

CRITIC*

This is an aid to critical thinking. It helps you get at the truth and at the same time increases your understanding of the subject matter. Apply it to what you read, what you hear at work and what you do in your classes. It will work just about anywhere.

Claim. Spell it out, Define it. Make it specific enough to be observable and measurable,

Role of the Claimant. Who is making the claim? Is there bias? Are they seeking money, fame? Are they selling something. The answers may suggest vigilance and caution.

Information Backing the Claim. Is it public? Can it be verified? Is it anecdotal or testimonial? Rate the quality of the information.

Test. How can we design an adequate, fair test? Were statistics used correctly?

Independent Testing. Were the testers unbiased? Were the results published? Was there peer review?

Cause Proposed. What is the cause for the claim. Is it consistent with the physical laws of the universe? Does it agree with what we know? What are the implications? Does Occam's Razor apply?

Adapted from Wayne Bartz's in the Sept/Oct 2002 issue of the Skeptical Inquirer.