

Thinking critically

- 1 Note that critical thinking is a powerful, highly prized, research skill.
- 2 Note in particular that thinking critically entails making judgments about such things as assumptions, claims, hypotheses, arguments, theories, and findings.
- 3 Recognise that, more specifically, critical thinking requires you to arrive at judgments about the value of such things.
- 4 So, when confronted with assumptions, claims, etc., explore such questions as:
 - a. 'How logical is this?'
 - b. 'How clear?'
 - c. 'How consistent?'
 - d. 'How accurate?'
 - e. 'How well supported by evidence?'
 - f. 'How important?'
 - g. 'How ethical?'
- 5 To help you develop that habit, practise when reading papers (or listening to presentations) generating lots of questions by using a range of interrogatives: What?; When?; Who?; Where?; Whence?; Whither?; How?; and Why?

This resource is published as the twenty-seventh in the Writing Protocols series.

Resources

Madsen Pirie, *How to win every argument* (Bloomsbury, 2015)

Darrell Huff, *How to lie with statistics* (Penguin, 1991)

Trisha Greenhaigh, *How to read a paper* (BMJ Books, 2014)

Stella Cottrell, *Critical thinking skills* (Palgrave, 2017)

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