CPR: CELEBRATE-PROBLEMATIZE-RECREATE
A routine for the critical analysis and application of new information & ideas

After reading a text, watching a movie, or being presented with new information or ideas in some manner, ask yourself as a learner to:

CELEBRATE
What are the core ideas being offered? What is most exciting, interesting, and insightful about them?

PROBLEMATIZE
What are the potential problems or downsides? What are alternative points of view to the ones being offered? You may want to prioritize these problems from most to least serious.

RECREATE
How might we address the most important problems we have identified? How might we plan to improve on the core ideas being presented or update them to fit our current situation or context?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?
The routine provides learners with a structure for looking critically at new ideas and pushes them toward application of those ideas.

Application: When and where can it be used?
As learners we often encounter new ideas, proposals, theories and so on. Often we listen superficially or read uncritically without recognizing what the important contribution of the new idea or proposal is. The “Celebration” step forces us to identify that and helps us to avoid negativity or automatic rejection. However, we also want to avoid uncritical acceptance of new ideas. The “Problematize” step forces us to examine things critically. Finally, we sometime merely take in the new information without considering it as a source for action. The “Recreate” step helps identify applications and address problems.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?
After presenting students with new information, ideas, theories, propositions or the like; tell them that when we encounter new ideas presented by ourselves or others it is important that we not just “take them in” as information but that give them critical consideration. Tell students it is useful to begin this process by identifying and celebrate just what the contribution being made is. What are the core ideas? What’s interesting and new? Students can record these on sticky notes, in their journals, or in a Google document. Share and discuss these. Ask students for elaboration using “What makes you say that?” or “Why did that stand out for you?”

After “Celebrating” the ideas, move to problematize them. Tell students that it is important not to merely accept things uncritically. Ask them to identify the problems, alternative viewpoints, or downsides to the proposition. Again share these, asking for elaboration. It will be helpful to have some kind of documentation either on the white board, Google documents, chart paper, or sticky notes. Discuss with the class how these can be prioritized from least to most serious concerns.

Finally, ask students to begin to transform the information. It may be helpful to discuss how this stage is where information begins to take on real value. It is not our knowledge of ideas but what we are able to do with ideas that the world values. Ask students to seek out applications, solve identified problems, and/or improve on the core ideas.