HANDOUT

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021, p. 263

Examples of a less well and better crafted draft

TASK: Read these earlier (A) and later (B) drafts of a paragraph. Notice the changes to the drafts, and how these changes affect the quality of writing. The sentences have been numbered for the convenience of this commentary.

EXTENSION exercise: Why not find a paragraph of your own writing and experiment with editing in this way?

Version A: [A1] One important thing to keep in mind is how social isolation could increase the risk of developing dementia symptoms for which there are several possible reasons. [A2] Research has shown that regularly interacting with others is a way to sustain brain function and boost immune system function, reduce stress and raise cortisol, adrena- line, and noradrenaline levels (Seeman, 1996). [A3] This explains why social interaction reduces the risk of depression (Fratiglioni, Wang, Ericsson, Maytan, & Winblad, 2000), which is risk factor for dementia (Livingston et al., 2017). [A4] In those already residing with a dementia, depression is likely to make it more difficult to cope with the dementia symptoms. [A5] Research also shows that the socially isolated are greater risk of stroke (Boden-Albala, Litwak, Elkind, Rundek, & Sacco, 2005), which can cause vascular dementia. [A6] Cohabitation with a partner has been found protective against dementia, probably for both practical and social/emotional reasons (Fratiglioni et al., 2000; Sundström, Westerlund, & Kotyrlo, 2016). [155 words]

Version B: [B1] There are several reasons why social isolation might increase the risk of developing dementia symptoms. [B2] As Figure 1.1 shows, regular interaction with others has several potential benefits, including sustaining brain function, boosting the immune system and reducing stress, in turn alleviating any tendency to depres- sion (Fratiglioni et al., 2000), a risk factor for dementia (Livingston et al., 2017). [B3] The socially isolated are also at greater risk of stroke (Boden-Albala et al., 2005), and strokes can cause vascular dementia. [B4] Cohabitation with a partner has been found protective against dementia, probably for both practical and social/emotional reasons (Fratiglioni et al., 2000). [B5] In sum, 'social relationships should be taken seriously as a risk factor for dementia' (Sundström et al., 2016, p. 1). [119 words]

Table 4.1 Contrasting Foundational Considerations of Five Qualitative Approaches

Foundational Considerations	Narrative Research	Phenomenology	Grounded Theory	Ethnography	Case Study
Research focus of approach	Exploring the life of an individual	Understanding the essence of the experience	Developing a theory grounded in data from the field	Describing and interpreting a culture-sharing group	Developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases
Unit of analysis	Studying one or more individuals	Studying several individuals who have shared the experience	Studying a process, an action, or an interaction involving many individuals	Studying a group that shares the same culture	Studying an event, a program, an activity, or more than one individual
Type of research problem best suited for approach	Needing to tell stories of individual experiences	Needing to describe the essence of a lived phenomenon	Grounding a theory in the views of participants	Describing and interpreting the shared patterns of culture of a group	Providing an in-depth understanding of a case or cases
Nature of disciplinary origins	Drawing from the humanities including anthropology, literature, history, psychology, and sociology	Drawing from philosophy, psychology, and education	Drawing from sociology	Drawing from anthropology and sociology	Drawing from psychology, law, political science, and medicine

Source: Creswell and Poth (2018)

Table 4.2 Targeting your reading using the Critical Synopsis Questions and the abstract

My initial answers to the Critical Synopsis Questions, from the abstract	What I need to find out from the paper itself in order to answer the Critical Synopsis Questions adequately
A. Why am I reading this?	
My research is into the effectiveness of early years educational support	• Is this paper relevant? Do the authors, who don't appear to be educationalists, align with my understanding of what 'early years educational support' is? Do they define that term?
B. What are the authors trying to achieve in writing this?	
Reporting patterns in data from a large survey – it is secondary data and their main message is about how they analysed it	• Do they say what they are trying to achieve? • Are they primarily looking at this general data set, and happen to be looking at education in this paper? Or do they have something particular to say about early years support? • Do they have an implicit position on the desirability of ethnic minority representation in early intervention education? • As it's not their data, how have they ensured they understand what it does and doesn't represent, why it was collected, etc., so that it does enable them to achieve what they want to?
C. What are the authors claiming that is relevant to my work?	
The following characteristics are associated with high representation in EI/ECSE: male gender, low birth weight, congenital abnormalities, behavioural problems. The following characteristics are associated with low representation: low socioeconomic status, high language and numeracy, ethnic minority group. Of these, it's the last that remains after factoring out interfering variables	• Do they make any important claims that are not mentioned in the abstract? • Do their definitions of key terms (e.g., 'ethnic minority group', 'early intervention', 'special education', 'other than English') align sufficiently with mine for their claims to inform my study? • What were the 'additional factors' they mention? • Are any reasons given for the disproportionate under-representation they find?

