Reading & Note-taking for AMS

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Introduction

Aims:

1. Practice Activities for Social Science reading
2. General Strategies – literal to critical reading
3. Note-taking Strategies
4. Reading for Research: general overview and discussion
Reading for Research

*Exercise 1:*

In groups, what are some difficulties you have in reading social sciences? (Either ones you expect or have already experienced)
Reading for Research

Exercise 2:

In writing a 10,000 word report, what are some primary purposes to read a text?

Be specific rather than general:
X To review the literature (too general)
✓ To locate 2-3 major works related to my research topic (better)
Reading for Research

Exercise 3:

- Establish a purpose at different stages of writing is important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Purpose for Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to Submission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beyond word for word reading

Two levels of reading: literal and evaluative

- Laufer (1989) suggests that 95% coverage is sufficient to allow reasonable comprehension of a text.
- A university graduate will have a vocabulary of around 20,000 word families (Goulden, Nation and Read, 1990).
- COBUILD Dictionary claims that 15,000 words cover 95% of the running words of their corpus.
- There are well over 54,000 word families in English
- University Word List (UWL)
Impression-based reading

Goals:

• Reading for general ideas

• Summarise 2-3 major findings from the research in 25 words or less

• Obtain a basic description of key points/ideas/findings

• Form an opinion based on a general impression
Skimming & Scanning

- As there are a lot of publications, in the initial stages of reading, it is helpful to surface read.

- A common sense approach is to skim and to scan
Skimming and Scanning

• Skimming is ....

• Scanning is ....

What are some features of the text that would help you to skim or scan a text?
Reading Practice

Exercise 4:

• You have 5 minutes to read through the following article

• Get a basic sense of the text and any additional information that you think is important
Note-taking

- Skimming and Scanning is helpful to get a quick impression of research

- Once you’ve located major texts and made a reference list, it is useful to take notes.
Note-taking

Exercise 5:

- Who takes notes?
- How do you take notes?
- Do you use a system? Why or why not?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages to note-taking?
- What are some strategies for purposeful note-taking?
Models of note-taking

- There are a bunch of different note-taking models available.
- A couple are:

  \[ SQR3 \text{ + Cornell/KWL} \]

  \[ Coding-sheets \]
SQR3

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
- Review
Reading Exercise

**SQR3** – step by step

- **Survey**: Predict content from headings
- **Question**: Ask questions – what are 2-3 you could take away from this text
- **Read**: Focus your reading on answering questions
- **Recite**: Repeat aloud information
- **Review**: 25 word summary of major ideas
Note-keeping

• A website that links to many note-taking sites is:

  “Greece Cental District Note-taking”

  Google: ‘Greece Note-taking’

  Link: http://www.greece.k12.ny.us/instruction/ela/6-12/Tools/Index.htm
Coding Sheets

Coding sheets are my preferred method

- Guides reading
- Easy to detail
- Facilitates critical reading and critical writing
## Example of Coding Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title, Date, Author</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Gaps</th>
<th>Validity</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jon, B. (2007) 'health' Journal of Health, Vol 23: 2, pp.11-17</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Critical theory</td>
<td>Action research - interviews</td>
<td>42 doctors</td>
<td>Stress and burn-out is at crisis point</td>
<td>Only focussed on 1st/2nd Year doctors</td>
<td>How would it compare in my country?</td>
<td>The questions were often biased and leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo, H. (2002) 'Doctors' Health Today, Summer, vol. 2</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Cultural theory</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>12 female HIV specialists</td>
<td>Experienced stress in meeting patient needs</td>
<td>The journal is dodgy, factors other than culture might explain</td>
<td>She didn’t know patients, might explain lack of data</td>
<td>It would be hard to replicate, therefore, findings might not be reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe, S. (1999)</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Post-modern philosophy</td>
<td>Text analysis</td>
<td>N/A – but subject area – doctors in Vic</td>
<td>Theorised stress is minimized in texts to make doctors work</td>
<td>Ignores texts which don’t conform</td>
<td>Not based on evidence but has logical fallacies</td>
<td>Theory is problemati c in a number of ways...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coding Sheets

Exercise 6:

• Choose 1-2 abstracts and prepare a ‘code’ – be creative where necessary
Critical Evaluation

• Critical evaluation is difficult

• Develop a pattern or system to check your reading

• Using a criteria sheet for evaluation can help

• Don’t be afraid to be opinionated, judgemental or overly sceptical in your evaluation process
Critical Evaluation

