

RECOGNIZING AND MAKING CRITICAL JUDGMENT

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this subject is to try to make and recognize critical judgment over a book. After learning about these topics, the students are expected to be able to make a critical review over a book, article or passage based on fact and related info of the text. Further, they can critic a text it in a news or journal.

After learning about critical judgment, students are expected to have some basic competencies: 1. Understand how to recognize a critical review. 2. Know how to make a critical review from the news or journals. Students are able to: 1. Arrange the steps in making the critical review from the news or journals. 2. Make the critical review from the news or journals.

Key Words : *Judgement, Critical, Recognizing*

Recognizing Critical Thinking, Critical Review, And Making Critical Judgment Discussion

Making critical judgment implies an attempt at objective judging so as to determine both merits and faults. Critical reading is thoughtful reading because it requires that the reader recognize not only what is being said at the literal level but also facts, opinions, attitudes, inferences, and bias. You show good judgment – or lack of it – through the kinds of facts and opinion. Good Judgment: Using the critical thinking process to form an opinion or reach a conclusion.

Critical Thinking

What is Critical Thinking ? Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally about what to do or what to believe. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking. Someone with critical thinking skills is able to do the following :

- understand the logical connections between ideas
- identify, construct and evaluate arguments
- detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- solve problems systematically
- identify the relevance and importance of ideas
- reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values

Critical thinking is not a matter of accumulating information. A person with a good

memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily good at critical thinking. A critical thinker is able to deduce consequences from what he knows, and he knows how to make use of information to solve problems, and to seek relevant sources of information to inform him.

Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or being critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used in exposing fallacies and bad reasoning, critical thinking can also play an important role in cooperative reasoning and constructive tasks. Critical thinking can help us acquire knowledge, improve our theories, and strengthen arguments. We can use critical thinking to enhance work processes and improve social institutions.

Some people believe that critical thinking hinders creativity because it requires following the rules of logic and rationality, but creativity might require breaking rules. This is a misconception. Critical thinking is quite compatible with thinking "out-of-the-box", challenging consensus and pursuing less popular approaches. If anything, critical thinking is an essential part of creativity because we need critical thinking to evaluate and improve our creative ideas.

Knowingly or unknowingly, you make critical judgment all the time from deciding on the type of toothpaste to buy to choosing a topic for an English theme.

The trick is to always be aware of your critical judgment and to know the reasoning behind your decision. Further you must be aware of the

judgment the author is making and you must also be aware of the judgment you make based on your own.

After we know about critical thinking, we also should know what an actual critical review is, because critical review relates to making critical judgment.

Critical Review

What is Critical Review

A critical review (sometimes called a critique, critical commentary, critical appraisal, critical analysis) is a detailed commentary on and critical evaluation of a text.

What is meant by critical

To be critical does not mean to criticize in an exclusively negative manner. To be critical of a text means you question the information and opinions in the text, in an attempt to evaluate or judge its worth overall.

What is meant by evaluation

An evaluation is an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a text. This should relate to specific criteria, in the case of a research article. You have to understand the purpose of each section, and be aware of the type of information and evidence that are needed to make it convincing, before you can judge its overall value to the research article as a whole. Each section of a research article has a particular job to do in the article. You need to be clear what each section is meant to do, before you can weigh up how effectively it actually does it.

Planning and writing the review

- **Work through each section in detail**, using the criteria provided above, and make brief notes.

How far does each section match up to what it should do?

Are there particular strengths and limitations in each section?

Why? Explain your thinking. You may need some evidence to support your view; for example, if you think that a sample of ten participants seemed quite small, you should try to find a similar study that has used more than ten, to cite as a comparison.

- **Plan and write your draft**

A short critical review should have a brief introduction, simply providing the

subject of the research and the author, and outlining the structure you will be using.

The simplest way to structure a critical review is to write a paragraph or two about each section of the study in turn. Within your discussion of each section, you should first sum up the main points such as the key findings, or methodology used, to show your understanding. After this, you could present the strengths and weaknesses, as you see them, of the section, with an explanation of your thinking, and evidence.

It is useful to plan out each section of your review as a short list, or bullet points, so that you can see that you have included everything.

- **Final draft**

You should point out the **strengths** of the study to show you are aware of their importance, as in:

‘These results *are consistent with* the aims of the research...’

‘The findings *are clearly presented* using diagrams and a graph...’

‘The discussion *consistently relates* the key findings to research discussed earlier...’

When you identify **weaknesses**, you should use a cautious, objective style. You can use such phrases as:

‘This sample *seems* fairly small in view of...’

‘It *might have been helpful* to provide more details of...’

‘There is no explanation for the absence of any literature after 2003.’

It *would have been useful* to know why this was the case.’

How to Write a Critical Review of a Journal Article

What is a Critical Review of a Journal Article

A critical review of a journal article evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of an article's ideas and content. It provides description, analysis and interpretation that allow readers to assess the article's value.