(Continued)

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 4.2 (Continued)

My initial answers to the Critical Synopsis Questions, from the abstract	What I need to find out from the paper itself in order to answer the Critical Synopsis Questions adequately
D. How convincing are these claims, and why?	
	• Is this sample size big enough for the kind of questions they want to answer? Do they make clear how they know their sample was big enough to get reliable results? For example, how much variation might there be across different states and/or different minority groups? • Who says that the ECLS–B is nationally representative? Has anyone challenged that? • How have they done the calculation showing that ethnic minority grouping is the only real effect on representation level? • Do they make any claims about how their findings generalize beyond the United States, and if so, do they explain why they think this? • Do they take into account the difference between large minority communities (e.g., Spanish) versus being the only kid with that language in the neighbourhood?
E. In conclusion, what use can I make of this?	
	• Do the claims convince me? Am I convinced that a study done in the United States is relevant to the country I am researching? If so, then I can cite this study as evidence that before you can make early years support effective you have to make sure that all children have access to it • Would the statistical test they used work with a smaller study like mine? If so, I could replicate their method and cite the paper as part of the justification • Were they able in this study to separate out factors that I think are important, such as the social and educational aspirations of different ethnic minority groups? If not, then I may cite it as an example of research that has not been able to capture that important variable

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 3.1 Analysis of an abstract 1 – empirical study

Text	Reader comments
SOURCE: *Educational Researcher*, 2012, vol. 41(9): 339–351	• This is a journal that addresses researchers of education. Why did the authors choose this audience?
TITLE: Are minority children disproportionately represented in early intervention and early childhood special education?	• What do they mean by 'minority'? Which country are they talking about? • What age range are they covering? • How do they define 'early intervention' and 'special education'? Do their definitions create any potential problems?
AUTHORS: Paul L. Morgan,[1] George Farkas,[2] Marianne M. Hillemeier,[1] Steve Maczuga[1] [1]*Population Research Institute, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA;* [2]*University of California, Irvine, CA*	• Why are there four authors? What skills does each bring? • What is the Population Research Institute? • Where in UCI does Farkas work? • What is their main purpose in writing this paper likely to be?
ABSTRACT: We investigated whether and to what extent children who are racial-ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented in early intervention and/or early childhood special education (EI/ECSE).	• Why did they think that racial-ethnic minority children might be disproportionately represented? What was their starting assumption?
We did so by analysing a large sample of 48-month-olds (*N* = 7,950) participating in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Birth Cohort (ECLS–B), a nationally representative data set of children born in the United States in 2001.	• Is this sample size big enough for the kind of questions they want to answer? For example, how much variation might there be across different states and/or different minority groups? • Who says that the ECLS–B is nationally representative? Has anyone challenged that?
Multivariate logistic regression analyses indicate that boys (odds ratio [OR] = 1.66), children born at very low birth weight (OR = 3.98) or with congenital anomalies (OR = 2.17), and children engaging in externalizing problem behaviours (OR = 1.10) are more likely to be represented in EI/ECSE.	• What is 'odds ratio'? Are large values a stronger effect, or weaker? Have they demonstrated *cause* or just a link? • Do they define 'low birth weight' clearly? • What sorts of 'congenital anomalies' are they talking about, and where are the lines drawn? Similarly for 'externalizing problem behaviours'. Might the definitions affect the findings (e.g., if certain anomalies and behaviours are less prevalent in some ethnic groups)?
Children from low-socioeconomic-status households (OR =.48), those displaying greater numeracy or receptive language knowledge (ORs =.96 and .76, respectively), and children being raised in households where a language other than English is primarily spoken (OR =.39) are less likely to be represented in EI/ECSE.	• What languages 'other than English' are they talking about? • Do they take into account large minority communities (e.g., Spanish) versus being the only child with that language in the neighbourhood? • What were the 'additional factors'?

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Text	Reader comments
Statistical control for these and an extensive set of additional factors related to cognitive and behavioral functioning indicated that 48-month-old children who are black (OR =.24) or Asian (OR =.32) are disproportionately under-represented in EI/ECSE in the United States.	• Are any reasons given for this disproportionate under-representation?

Table 3.2 Analysis of an abstract 2 – theoretical argument

Text	Reader comments
SOURCE: *Social Theory and Health*, 2020, vol. 18(1): 66–85	• This journal focuses on health worldwide, but particularly likes to combine theory with practice. This helps explain why the authors targeted this journal for their theoretical discussion
TITLE: Theorizing physical activity health promotion: towards an Eliasian Framework for the analysis of health and medicine	• What is an Eliasian Framework? • Is that framework going to be appropriate for the topic of physical activity health promotion?
AUTHORS: Kass Gibson,[1] Dominic Malcolm[2] [1]*Plymouth Marjon University, Derriford Road, Plymouth PL6 8BH, UK;* [2]*Loughborough University, Epinal Way, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK*	• Which disciplines do these authors work in? • How might the specialisms of the authors jointly strengthen (or weaken) the arguments?
ABSTRACT: This article seeks to advance our understanding of the convergence of physical activity and public health through a novel theorization drawing upon, applying and developing figurational sociological principles of Norbert Elias.	• What is novel about the application of the theory? • As the theorization 'draws upon' Elias' one, how does it differ from it?
More specifically, we focus on four core aspects of Elias' theoretical corpus: interdependencies; forethought (as an aspect of civilizing processes); the interaction of 'fact' and emotion in socially determining knowledge; and finally, the hinge.	• What do these four aspects individually and jointly seek to do? • What is 'the hinge'?
As such, we argue that contemporary interest in physical activity health promotion can be attributed to the amalgamation of distinctive figurations of interdependency ties;	• What was physical activity health promotion like in the pre-'contemporary' days? • What evidence will they offer to support the role of each of the aspects they list here?