Exercise 7:

• In groups, list as many ways that you might attack a piece of research

  • For example, *the accuracy of findings*
Critical Evaluation

- Attack the **presentation**
- Attack the quality of writing
- Attack the basis assumptions
- Attack the writer for lack of clarity not writing concisely
- Attack the writer for not having a position, clear viewpoint
- Attack the **theoretical position**
- Attack definitions
- Attack interpretation of concepts
- Attack the rhetoric (analogy, metaphor etc)
- Attack the writer’s bias
- Attack the evidence
- Attack the soundness of the **research methodology**
- Attack the limited number of participants
- Attack the reliability (could the study be replicated); the validity (are claims generalizable)
- Attack the claim and evidence the writer uses to support it
- Attack the logic – Fallacies (check a guide to fallacies) (particularly in theory)
- Attack the **findings**

ALWAYS BE RESPECTFUL AND POLITE WHEN WRITING UP YOUR CRITICISMS*
Connecting reading to research

• Connecting reading to research is difficult in a number of ways.

• Social science texts tend to be quite different from science based texts

• Following are some tips and strategies to connect reading to research
Reading for Research

- One way to assess a thesis is to check the student’s reference list – it is a pretty good indication of their reading/research skills!
Compiling a Reading List

Exercise 8:

• How many sources for a project?
• What are some limiting search strategies you might use to identify sources?
Maintaining Your Reference List

- Keep your reading list up-to-date
- Keep it next to you when you write
- Use your reading to guide your outline/plan to write research
- Work from the sources to the written page
Reading ‘schools of thought’

Your reading in social science can be improved if you are aware of:

• Major ‘schools of thought’

• Major ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ approaches to data collection
Reading in a tradition

*Exercise 9:*

Here are some general ‘schools of thought’ that guide social sciences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Issues, Epistemologies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-modernism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marxist theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-colonial theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-structuralism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positivism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Connecting theory - research

- Theory + Method + Findings are often connected and formulaic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist</td>
<td>Action research</td>
<td>Disadvantage based on gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural/cultural theory</td>
<td>Ethnography</td>
<td>Disadvantage based on culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-modernist/critical theory</td>
<td>Discourse analysis</td>
<td>Disadvantage based on ‘power’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading research methods

*Exercise 10:*

- In groups, prepare a sheet with two columns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Reading research methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative</th>
<th>Qualitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>structured interviewing</td>
<td>analytic induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statistical surveys and questionnaires</td>
<td>ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structured observation</td>
<td>focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>content analysis</td>
<td>morphological analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary analysis</td>
<td>participant observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative marketing research</td>
<td>semi-structured interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unstructured interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>theoretical sampling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Quantitative**
  - structured interviewing
  - statistical surveys and questionnaires
  - structured observation
  - content analysis
  - secondary analysis
  - Quantitative marketing research

- **Qualitative**
  - analytic induction
  - ethnography
  - focus groups
  - morphological analysis
  - participant observation
  - semi-structured interview
  - unstructured interviewing
  - textual analysis
  - theoretical sampling
Reading analysis

Exercise 11:

- Read 1-2 abstracts and identify theory/methods
- Explain your findings to your partner
Reading for your research

Set goals for your reading
Break reading into smaller tasks

• 1. Pages 34-40
• 2. Chapter 6
• 3. General/Background reading
• 4. Specific reading
• 5. Technical reading
Summary

- What are some initial steps in reading for research?
- What is a major purpose for skimming and scanning?
- What is impression-based reading?
- What are two basic note-taking techniques?
- What are some features of articles to evaluate?
- What are some major schools of research/methodologies that guide your reading?
Recap

- Consider the type of text and your purpose for engaging with it before reading or drawing from it
- Survey, skim, scan and actively engage with the text
- Ask questions as a way of critiquing and analysing the material
- All notes should be systematic, concise and tied to their purpose
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References – reading research


- Nation, P. and Waring, R. VOCABULARY SIZE, TEXT COVERAGE AND WORD LISTS, www1.harenet.ne.jp/~waring/papers/cup.html
References


• Marks-Beale, A. (2007) Success skills: Strategies for study and lifelong learning, Thomson South-Western

• Website:

• Greece Central District, Note-taking guides