

PMI: THE TREATMENT OF IDEAS

- P=Plus.** The good things about an idea – why you like it
M=Minus. The bad things about an idea – why you don't like it
I=Interest. What you find interesting about an idea

Instead of just saying that you like an idea, or don't like it, you can use a **PMI**. When you use a **PMI** you give the good points first, then the bad points, and then the points which are neither good nor bad, but are interesting. You can use a **PMI** as a way of treating ideas, suggestions and proposals. You can ask someone else to do a **PMI** on an idea or you may be asked to do one yourself.

EXAMPLE

Idea: All the seats should be taken out of buses.

- P:** More people can get into each bus.
It would be easier to get in and out.
Buses would be cheaper to make and to repair.
- M:** Passengers would fall over if the bus stopped suddenly.
Old people and disabled people would not be able to use buses.
It would be difficult to carry shopping bags or babies.
- I:** Interesting idea that might lead to two types of bus, one with and one without seats.
Interesting idea that the same bus would do more work.
Interesting idea that comfort may not be so important in a bus.

PRACTICE

1. By law all cars should be painted bright yellow.
2. People should wear badges showing whether they are in a good mood or bad mood that day.
3. All students should spend 3 months every year earning money.
4. Every adult should spend one week a year in the police force.
5. There should be a special TV channel for young people only.
- ★ 6. In many countries there is a jury system in which ordinary people assess whether an accused person is guilty or not. Some other countries do not have juries but have three judges who do all the assessment themselves. Do a **PMI** on this three-judge system.
- ★ 7. Do a **PMI** on the system which allows a lawyer to sue on behalf of a client and then to take a percentage of the damages awarded by the courts. If the lawyer does win the case, then he charges no fee.

PROCESS

DISCUSSION

- When is a **PMI** most useful?
- Does one always look at the good and bad points of an idea?
- Does a **PMI** waste time?
- Is it easy to do a **PMI**?

CAF: THE FACTORS INVOLVED

CAF=Consider All Factors.

When you have to choose or make a decision or just think about something, there are always many factors that you have to consider. If you leave out some of these factors, your choice may seem right at the time but will later turn out to be wrong. When you are looking at other people's thinking, you can try and see what factors they have left out.

EXAMPLE

Some years ago in a big city there was a law that all new buildings had to have large parking lots in the basement so that the people working in the building would have somewhere to park. After a while this law was changed because it was found to be a bad mistake. Why?

They had forgotten to consider the factor that providing parking lots would encourage everyone to drive in to work in their cars and so the traffic congestion on the road was worse than ever.

PRACTICE

1. A husband and wife go to buy a used car for their family. They consider all the following factors:

That the person selling it actually owns it.
The price of the car.
The type of car and the color.
The engine power and the speed of the car.
That all the mechanical parts are working perfectly.
That it is big enough for the family.

PRACTICE (continued)

2. Do a full **CAF** on the factors involved in choosing a career.
3. An inventor has invented a breakfast pill which is very tiny but contains all the food and vitamins you need. After you have eaten the pill you do not feel hungry for five hours. Should this pill be allowed. What are the factors involved?
4. What are the factors involved in choosing your hairstyle?
5. If you were interviewing someone to be a teacher, what factors would you consider?
- ★ 6. The textile workers in a country demand protection from foreign imports which are coming into the country at a lower price and taking over the market. What factors should a government consider in this matter?
- ★ 7. There is a plan to turn a golf course on the edge of a growing town into a new shopping center. This is backed by business and the consumers but opposed by environmentalists. What factors should be considered in the final decision?

PROCESS

Discussion:

- Is it easy to leave out important factors?
- When is it most important to consider all the factors?
- What is the difference between **PMI** and **CAF**?
- What happens when other people leave out certain factors?
- Do you need to consider all factors or only the most important ones?