

**Are you a more critical thinker than you realise?**

Critical thinking that follows the logic of enquiry is only an extension of what people do as part of everyday living. Over the last year or so, in your domestic or social life, have you:

- | <i>Type of Incident</i>  | <i>yes/No</i> |
|--|---------------|
| 1. tried to convince a friend about something that he or she doesn't believe?  |               |
| 2. questioned someone's strongly held opinion because they haven't enough evidence to support it?                              |               |
| 3. read claims in a newspaper or on television which you have not been ready to accept?  |               |
| 4. attempted to resolve others' disagreement or conflict?  |               |
| 5. changed your mind about an issue after you reflected on other people's points of view?                                      |               |
| 6. discovered that someone sees things differently from you because she or he holds different assumptions about the situation? |               |
| 7. planned how to find something out which will involve making some detailed enquiries?  |               |
| 8. weighed up different alternatives in working out how to solve a difficult problem?  |               |
| 9. drawn a sketch or diagram to explain a difficult idea to someone?   |               |
| 10. written a complaint setting out the basis of your grievance, or a thank-you note stating why you are grateful?             |               |

Add up the number of ticks. The more ticks you have, the more likely it is that you habitually think quite critically when you need to in your daily life, broadly consistent with the logic of enquiry. You evaluate others' arguments and develop your own. You ask questions, work out how to get answers, and find ways of explaining complicated ideas.

*Can you draw on some of the ways you think critically in everyday life in developing your ability to think critically in your academic work?*

## Comparing lists of Dos and Don'ts

There must be as many of these lists as there are people who compile them! Here is our list for maximising one's learning to think like an experienced management researcher.

### *Do*

1. See what can be learned from models of good practice in the literature by working out how the authors structure their argument and express themselves clearly.
2. Work on making your writing style as fluent as possible, so that the assessors can easily grasp the argument that you are trying to put across.
3. Build up the habit of asking questions and refining them to ensure that they focus tightly on what you need to find out.
5. Be prepared to contribute your thinking in discussions involving students or academics, having thought carefully about what you're going to say.
6. Put yourself in the position of your assessors and scrutinise your own writing from their point of view, to see how far it meets the criteria that the assessors will be using.

### *Don't*

1. Rush into writing for assessment without thinking through how to structure it so as to build up a clear argument that will be communicated and convincing to the assessors.
2. Try to impress your assessors by adopting a dense writing style relying on long complex sentences, in case it fails to communicate your argument to them.
3. Presuppose that you know precisely what you are going to find out, and try to confirm your prejudices rather than check them out through your investigations.
5. Be so talkative in discussions involving students or academics that you miss out on opportunities to learn from their thinking.
6. Be so self-absorbed that you focus only on what you want to say in your writing for assessment, and so fail to take into account the criteria the assessors will be referring to in judging your work.