


The workshop will start shortly.

To help things run smoothly:

- Open this webpage on your browser:
<http://bit.ly/critrdg>
- Check that your speakers, headphones or headset are connected and working.
- Turn your microphone off when not speaking.
- Post first in chat if you have questions or issues; I will unmute you to speak.
- If you lose connection, please try to reconnect as soon as possible.



Critical (Academic) Reading Workshop

25 August 2020

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Introduction

This workshop aims to help you read academic texts critically.

I am an Applied Linguist and PhD researcher. I have taught academic reading and writing for several years. You can find out more about me at <http://hsiaoyun.net/>

Agenda

- ❑ Activity 1 (5 minutes)
- ❑ Evaluating academic sources
- ❑ Activity 2 (20 minutes)
- ❑ BREAK (5 minutes)
- ❑ A mental map for finding your way through academic lit
- ❑ Activity 3 (40 minutes)
- ❑ 1-minute paper

Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Take a few minutes to think about the difficulties you have encountered when reading academic texts. Share them [here](#). Comment on your classmates' answers if you can.

Evaluating academic sources

The CRAAP Test

Currency: *The timeliness of the information.*

- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Does your topic require current information, or will older sources work as well?
- Are the links functional?

Relevance: *The importance of the information for your needs.*

- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable citing this source in your research paper?

Authority: *The source of the information.*

- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- What are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations?
- Is the author qualified to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or email address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
examples: .com .edu .gov .org .net

Accuracy: *The reliability, truthfulness and correctness of the content.*

- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem unbiased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar or typographical errors?

Purpose: *The reason the information exists.*

- What is the purpose of the information? Is it to inform, teach, sell, entertain or persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact, opinion or propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?

Activity 2 (20 minutes)

In your breakout rooms, discuss how you can apply the CRAAP Test to the article *Peer assessment in a test-dominated setting: Empowering, boring or facilitating examination preparation?*

You can comment by annotating the article [here](#) (it works just like commenting on Word; permission to use mic/camera is not necessary).

BREAK

5 minutes

A mental map for finding your way through academic lit

Where on the “map” of academic literature do you think the text belongs?

Adapted from Poulson & Wallace (2012) and Wallace & Wray (2016) by Dr Kramer-Dahl

Components of the Mental Map	Aspects to Consider When Locating the Text
Three types of literature that inform understanding of and/or practice in the social world	Whether the account dominantly informs theory, research or practice/policy.
Three kinds of knowledge that are expressed in the literature about a phenomenon in the social world	Whether the knowledge is primarily developed by systematically reflecting on, investigating or taking action in the social world; Whether the claims are primarily based on a system of connected concepts, empirical evidence obtained through the collection and analysis of data, or knowledge generated in prior inquiry
Three kinds of intellectual purposes for studying that produce literature about the social world	Whether the authors’ main reason for undertaking their project is: (1) aiming to understand, (2) critically evaluate and challenge, or (3) improve others’ or own practice through research and evaluation; Depending on reasons for project, typical questions, (1) What happens and why? (2) What is wrong with what happens and why? and (3) How effective are interventions/is my action to improve practice? What the value stance adopted towards what is being studied (e.g. practice, policy) is: (1) relatively impartial, (2) negative, or (3) positive.
Two dimensions of variation among knowledge claims about the social world that affect their vulnerability to critique	Authors’ tentativeness or certainty about their claims and their willingness to generalise, relative to the amount and type of evidence available

Guide to critically analysing an academic text

Adapted from
Poulson & Wallace
(2012) and Edwards
(2000) by Dr
Kramer-Dahl

Critical analysis Questions	Sub-questions unpacking the questions
1. Why am I reading this text?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) What is my purpose and context for reading this text? (b) Do I have specific questions that I am asking of this text?
2. What are the authors trying to achieve in this text, and how do they do it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) What type of literature does this text belong to, and what main kind of knowledge does it aim to generate? (b) What is the authors' overarching purpose for the study? (c) What value stance do the authors adopt towards their object of investigation? (d) What do the authors see as their main contribution? I.e. What gap in our understanding, in the authors' view, does their study address? (e) How have the authors structured their text globally to achieve their purpose?
3. What are the authors' main claims?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) What is the overall argument the authors make? (b) How would you summarise what the authors aim to do in this text and their main findings in your own words in two or three sentences? (c) What are 3-4 of the most significant claims made by the authors? (d) How clear and explicit are these claims? (e) Do they fit together in support of the larger argument? (f) How certain and generalised are the claims? Are they made with some degree of tentativeness? Do they acknowledge validity beyond the context from which the claim was derived?
4. How convincing are these claims and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) What, if any, range of sources is used to back up the claims (e.g. own research evidence, reference to work of others; own practical experiences)? (b) If claims are mainly based on authors' own investigation, how reliable and credible is the evidence (judging from the range of sources, methodology and methods employed, account of data collection and analysis)? (c) Are the claims framed by a particular theoretical or conceptual framework? If so, are the key concepts clearly defined, consistently used and aligned with the way others have used them? (d) To what extent are the claims supported or challenged by the work of others? Do the authors refer to the work of others to support their claims? Acknowledge and discuss counterevidence from the work of others? (e) To what extent do the claims align with my experience? (While the social world investigated in the text is likely not identical with the one you have experienced, the claims being made may have major similarities with your experience and be assessed for their feasibility given your experience.)

Activity 3 (40 minutes)

In your breakout rooms, critically analyse (as a group) the same article using the guide in the previous slide.

As before, you can comment by annotating the article [here](#) (it works just like commenting on Word).

1-minute paper

This has been a very brief introduction! With time and experience, you will find academic reading easier.

Please spend the last minute answering the last three questions [here](#).

In the next few days I will email you some follow-up comments and feedback. You can also email me at hsiaoyun.chan@nie.edu.sg / hsiaoyun.chan@gmail.com, or text me on [Telegram](#).

Take care, and stay safe!