

The purpose of these assignments is to help you learn how to critically read a research article and decide how it may or may not directly apply to your research project. These critiques are not designed to be outlines but critical readings of past research. Don't just read and write for the critique assignments as if they exist in a vacuum... force yourself to think about how these concepts apply directly and indirectly to your research project. If you realize the article may not directly apply to your research, think about how the concepts apply to research in your field of study or your future profession and what questions it raises in your mind or what concepts it clarifies.

If you have questions about how these concepts apply to your project or future profession, don't be afraid to bring these questions up when meeting with your research mentor. Don't just be a passenger, be an active participant in the process of designing and implementing your research project.

Assignment Basics: You are required to submit **at least 3**, 2-3 page article critiques over the course of the semester (see Syllabus for exact due dates). These should follow the convention and style for your field (APA, MLA, Chicago) and will lose points for improper grammar and spelling. You should address the points below in your own words, although you may use quotes from the article if you find them particularly relevant. Make sure to cite the page number if you use a direct quote.

Articles should be chosen from peer-reviewed sources or other scholarly publications. Articles from sources such as Wikipedia, news websites (MSN, CNN, etc.) are designed for mass consumption, are not considered scholarly work, and will not be accepted. Consult with your Faculty Mentor to select articles from the accepted journals and sources in your discipline.

Format

1. Your name and the number of the Article critique (1, 2, 3, ...) should be at the top left corner of the page.
2. **Include a copy of the article with your critique (see #4 below).**
3. Provide your observations of the article with the following to guide your thinking:
 - a. Abstract: A concise summary of the study
 - b. Rationale: What is the reason for conducting the study?
 - c. Purpose: What does the researcher intend to accomplish?
 - d. Method
 - i. Participants: How were participants or samples selected? Assigned? Which, if any, were lost?
 - ii. Apparatus: Were measuring instruments and tests reliable? Valid?
 - iii. Procedure: What did participants do? How were they measured? With what? Who measured them? Were testing conditions uniform? Were additional factors operating?
 - iv. Results: How were the data analyzed? Was the analysis appropriate? Accurate?

- v. Discussion: What were the major conclusions? Are they justified (valid)? Can results be generalized? To which population(s)?
4. Briefly identify how this source is relevant to your research project. As background material, data collection methods, analytical techniques, etc.? Is the source integral or peripheral to the successful completion of the project?
 5. The critiques must be submitted as an email attachment (.doc or .docx format). If your source is also in a format (DOC, PDF, HTML, etc.), it can be attached to the assignment submission as well; otherwise, please submit a hardcopy of the source to accompany the critique.

Below are questions to consider that may help with your critique.

1. How many parts are there to the study? How is the work organized: by subject, issue, theme? What space is allocated to each part? Do the pieces fit together?
2. What is the author's main purpose in writing the piece? Is it political? Why is the author writing this piece now? What is the BIG or hidden message?
3. What are the main arguments and questions being presented? What drives the article?
4. How are the words being spent? Words have two values: the designated meaning should be consistent throughout and the expressive value must be accurate.
5. What meaning does this work have for scholars within this discipline? Does it inform us about thought and/or practice?
6. Is the work credible? What is the evidence?
7. What theoretical perspective is articulated or implied?
8. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments?
9. Does the author provide primary or secondary evidence? How strong is the argument? How convincing is it? Is the evidence sufficient to sustain the argument? What other sources could have been used? Are the selected sources appropriate?
10. What assumptions does the author make and which of these should be questioned?
11. What are the strengths, weaknesses, omissions, limitations of the article?
12. What areas does the author emphasize or neglect/omit; what is NOT in the article?
13. How are the critical issues stitched together? Is the logic appropriate?
14. What values does the author project?
15. Are the main arguments explicit or implicit or both?
16. Consistency: are the meanings of words used consistently throughout? You want to avoid intellectual and linguistic "slippage", e.g. re the term, progressive; one person's meaning is different from another.
17. What is the author's central thesis? What is she (he, they) trying to do in the piece? What are the most important or new ideas presented?
18. What is the theoretical framework being employed? How is it used?
19. What does this piece contribute to our understanding of issues such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or other factors?
20. What assumptions about gender, race, class, etc. are implicit? Why do you think the author holds these views? Do you agree or disagree with the author(s) views?
21. What criticisms can you make? Do you find any particular bias in the reading? What is missing in this piece? Are there glaring defects? Are these trivial or fundamental?
22. Relate critical issues to similar work by other authors. How does this piece compare to what we have read so far? Use any dimension that seems useful to you for your comparison (e.g., topic, tone, ideas, thesis, approach, method, etc.)
23. How does the work stand up to criticism?

Scoring Rubric for Article Critiques

75 points possible = 65 (up to 10 points extra credit available if standards are exceeded)

Dimension/Characteristic	Performance Level			
	Exceeds Standard (15)	Meets Standard (14)	Approaches Standard (13)	Doesn't Meet Standard (0)
<p>Conventions and Style: Appropriate conventions of writing are evident (i.e., correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, etc.). The critique should also be word-processed in 12-point font, single-spaced with one-line spaces between paragraphs, and have 1" margins. Critique follows formatting guidelines of reviewer's discipline.</p>				
<p>Flow: The critique flows in a logical and accessible manner. Overall the critique is well-structured, easy to read and follow, and is therefore accessible to the reader. The writing should be concise yet informative.</p>				
<p>Description of study: A concise and accurate summary of the critiqued study is provided. This description sufficiently describes the study so that readers are informed of its purpose, actions taken, methods of data collection used, results, and conclusions or lessons learned.</p>				
<p>Critique of research study: The critique offers comment on both the strengths and areas that require improvement in the study reviewed. Comments in these areas should be grounded in what we have learned about good practice in educational research generally.</p>				
<p>Reflection on personal meaning of study: The critique makes a genuine attempt to find personal relevance or meaning in the findings of the report in a thoughtful, reflective manner. Despite limited research experience, the critic attempts to answer the question: what does this study say to me as an early-career educational researcher.</p>				

Comments: