Why Critical Thinking?

The Problem:
Everyone thinks; it is our nature to do so. But much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or down-right prejudiced. Yet the quality of our life and that of what we produce, make, or build depends precisely on the quality of our thought. Shoddy thinking is costly, both in money and in quality of life. Excellence in thought, however, must be systematically cultivated.

A definition:
Critical thinking is the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it.

Suggested questions supervisors may use to promote student's use of critical thinking skills:

What are you trying to accomplish?
What is your central purpose?
What is the main idea here?
Can you explain this idea?
Can you give me an example?

What questions are you raising/addressing?
Are you considering the complexities in the question?

What information are you using in coming to that conclusion?
What experience have you had to support this claim?
What information do you need to settle the question?
Do you need more facts or do you need to rethink how you are labeling the facts?

How did you reach this conclusion?
Is there another way to interpret the information?
Is there an alternative plausible conclusion?

If someone accepted your position, what would be the implications?
What are you implying?

What are you taking for granted?
What assumption has led you to that conclusion?
From what point of view are you looking at this issue?
Is there another point of view you should consider?