(Continued)

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Text	Reader comments
an associated development in the internalization of human self-control; conceptions of 'truth', which derive from a combination of scientific evidence, ideological desires and the gratification brought from the 'holding' of such beliefs; and the intersection of social and biological processes on the human body.	
This paper advances existing figurationally informed theoretical analyses of health and medicine, in highlighting the essential interconnectivity of Elias' key ideas. This approach is, in turn, more faithful to Elias' advocacy of a radically relational sociological perspective.	• What is a figurationally informed theoretical analysis? • What other approaches are there, that are less faithful to Elias' ideas?
The result is both an original conceptualization of this increasingly significant social phenomenon, and a more explicit elucidation of the distinctive Eliasian Framework through which future theoretically informed empirical research into contemporary health and medicine can be developed.	• Which is the article's primary goal: conceptualizing physical activity health promotion, or elucidating the framework, and are they potentially in conflict with each other?

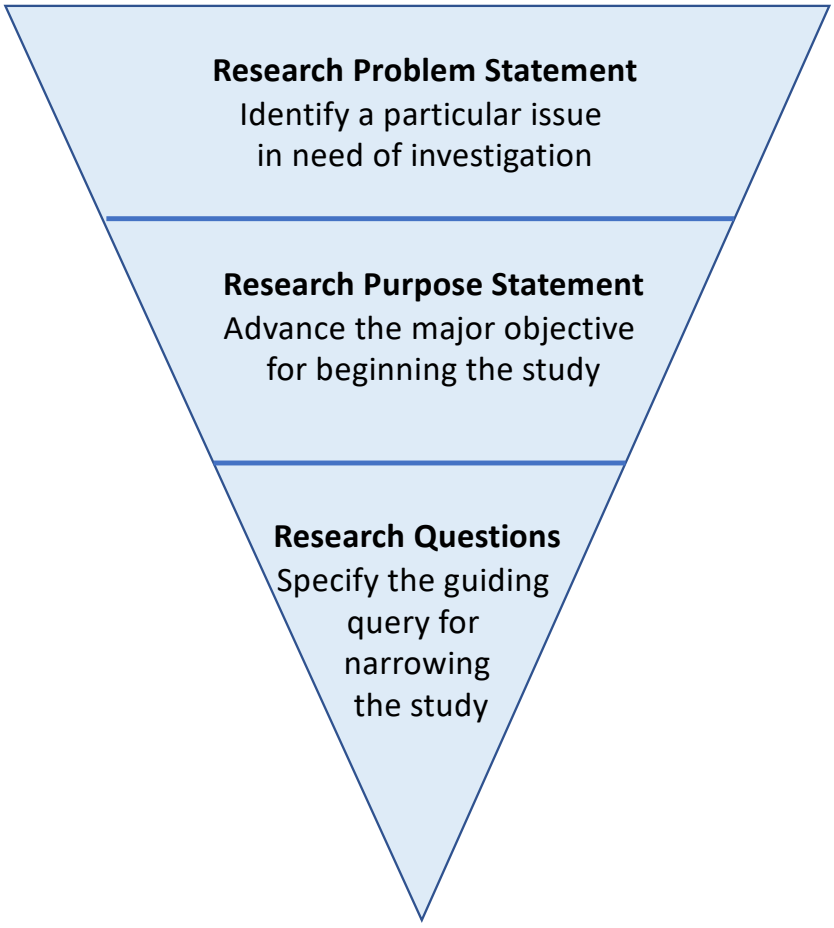
Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 4.1 Identifying flaws in arguments

Type of flaw in an argument	Example (at the level of a few sentences)	Critical questions as a reader, suggesting there may be a flaw	Example resolution
Conclusion without warranting	The best musicians make the worst teachers	Why do you think that? How do you know?	The eye for fine detail possessed by the best musicians tends to make them over-critical and discouraging with pupils (Goodman, 2009)
Potential warranting without a conclusion	Johnson's research shows that people often sign legal agreements without reading them. Legal documents can be difficult to read	So what? What do these different pieces of evidence, together, imply?	People may fail to read legal documents because they are too difficult
Warranting leading to an illogical conclusion	People in English-speaking countries tend not to know another language. This indicates that they are poor language learners	Does this reasoning add up? Aren't there other more plausible conclusions?	This may suggest that English speakers do not see the need to know other languages
Conclusion not explicitly linked to warranting	Statistics show that teenagers are drinking far too much to be good for their health. Alcoholic drinks should be increased in price	What causal relationship between the factors are you meaning to suggest?	Since teenagers have only limited money, raising the price of alcohol might result in their drinking less
Conclusion with inadequate warranting	Trainee managers learn more effectively when they are praised than when their efforts are criticized. In a survey of female trainee managers in a retail company, 77% said they liked to be praised	Is the evidence adequate to justify the extent of the claim? Is the evidence appropriately interpreted? What is the link between 'liking to be praised' and learning more effectively?	However, males and females may respond differently to praise

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Figure 6.1 Interrelating Study Research Problem, Purpose, and Questions



Creswell and Poth (2018), p. 195.

Examples of purpose statements

The _____study describes and analyses the process of eliciting the life history of a man with a DBA degree in Hong Kong.

The _____story describes the aftermath of the super-typhoon as my family and friends in Hong Kong, the town where I was born and lived, react to and cope with the unanticipated consequences of this natural disaster.