Before You Read the Article

- What does the title lead you to expect about the article?
- Study any sub-headings to understand how the author organized the content.
- Read the abstract for a summary of the author's arguments.
- Study the list of references to determine what research contributed to the author's

arguments. Are the references recent? Do they represent important work in the field?

- If possible, read about the author to learn what authority he or she has to write about the subject.
- Consult Web of Science to see if other writers have cited the author's work. (Please see 'How to use E-Indexes'.) Has the author made an important contribution to the field of study?

Reading the Article: Points to Consider

Read the article carefully. Record your impressions and note sections suitable for quoting.

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the author's purpose? To survey and summarize research on a topic? To present an argument that builds on past research? To refute another writer's argument?
- Does the author define important terms?
- Is the information in the article fact or opinion? (Facts can be verified, while opinions arise from interpretations of facts.) Does the information seem well-researched or is it unsupported?
- What are the author's central arguments or conclusions? Are they clearly stated? Are they supported by evidence and analysis?
- If the article reports on an experiment or study, does the author clearly outline methodology and the expected result?
- Is the article lacking information or argumentation that you expected to find?
- Is the article organized logically and easy to follow?
- Does the writer's style suit the intended audience? Is the style stilted or unnecessarily complicated?
- Is the author's language objective or charged with emotion and bias?
- If illustrations or charts are used, are they effective in presenting information?

Prepare an Outline

Read over your notes. Choose a statement that expresses the central purpose or thesis of your review. When thinking of a thesis, consider the author's intentions and whether or not you think those intentions were successfully realized. Eliminate all notes that do not relate to your thesis. Organize your remaining points into separate groups such as points about structure, style, or argument. Devise a logical sequence for

presenting these ideas. Remember that all of your ideas must support your central thesis.

Write the First Draft

The review should begin with a complete citation of the article. For example:

Platt, Kevin M. F. "History and Despotism, or: Hayden White vs. Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great." *Rethinking History* 3:3 (1999) : 247-269.

NOTE: Use the same bibliographic citation format as you would for any bibliography, works cited or reference list. It will follow a standard documentation style such as MLA or APA.

The **first paragraph** may contain:

- a statement of your thesis
- the author's purpose in writing the article
- comments on how the article relates to other work on the same subject
- information about the author's reputation or authority in the field

The **body** of the review should:

- state your arguments in support of your thesis
- follow the logical development of ideas that you mapped out in your outline
- include quotations from the article which illustrate your main ideas

The **concluding** paragraph may:

- summarize your review
- restate your thesis

Revise the First Draft

Ideally, you should leave your first draft for a day or two before revising. This allows you to gain a more objective perspective on your ideas. Check for the following when revising:

- grammar and punctuation errors
- organization, logical development and solid support of your thesis
- errors in quotations or in references

You may make major revisions in the organization or content of your review during the revision process. Revising can even lead to a radical change in your central thesis.

Making Judgment

To evaluate or to judge what you read you must attempt to answer such questions as these:

- Is the author telling the truth as far as he knows it?
- Does he know the truth?
- Is he prejudiced?

- Does he have an ax to grind?

What are his ideas and claims worth to me?

In the following paragraphs some standards of evaluation are discussed.

A One-Side Presentation Details.

Next let us evaluate two paragraphs making use of particulars and details in support of an argument.

Much of this masculine point of view or course is due to the fact that man is giving to vain (if sometimes glorious) imaginings, whereas woman is realistic. I utter nothing new or revolutionary in saying this. For confirmation of the truism that imagination is peculiarly masculine, one need only recall that all the fairy tales of the world have been, and continue to be, written by men. I give you Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, Homer, Virgil, the spinner of Scheherazade's adventures, the Arab storyteller in the market place, the Indian creator of mythology, the ancient Hebrews who accounted for the beginnings of life. At the same time, masculine imagination creates the Casper Milquetoasts of the -world. They people life with terrors of their own devising and then become frightened by their own creations; they defeat themselves before ever getting a start.

Anonymous proved his claim that men are imaginative, women realistic? It seems so. But wait Here is a paragraph taking the view:

I just don't understand this man. He says men are imaginative, are realistic. "For confirmation of this truism," he says, "I give you Hans Christian Andersen, the Brothers Grimm, Andrew Lang, Virgil, and the nameless spinner of Scheherazade's adventures" O.K., Anonymous, two can play at gift giving. I give you Marie de France, the Sisters Bronte, Beatrix Potter, Selma Lagerlof, lady, Laura E., Richards, Helen Bannerman, Lily F. Wessethoeft, and Beatrice Lillie. No, on second thought I think I'll keep Betrice Lillie. You don't deserve her, and I doubt if you could manage her. You see E.B. White gives us some details that Anonymous has left so you can see that Anonymous's argument is not worth what it seemed to be.

