

## CRITICAL READING

### QUESTIONS TO GUIDE CRITICAL READING

#### What is the purpose of the text? Is the writer:

1. Reporting results of empirical research
2. Giving a meta-review of recent research
3. Proposing a new model or ...?
4. Arguing a position about an issue
5. Doing something that is none of these?

#### Identify and evaluate the line of reasoning

1. What is the overall idea the author wants me to accept?
2. What are reasons presented to persuade me to accept this?
3. Are all the reasons relevant to the overall argument?
4. Are the reasons sufficient to support the conclusion?
5. Do the reasons follow logically from one another?
6. Does the argument begin from a premise? Is it strong enough?
7. Is the reasoning sound? (see critical reasoning handout)

#### Question surface appearances

1. What is the underlying worldview of the writer? How reasonable is it?
2. Is there a hidden agenda?
3. Is the evidence supporting the reasons valid?
4. Is the evidence biased?
5. Has the evidence been manipulated?
6. (e.g. numbers represented as percentages seem more persuasive)
7. Does the language attempt to persuade?  
(e.g. 'clearly', 'surely', 'obviously')

#### Specific questions to ask of a research article

1. Is the research aim clearly stated?
2. Do the authors review a comprehensive and relevant range of literature?
3. What methodology has been used?
4. Does the methodology have limitations not identified by the authors?
5. What are the main arguments / findings?
6. Do the authors link the findings to the literature?
7. What conclusions do the authors draw from the findings? Are they logical?
8. Is the discussion balanced / reasonable?
9. How do the ideas / research in the article contribute to the field of study?
10. Does this research link with any research reported in other articles you have read?
11. Do the authors acknowledge limitations and suggest further study? Do you agree with their suggestions?