The present _____study is designed to explore the beliefs, perceptions, and needs that current young teachers and teachers-to-be have regarding their role as a leader of the curriculum design group in Hong Kong secondary schools.

The purpose of this _____study is to explore what meaning refugees ascribe to their experiences of waiting for the rite-to-enter at the major refugee boarder centre in Myanmar.

The purpose of this _____study is to understand the processes a person experiences in creating a leadership identity in a small private banking setting of Hong Kong.

The purpose of this _____study is to explore how women maintain their health in geographical, social, political, economic, and historical contexts.

This _____ study examines how the 'work and talk' of Hong Kong bartenders reinforce certain meanings of coffee drinking in society and it reveals how the 'work and talk' create and maintain a 'coffee drinking' culture.

This _____ study aims to fill a gap in the literature by giving an empirical account of the K-pop group movement centered on a description of the group's core values.

The purpose of this _____study is to describe the ways in which three urban elementary schools, in partnership with a local, publicly funded multipurpose university, used a similar array of material and human resources to improve their integration of technology.

The _____study presented in this proposal is a qualitative case analysis that describes and interprets a campus response to a green roof-top construction incident.

HANDOUT

Fig. 6.2 Sample Research Problem Statement (Introduction) to a Study

1 Research topic

Exploring the conceptions and misconceptions of teen smoking in secondary schools

2 Discuss research problem

Tobacco use is a leading cause of cancer in American society (Johnson, 2020, Smyth 2018; Duke, 2020). Although smoking among adults has declined in recent years, it has increased for adolescents. The Centre for Health Control (CHC) has reported that smoking among secondary school students had risen from 25.5 percent in 2010 to 27.3 percent in 2020 (CHC, 2020). Unless this trend is dramatically reversed, an estimated 5 million of our nation children will ultimately die a premature death due to smoking-related diseases (CHC, 2020).

3 Summarise literature

Previous research on adolescent tobacco use has focused on four primary topics. Several studies has examined the topic of smoking initiation, noting that tobacco use begins as early as junior secondary school (Johnson et al, 2020; Smyth , 2021). Other studies (Duke, 2020) have focused on the prevention of smoking and tobacco use in schools. This research has led to massive school-based prevention programs and interventions (Smyth et al., 2018). Fewer studies had examined the 'quit attempts" or cessation of smoking behaviour among adolescents (Harm, 2020)

4 Point to deficiencies in evidence

Minimal research attention has been directed towards the social context of secondary schools as a site for examining adolescent tobacco use. Often peers become a strong social influence, and belonging to an athletic team, music group, or a "grudge" crowds can impact thinking about smoking (McSmok, 2019). Schools are also placed where teachers and administrators need to be role models for abstaining from and enforcing policies about tobacco use (O'Hara, 2020). Existing studies on the tobacco use are primarily quantitative with a focus on outcomes and transtheoretical models (Duke, et al., 2020). However, qualitative investigations provide detailed views of students in their own words, complex analysis of multiple perspectives, and specific school contexts that shape students' experiences with tobacco (Smyth, in press). Moreover qualitative study offers the opportunity to involve secondary school students as co-researchers, a data collection procedure that enhances the trustworthiness of students' views uncontaminated by adult perspectives

5 Argue importance of study for audiences

By examining these multiple school contexts, using qualitative approaches and involving secondary students as co-researchers, we can better understand the conceptions and misconceptions help about tobacco use in secondary schools. With this understanding, researchers can better isolate variables and develop models about smoking behaviour. Administrators and teachers can plan interventions to prevent and change smoking.

Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018)

for research funding bodies. They may be more indulgent of a student, as a learner, but will still be seeking evidence of the critical approach to reading and self-critical approach to writing that they expect generally from academics.

How strong is your sense of the audience for your academic writing?

Look carefully at each statement in our profile of the academics who may assess a postgraduate's written work. Then consider the two questions at the end of the exercise.

Profile of the postgraduate student's target readers (assessors)

Age **Old enough** to have read plenty of other postgraduate work, so they will have a measure by which to judge yours.

Lifestyle **Busy**, so they will appreciate a logical structure, clear focus and fluent writing style that communicates efficiently.

Attitudes **Fair and respectful**, concerned solely with the quality of your argument.

Sceptical, so they will not accept your argument unless you provide adequate warranting for the claims in your conclusion.

Open-minded, so they will be ready to be convinced by your argument if your conclusion is well warranted, even if their own views are different.

Empathetic, having once been postgraduate students themselves, they will have a sense of how you are feeling and how difficult it can be to navigate a new topic.

Best subject **The field of enquiry:** knowledgeable about the area in general but possibly not about detailed issues or your professional experience. Therefore, they will welcome a brief description of specific context and content, but only in so far as it is relevant to your argument.

Likes **Logic**, as expressed in an account that is carefully constructed, well argued, balanced, meticulous on detail and reflective.

Books and journals, so they know the literature well and will expect you to have read what you write about and to report it accurately (and they may wish to follow up some of your references to extend their own knowledge).

Evidence that your work has met the assessment criteria, since no work, however imaginative, can pass unless it fulfils the requirements that are laid down.

Signposting, indicating what you are doing, what you have done and what you are doing next, and making clear how parts of the written account fit together in supporting your argument.

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Pet hates

Waffle: ill-structured writing that is unfocused and leads nowhere.