These paragraphs by anonymous and E.B. White illustrate the difficulty you may have in evaluating an argument supported by particulars and details. If you are not familiar with a given

subject, you may easily be misled by a one-sided presentation of details. The will appear logical to you because you do not know that supporting an opposing argument have been left out. How can you cope intelligently with this difficulty? How can you whether opposing details have not been presented? These are not questions to answer, for the truth about many problems is hard to find out, even here in the United States, where, normally, we are free from censorship. One thing you can do is to seek deliberately for **opposing arguments**. If you are in the habit of reading only one, find some magazine with a different editorial policy and read it too. Read newspapers and books written from different points of view Another thing you can do is to keep an open mind. Remember, not seemingly plausible argument is sound.

Misleading Comparison.

Let us examine a selection in which a conclusion is reached by paring one animal with another. What is your evaluation of the result?

The cat is a stupid animal, incapable of learning any tricks. Whoever heard of a cat who would play dead or shake hands? The dog, on the other hand, is quick to learn. He can be taught to beg, to shake hands, to fetch his master's slippers, and to guard, even with his own life, his master's child. The cat is stubborn; she does as she pleases. If a child tries to play with her and she way. But a dog is obedient and dog's ears are sensitive), 'only that baby love him and pat on the head.

The cat is selfish and lacking in affection. She prefers being left in a cozy spot by the fire to being petted and played with. But the dog is most loving. He lives, not by meat alone, but by the affection caresses of his master. Dogs have been known to refuse food and even to die when a beloved master has left them.

Clearly, the dog is a much better pet than the cat. If you don't know cats or dogs, this selection may seem logical. But before you accept the conclusion that the dog is a better pet than the cat, read the following selection: The dog is filthy fellow. He litters the dooryard with bones, old shoes, and other things he drags in. He wades through mud but protests when he is given a bath.

The cat, however, is clean. She never litters the house or the lawn, and she constantly washes herself, thus keeping her coat glossy and beautiful. The dog appears more intelligent than

he is because he aims to please. By patience, repetition, and praise, his master can teach him to perform many tricks. And if the dog is given food as a reward, he will learn more quickly than otherwise.

But the cat is shrewd. She knows how to get what she wants. A Persian cat once learned to pretend that she wanted to be let outside in order to get her mistress out of bed. But when Miss Green got up, Pussy always went straight to the refrigerator, where the food was kept. The cat, though affectionate (how she loves to be stroked), is independent. She is a free animal and will not cringe or fawn for favors. But the dog is servile. Whip him, and he comes crawling like a slave. Truly, the cat, unlike the dog, is a noble animal, one worth y of respect.

Now you can see that, like the method of supporting a statement by details, the method of comparison and contrast may be misleading if important details are left out. In the two selections concerning the dog and the cat, neither has made use of false details; yet, as a whole, each selection is misleading and false.

The Method of Repetition

Repetition of a slogan is a method of advertising which calls for alertness rather than for evaluation. It is used without supporting evidence and may give the reader or listener no opportunity for thought. The way in which it may mislead us is insidious; it works subtly. The first time we hear the refrain "that Rosebud look" and we are told that we can have it "in just ten days" we may laugh. After we have heard it a hundred times, it may sink into our subconscious, and we may find ourselves thinking that the use of Rosebud soap really will give us a beautiful, rose-petal-soft skin. And so it goes with a dozen other slogans, "the prevention lotion," "not a sore throat in a train load," "they thrill," "she's engaged she uses wonder crème" – after we have heard them along enough, we may believe them.

Faulty Cause-to-Effect Reasoning

Another thing to watch for as you read is faulty cause-to-effect reasoning. A common difficulty in cause-to-effect reasoning is distinguishing between a true cause of an event or condition and something which merely went before that event or condition.

Example 1

On my way to the grocery. I saw a black cat. On

my way home, I dropped a dozen eggs. Did the black cat cause me to drop the eggs? Well, on my trip to the grocery, I saw other things besides the black cat: a bed of yellow jonquils, a brilliant cardinal and his reddish brown mate, a wriggling puppy, a curly-headed baby holding onto his mother's hand. Why, then, should I say that, out of all the things I saw, the black cat brought me my bad luck? Very likely it was my own carelessness which was responsible.

Example 2

I had a cold last week. I went to bed, took aspirin and soda. In four days the cold was practically gone. Did the aspirin and soda cure it? Or the bed rest? If you ask your doctor, he'll probably tell you that many colds get better in four days' time, no matter what remedies are used or not used. So, you see, an event or condition is not necessarily caused by an event or condition immediately preceding it.

Conclusion

After learning about critical judgment, students are expected to have some basic competencies:

1. Understand how to recognize a critical review.
2. Know how to make a critical review from the news or journals.

Students are able to :

1. Arrange the steps in making the critical review from the news or journals.
2. Make the critical review from the news or journals.

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