planning my assignments. (Critically evaluating source of information, 25 November 2020)



**Plans for
the
future...**

References

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- Wineburg, S. and McGrew, S. (2017) *Lateral reading: reading less and learning more when evaluating digital information*. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3048994 (Accessed: 11 November 2020).

Photos

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