Avoidable errors that careful proofreading could have picked up, whether in spelling, punctuation, word choice or grammar.

Over-generalization: sweeping conclusions that are unconvincing because they go far beyond the warranting provided.

Free-floating recommendations for practice: insufficiently justified proposals about what should happen.

Poor referencing: failure to acknowledge authors or inaccurate and incomplete reference lists.

Plagiarism: using chunks of someone else's text as your own work, passing off others' ideas as your own or failing to acknowledge your sources adequately.

Believe that

Conclusions must be warranted by evidence from empirical research, literature or personal experience, if they are to convince.

Everything in a written account should be relevant to the focus and the conclusion.

Questions to ask yourself

A. To what extent are you already aware of the characteristics of your assessors and their concerns as they read your work?

B. Which of their concerns could you take more fully into account as you prepare written work for them to assess?

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 10.1 Four intellectual projects for studying aspects of the social world

	Intellectual project for studying an aspect of the social world			
	Knowledge-for-understanding	**Knowledge-for-critical evaluation**	**Knowledge-for-action**	**Training**
Reasons for undertaking the study	To understand policy and practice through theory and research	Critically to evaluate policy and practice through theory and research	To inform policy-makers' efforts to improve practice through research and evaluation	To improve practitioners' practice through training and consultancy
Typical mode of working	Social science-based basic research and theory	Social science-based basic research and theory	Applied research, evaluation and development activity	Designing and offering training and consultancy programmes
Value stance towards an aspect of the social world	Relatively impartial towards policy and practice	Negatively critical of policy and practice	Positive towards policy and the possibility of improving practice	Positive towards policy and the possibility of improving practice
Value governing the significance of the focus	Positive, because it is intrinsically interesting to understand how policy and practice operate	Positive, because it is instrumentally important to show how policy and practice benefit some groups at the expense of other groups	Positive, because it is instrumentally important to help those responsible for policy and practice to make them work as well as possible	Positive, because it is instrumentally important to find practical ways of making policy and practice work as well as possible
Values about what is right or wrong	Neutral towards any group advantages or disadvantages resulting from the behaviour of the different groups involved	Negative towards advantages that the behaviour of some groups gives them over others Positive towards changing policy and practice to minimize advantages or disadvantages for any group	Positive towards (or not noticing) any advantages that the behaviour of some groups gives them over others Positive towards (or not noticing) the help that advantaged groups may get from the investigation to sustain or increase their advantage over others	Positive towards (or not noticing) any advantages that the behaviour of some groups gives them over others Positive towards (or not noticing) the help that advantaged groups may get from the practical intervention to sustain or increase their advantage over others

(Continued)

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Table 10.1 (Continued)

	Intellectual project for studying an aspect of the social world			
	Knowledge-for-understanding	**Knowledge-for-critical evaluation**	**Knowledge-for-action**	**Training**
Typical question about the social world	What happens, and why?	What is wrong with what happens, and why?	How effective is what happens, and how may it be improved?	How may my programme improve practice?
Place of theoretical knowledge in the study	Informed by and generates social science theory	Informed by and generates social science theory	Informed by and generates practical theory	Largely atheoretical, informed by a practical theory of training
Common types of published literature produced	Academics' social science-based theory and research (reference may be made in associated policy literature)	Academics' critical social science-based theory and research	Informed professionals' practice and academics' applied research (reference may be made in associated policy literature)	Trainers' and consultants' practice literature (reference may be made in associated policy literature)
Main target audience to influence through published literature	Policy-makers, academics, practitioners on advanced education programmes	Policy-makers, academics, practitioners on advanced education programmes	Policy-makers, academics, trainers, practitioners on advanced education programmes	Practitioners, other trainers, practitioners on education and training programmes
Fictional example of a leadership study	A comparison of perceptions as leaders and followers in different groups	A study of the inhibitory impact of childrearing on women's career chances as business leaders	Measuring the impact of senior managers' leadership behaviour on organizational performance	Development of a diagnostic tool for identifying individuals' potential as business leaders, marketed to the human resources departments of companies

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

A. Why am I reading this?

Part of reading to answer the review question 'In what ways can language be the focus of a court dispute?'

B. What are the authors trying to achieve in writing this?

***Abstract**: They're questioning the relative weight of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic explanations. (But what are those two explanations and how convincing are they?) They seem to be defending the person who gave offence. (How do they justify that position?)*

***Full reading**: They provide an explanation, from psycholinguistic theory (Wray's) for why two people had different understandings of the same word or phrase. They show that sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics play a role in how we understand language. But they do not propose that court cases should always take these things into account.*

C. What are the authors claiming that is relevant to my work?

***Abstract**: If you encounter an unknown word/phrase, you break it down to understand it. But if you do know it, then you do not need to break it down to understand it. So you can miss seeing that it may be offensive for some people. (What sort of psycholinguistic theory is used to make that case?)*

***Full reading**: An African-American woman sued her employer after she was sent a certificate calling her a 'Temporary Coon Ass'. 'Coonass' (usually one word) is a dialect word that does not relate historically to 'coon' or 'ass', and refers to white people from Louisiana. The case revolved around whether the sender should have realized that the woman would find 'coonass' offensive because it contains 'coon'. The authors' 'Needs Only Analysis' model shows how the sender could fail to notice 'coon' inside 'coonass', because he had never had to break the term down into its components. Meanwhile the recipient, not knowing the dialect word, would automatically break it down to reveal two offensive words.*

D. How convincing are these claims, and why?

***Abstract**: The authors claim a 'psycholinguistic rationale'. (But how plausible is it that someone could fail to see an offensive word inside a longer word or phrase? What other explanations could there be, and are they considered? Is their claim generalizable to other court cases?)*

***Full reading**: Their argument is convincing in itself, but draws only on one theory. They do not mention any other court cases, so it is not clear how common this sort of dispute is. There is no mention of other kinds of disputes in the courtroom either. There is good*

(Continued)

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

quality evidence about what happened and what the individuals believed 'coonass' to mean: original court transcripts, other court documentation. Other supporting evidence from dictionaries and a survey is offered.

