



May 2024

Government Procurement Services

This newsletter informs government purchasing and contracting professionals about public procurement topics.

UPCOMING CLASSES:

[Writing Statements of Work](#)

(Virtual)

[May 15, 2024](#)

[Purchasing 101 for Everyone](#)

(Arlington)

[May 21, 2024](#)

[Contract Administration](#)

(Arlington)

[May 22, 2024](#)



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**Critical Thinking - The
Foundation of Effective
Decision-Making**

Training Schedule



As a procurement professional, your role is pivotal in making sound, practical decisions every day. The significance of critical thinking skills in this process cannot be overstated. They equip us to evaluate options, anticipate outcomes, and ultimately, make better decisions.

At the heart of critical thinking is questioning so-called 'facts' and not accepting them at face value. This approach, when applied to the 'facts' we encounter, can lead to a deeper understanding and more informed decision-making.

I discovered the **FIRST** method for critical analysis from Noom, a behavioral science weight loss management plan. I realized that the **FIRST** method can be applied to any decision-making process, making it a valuable skill for all professionals.

Funding - If it is a study - who paid for it? Was it a non-biased study, or was the study paid for by the people who benefited from the results of the study? You may have to do additional research to determine whether the source is reliable or biased.



Group Discounts Available

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

**May 22, 2024
November 5, 2024**

ESSENTIALS OF CONTRACT MANAGEMENT
December 4-5, 2024

ETHICS AND FRAUD IN CONTRACTING
**September 25, 2024
November 19, 2024**

FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC PURCHASING
**October 8-9, 2024
November 12-13, 2024**

NEGOTIATION SKILLS
October 23, 2024

PROCUREMENT MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

Investigation - Was there an experiment? If so, did it look at cause and effect or a correlation (how are x and y related)? Example: Crime rates and ice cream consumption both increase in the summer. But that doesn't mean that eating ice cream increases the crime rate!

Results - Are the results from a respected, peer-reviewed academic journal, or were they written by some random blogger with zero citations? A good study will suggest a finding, but it won't typically prove anything with 100% certainty. It is important to distinguish between credible sources and those that lack credibility.

Subjects - How extensive was the study? Did it only examine a dozen women in their 60s, all named Nancy? If the information provides statistics about a particular issue, what methodology was used to collect the data, and how large was the sample size?

Time - How long ago was the study done? How long did the study run? A study that lasts three months is often more reliable than one that lasts three days or three hours.

These skills can be used beyond our procurement careers. Our personal lives are filled with news stories, internet articles, social media posts, and other information sources. Using the **FIRST** method for critical analysis can help us to differentiate between fact and fiction.

July 9-10, 2024
August 13-14, 2024
October 16, 2024
December 10-11, 2024

**PURCHASING 101
FOR EVERYONE**

May 21, 2024
August 6, 2024
December 4, 2024

**SPECIFICATION
WRITING**

September 26, 2024
December 19, 2024

**USING REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS**

July 24, 2024
November 21, 2024

**WRITING STATEMENTS
OF WORK**

May 15, 2024
October 22, 2024
November 7, 2024

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Question:

"During the Competitive Sealed Proposal (CSP) opening, are prices announced publicly?"



Answer:

A public bid opening is "*the process of opening and reading bids at the time and place specified in a solicitation and in the presence of anyone who wishes to attend.*" [NIGP Dictionary of Terms]

Public bid openings are generally held for formal bids, which are solicitations that exceed the entity's informal threshold. Most local governments in Texas have a formal bid threshold of \$50,000 or greater, while the State of Texas has a formal bid threshold of \$25,000 or greater.

For **Competitive Sealed Proposals**, only the names of the respondents are read, no prices. Since proposals can be negotiated, the entity's negotiation power will significantly diminish if all prices are read at the opening. However, once a contract is awarded, all prices become public information.

There is an exception for Competitive Sealed Proposals for construction procurement. Texas Government Code 2269.154 requires that prices be read aloud: "*The governmental entity shall receive, publicly open, and read aloud the names*

of the offerors and any monetary proposals made by the offerors."

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