Mission Critical: Are You Sure About That?

My first blog post will be more about who I am and less about what I have to say. The posts afterward will be the opposite. I’m dedicating the content of my blog not to personal pontification, but to showcasing the accessibility and diversity of the knowledge and wisdom in the community.

This could be from faculty, classes, or a conversation on the street. Wherever it comes from, I want to present not what to think, but ways of thinking, arguments, stories — all to show you my journey in learning how to think. Critically. I welcome comments and hope that, at the very least, it gets read. That’d be enough for me.

I’m a sophomore public health and philosophy dual major with a concentration in bioethics, a research assistant to Dr. Dean Robinson (one of the CHC Murray professors), a member of the Emerging Scholars cohort of ’21 and the Community Scholars Program (CSP) cohort of ’20, and an RA in James residence hall. I’ll try not to say a lot about myself because, hopefully, my writings will eventually show who I am, what I do, where I go, and what I care about.

This anecdote comes from CSP, which is instructed by Dr. Deborah Keisch. Dr. Keisch shared a podcast that focused on answering the question, “How do we know what we know?” and, consequently, “How do we know what we don’t know?” The example touched on the idea of generally accepted truths, whatever those may be for you.

How many of you believe the earth revolves around the sun? Probably most. How many of you know how this was proven? I couldn’t tell you the exact methods that were used to disprove geocentrism off the top of my head, yet I claim heliocentrism arbitrarily, having accepted it as convincing.

If I don’t truly know the reasons but I accept the conclusion, can I then claim it as a fact? Or is it opinion?
Think of all the information that professors — just to name a shared source — throw at you. How do you decide what is acceptable?

Credit goes to Honors lecturer Dr. Susan Ware for reminding me of two things: End with a good conclusion, and despite shortcomings of knowledge, it’s important to recognize that what’s repeatable and viable is deserving of your good faith.

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