E. In conclusion, what use can I make of this?

***Abstract**: It's about language, but so far I can't tell if it is convincing enough to use.*

***Full reading*:**

(a) It will be useful for demonstrating that one way in which language can be the focus of dispute is when two people fundamentally disagree on what a word or phrase means – but is this case representative? I need to find other cases that are similar and also cases that illustrate different kinds of dispute.

(b) It could inform a discussion of what causes disputes, bringing in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics – but I may need to look at alternative theories too.

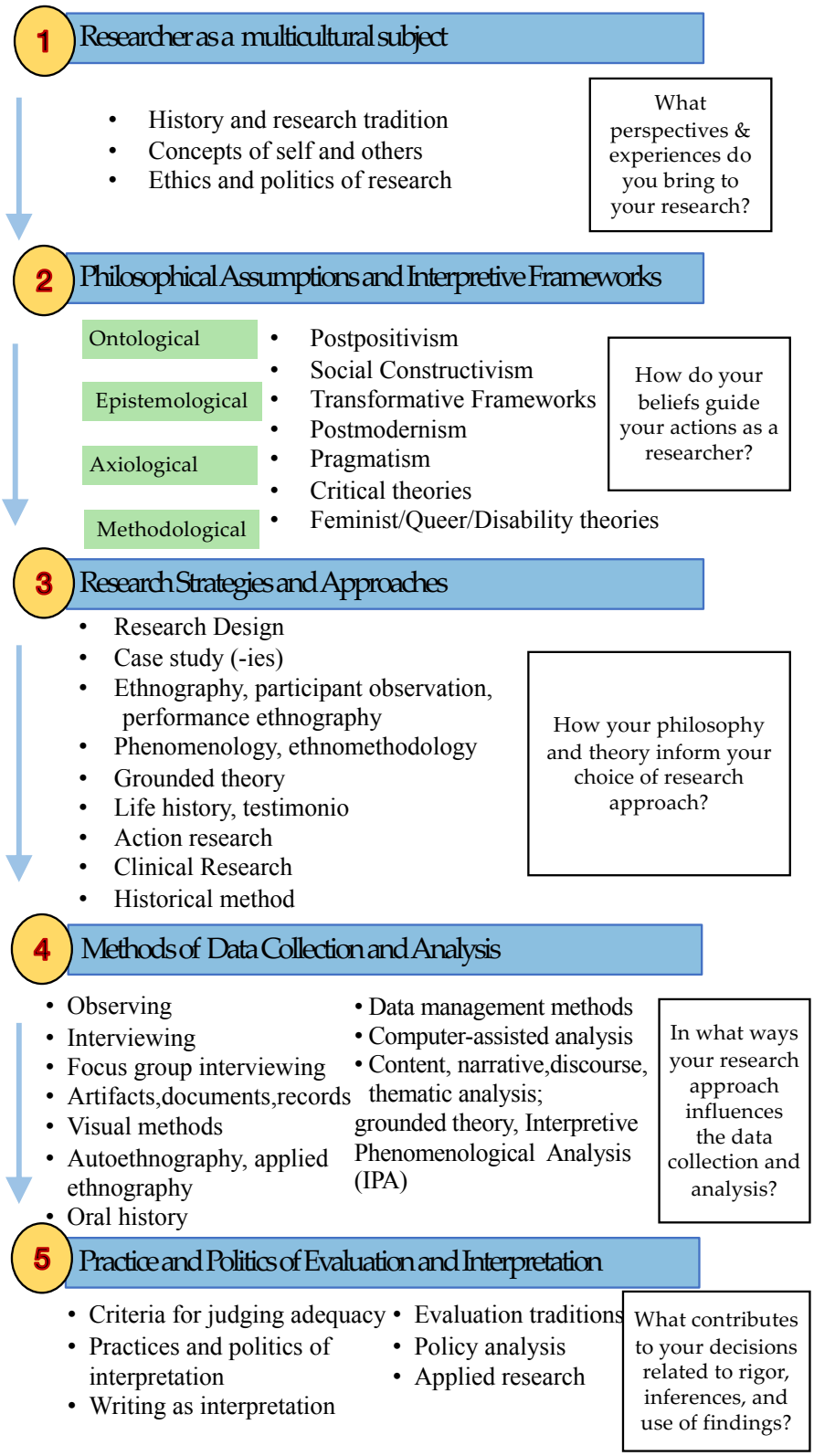
Code: *(2) or (1)*

(1) = Return to this for detailed analysis; (2) = An important general text;
(3) = Of minor importance; (4) = Not relevant.

Our reading was driven by the review question posed above. Bear in mind that our answers may differ from yours, since they reflect our perceptions and evaluatory judgements. But what we have written can help you to gauge which aspects of the Critical Synopsis process you are most confident about, and which aspects you may need to concentrate on when undertaking your own Critical Synopses.

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Fig. 2.1 Situating Philosophy and Interpretive Frameworks within the Research Process



Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018)

HANDOUT

Table 1.2 Linking a critical approach to your reading with a self-critical approach to writing

How critical a reader and self-critical a writer are you already?

A Rate each element of critical reading in the list below according to how much you already employ it when you read academic literature. Use a scale of 0–2 (*where 0 = rarely/never, 1 = sometimes/quite often, 2 = always*)

B Now do the same for your own academic writing. (You may find it helpful to look at assessors' comments on your past work to see what they have praised and criticized.)

C Then add up the ratings separately for each column, and consider your response to our statement at the end of the exercise.

Element of critical reading	*Rating*	*Element of self-critical writing*	*Rating*
When I read an academic text I:	0–2	**When I write an academic text I:**	0–2
1 try to work out what the authors are aiming to achieve;		1 state clearly what I am trying to achieve;	
2 try to work out the structure of the argument;		2 create a logical structure for my account, to help me develop my argument and to help the reader to follow it;	
3 try to identify the main claims made;		3 clearly state my main claims;	
4 adopt a sceptical stance towards the authors' claims, checking that they are supported by appropriate evidence;		4 support my claims with appropriate evidence, so that a critical reader will be convinced;	
5 assess the backing for any generalizations made;		5 avoid making sweeping generalizations;	
6 check how the authors define their key terms and whether they are consistent in using them;		6 define the key terms employed in my account, and use the terms consistently;	
7 consider what underlying values may be guiding the authors and influencing their claims;		7 ensure that I am aware of how what I write reflects my values; and, where appropriate, that I make these values explicit;	
8 keep an open mind, willing to be convinced;		8 assume that my readers can be convinced, provided I can adequately support my claims;	
9 look out for instances of irrelevant or distracting material, and for the absence of necessary material;		9 sustain focus throughout my account, avoid irrelevancies and digressions, and include everything that is relevant;	
10 identify any literature sources to which the authors refer, that I may need to follow up.		10 ensure that my referencing in the text and the reference list is complete and accurate, so that my readers are in a position to check my sources.	
Total score for reading		*Total score for writing*	

The higher the scores, the further you have already progressed in becoming a critical reader and/or self-critical writer. Look back at any items you gave 0 to. Consider how you might increasingly incorporate these elements of critical reading and self-critical writing into your habitual approach to study.

Source: Wray & Wallace, 2021

Glossary

abstract a. A short summary of an academic journal article, dissertation or other research report, placed at the beginning of the text to provide readers with key information about the content.

b. A prospective description of a conference presentation, submitted in order to be allotted a presentation slot, and usually circulated to attendees to help them decide whether to attend the presentation.

abstraction A mechanism for generalization, whereby specific details of any given context are ignored so as to capture similarities across a broader range of contexts.

academic journal article A publication that contains original research by the author(s). It usually appears in a specific volume (sometimes volume and issue) with a year date, though electronic-only journals do not always adhere to that practice. Journal articles are usually subject to peer review before acceptance, which entails critical feedback from academic experts aimed at improving the quality of the paper.

argument In this book, the combination of a conclusion containing one or more claims, and the warranting for it, based on some form of evidence.

assumptions Underlying ideas, often not explicit, that shape the thinking of the researcher or reader.

central question A question about the social world that any given study can make a contribution to answering. Central questions unite researchers into groups within and across disciplines. Example: How can vulnerable children be supported through their early years?

certainty A continuum, from believing that a claim is definitely the case, to that it might be the case. Authors control how vulnerable their work is to criticism by selecting the level of certainty appropriate to the reliability of their research design and findings.

Comparative Critical Summary A short text drawing on the answers to the Critical Synopsis questions for two or more research articles, to compare their capacity to answer the reviewer's review question.

concepts Abstract ideas that capture features of the social world through language, enabling researchers to examine and compare them.

conclusion (component of argument) The set of claims made by a researcher, the reliability of which is determined by the strength of the warranting.

conclusion (of dissertation) The final chapter or section, in which answers to the central question are offered, drawing on the warranting of the previous chapters. Reflections on the reliability of the research are given, to indicate the appropriate level of certainty. Comments on the potential for generalization beyond the scope of the research are included.

Critical Analysis Questions A set of ten questions applied to a frontline research text, to generate material for a Critical Review of a text.

Critical Literature Mini-review A short Critical Literature Review that goes into more depth than a Comparative Critical Summary, but covers a smaller range of texts than a full Critical Literature Review. It can form part of a warranting unit, or help to link a transition in the narrative.

Critical Literature Review An account of multiple published texts that scrutinizes the authors' claims and the warranting for them, as relevant to the reviewer's own review question(s).

Critical reading Reading research accounts with insight and scepticism, willing to be convinced but requiring warranting for the claims made.

Critical Summary A short text presenting an insightful evaluation of one research article, based on the Critical Synopsis Questions.

Critical Synopsis Questions Five basic questions to ask when reading a text without conducting an in-depth analysis.

data-driven literature Research reports of an empirical, rather than theoretical or methodological, enquiry.

dissertation A long text written for assessment or examination in a university that reports the candidate's own empirical, theoretical, practice-based or literature-based research. Dissertations need to conform to the specific length and formatting requirements of the institution. In some countries, a long dissertation is called a thesis.

Dissertation Logic Check Template An editable document that can be used to develop the logic of a dissertation project and track incremental writing-up, as the project proceeds.

evidence Information that indicates whether a claim is valid. Along with reasoning, evidence forms a major element of warranting. Sources of evidence include findings from the literature or research.

generalization A continuum based on the capacity for a specific claim to apply beyond the context that generated it. Authors control how vulnerable their work is to criticism by selecting the level of generalization appropriate to the similarity between their own research context and other contexts. Generalization typically entails an increasing level of abstraction, as details local to specific contexts are set aside.

ideologies Beliefs, ideas and principles connected systematically to generate a rationale for social, political or economic policy and behaviour.

intellectual project The researchers' purpose, based on what they are trying to achieve. The main intellectual projects are knowledge-for-understanding, knowledge-for-critical evaluation, knowledge-for-action, and training.

knowledge-for-action An intellectual project focused on improving how things are done.

knowledge-for-critical evaluation An intellectual project focused on exposing problems with what is currently done.

knowledge-for-understanding An intellectual project focused on examining some phenomenon from a relatively impartial standpoint.

label In this book, a loose group of concepts with a narrow focus, such as *criminal activity*, which groups *burglary*, *theft*, *conspiracy* and *deception*.

Linkage Tracker Test A tool that helps you check that everything included in your narrative needs to be there.

metaphor A word or phrase used to characterize a phenomenon, although it is not literally true. In academic research it can be a device for conceptualizing a complex phenomenon in simple terms. The metaphor highlights certain features of the phenomenon while ignoring others. It offers a means to explore the phenomenon in new ways.

methodological aim What you plan to do, in order to achieve your substantive aim (e.g., what research design you will use, how you will collect and analyse your data).

model In this book, a tightly grouped set of concepts with a narrow focus that are associated in a manner that creates a coherent element of theory (e.g., a cause-and-effect relationship). Models are often presented graphically.

opinion A viewpoint that generates claims, but without adequate warranting.

oral presentation An assessed component, or a conference or workshop presentation, spoken live by the researcher about his or her own work. Typically, oral presentations are supported by a visual display, such as PowerPoint, and often by a printed handout.

perspective In this book, a loose group of concepts with a broad focus. Thus, a *cultural perspective* might focus on shared beliefs, values, and codes of behaviour.

policy literature Texts produced by policy-makers or their advisers and shaped by their assumptions and beliefs, often political. These texts may draw on a range of resources, including the findings of academic research, to develop a case for making a change with onward impact on practices.

poster Printed visual presentation of academic work, presented on a display-board at a conference.

practice knowledge Knowledge derived from undertaking professional or other relevant activity, rather than only observing or questioning others. Thus, it includes 'know-how' skills and deeply embedded instincts based on experience.

practice literature Texts that comment on or give recommendations for how an activity can or should be done.

research knowledge A description of observed patterns arising from systematic empirical investigation.

research literature Texts that make claims about the real world, based on observation or experiment.

research question A question that determines the design and conduct of part or all of an empirical investigation. Research questions are inspired by the puzzles or significant needs for new knowledge identified in the critical literature

review. They are answered in the discussion after the findings have been reported.

research report Any written account of research. In this book, the term is used to refer to reports of original, empirical research – where data have been analysed in order to address a question – in contrast to literature reviews or textbooks.

review question In this book, it is a question that determines the scope and focus of part or all of a Critical Literature Review. Review questions aim to develop answers to the central question. They are answered in the discussion at the end of the literature review chapter(s) or section(s).

self-critical writing Academic writing where the author consciously attempts to take account of the needs and expectations of critical readers in order to convince them of the author's argument. The author habitually interrogates his or her own writing from the perspective of the target audience, to check how well the argument is communicated, and whether it is likely to be convincing to this audience.

signposting Indications in the narrative of the relationship between parts of the whole text, particularly stating what a chapter will cover, or has covered, and how it relates to what has come before and will follow.

substantive aim The intended achievement of a contribution to significant new knowledge about the topic.

task-driven reading Reading for a particular purpose, particularly answering review questions, as opposed to general background reading.

theoretical aim The intended use of theory to achieve understanding of the phenomenon under examination. In a theory-focused piece of work, the theoretical aim may include the development of new theory.

theoretical knowledge One of the three kinds of knowledge claim. It explains a phenomenon in conceptual terms, with reference, often, to models and perspectives.

theoretical literature Academic writing, the primary goal of which is to offer new conceptualizations, models and theories about aspects of the social world.

theories In this book, a tightly linked set of concepts sufficiently broadly focused to be relevant to several domains. The concepts, which may already be

combined into models, are associated in some way that can offer explanations, or make predictions.

thesis A substantial written text, usually for a doctorate. In some countries it is known as a doctoral dissertation.

training Practical advice, tuition and application, aimed at changing practice.

warranting The reason(s) for accepting a claim. It can be based on empirical evidence, explanation or reasoning deriving from theory, personal experience and practice knowledge.

warranting unit A component of the larger text that provides warranting for an interim conclusion.