

**Critical Reading Workshop for IGDS Graduate Students**

**Dr Dalea Bean**

**Friday September 25, 2020**

Workshop time period: 2 hours

**Objectives:** By the end of the workshop students should be able to:

* **Paraphrase** without plagiarizing
* **Learn what critical questions** to ask of a text
* **Develop note taking strategies**
* **Reflect** on their own reading skills towards the aim of improvement

Self-reflection questions:

* How strong are my reading skills?
* Am I reading fast enough?
* Do I read with a critical eye?
* What is my main challenge with reading at the graduate level
* Do I manage the vast amount of information I need to read?

 

**Exercise One: Paraphrasing Exercise 20 minutes**

**Why is paraphrasing important:**

* Paraphrasing is important because it shows you understand the source well enough to write it in your own words.
* It also gives you a powerful alternative to using direct quotes.
* It is a useful way to use source material for your research paper/essay - providing it is appropriately referenced.

How do I paraphrase?

There are useful strategies to develop your paraphrasing skills. The most important feature, however, is to make sure you understand the text fully before you attempt to paraphrase it.

1. Read the text you want to paraphrase carefully before you attempt to paraphrase it.
2. Look up in your dictionary any words you do not understand.
3. Re-read the text quickly - skim it if you feel confident. In particular, pay attention to first sentences in paragraphs.
4. Cover the text and verbally summarise it, from memory only. For this use your own words but bear in mind you may have to write it in a more academic manner.
5. Write down your verbal summary.
6. Check the original text again to make sure you have included the main points. Add quote marks if you have used any key phrases or unique terms which cannot be paraphrased.
7. Record all source and author details for future reference

 

**Instructions: Read each passage twice. On a separate piece of paper, write a paraphrase of each of the following passages without looking at the passage**

*Violence against women occurs in Jamaica in a particular context that unfortunately normalizes it. In different ways we are all guilty of being complicit to the occurrence of violence against women, whether by disregarding it as a private issue and not reporting it, by self-esteem issues, among others. But basically high levels of victimization, coupled with cultural acceptance of rape myths that she had to have done something to “deserve it” or a man beating a woman is an expression of love and a form of “discipline” when his partner gets out of hand.... All create an environment where victimized students are disempowered and alienated from their University experiences. This environment has resulted in impediments to academic success, lower graduation rates, health problems, and persistent mental health issues.*

Whose business is it? Violence Against Women at UWI Mona. Taitu Heron November 25, 2013

*Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. Men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance could be regarded as showing a complicit masculinity. It was in relation to this group, and to compliance among heterosexual women, that the concept of hegemony was most powerful. Hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force; it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion.*

Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept

R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt Gender & Society 2005 19: 829



**Exercise 2: Note Taking 30 minutes**

Note taking is important to organise and summarise your thoughts as you read many sources for various courses or intense reading for a literature review.

Some may write notes in the margins of the work, but it is a good idea to take notes on paper or typed as memos so as not to deface the reading material.

Strategies:

1. Highlight important areas to help focus your attention and eyes on the content. These are also areas that you can later summarise and paraphrase using the techniques above. Be wary of over highlighting and of only highlighting without note taking.
2. Make margin notes where possible. Modern versions of PDF allow note taking in soft copy. Margin notes allow you retain information and deeply process information
3. Reading grids: this is a table used to summarise the main ideas and supporting details covered in a paper/book chapter.
4. Creating a checklist. A journal article checklist could include purpose of the article, goals of the research, research questions, theoretical framework, methods, discussion points, conclusion, critique and comparisons with other articles
5. Establishing a note taking template as shown in the example below:

Read the introduction of the following article and fill in the blanks below. Remember these are notes, not paraphrasing, so be as succinct as possible to capture the essence of what is required

Required reading: [Jenny Douglas: Black Women's Activism and Organisation in Public Health - Struggles and Strategies for Better Health and Wellbeing](https://sta.uwi.edu/igds/sites/default/files/igds/documents/CRGS_13_Pgs51-68_JDouglas_BlackWomenActivism%20%281%29.pdf)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **(name of author)** is researching/commenting on

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**main subject/theme**) through the use of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**central concept/theoretical framework**). Through this concept, the author leans on the work theories of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**authors/theories here**) which allow the author to conceptualise \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(**main subject theme identified above**). The author locates their work in intersections of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**identities or theoretical concepts that intersect to produce new understandings of the topic**) .The author argues that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**main arguments/contributions**). These arguments advance my understanding of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**main and sub themes**) and problematize ideas of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**concepts or previous theories/content to which the author offers critique.**

 

Exercise 3: Questioning your text: reading Critically **(40 minutes)**

**What is Critical Reading?**

It is reading actively with the goals of identifying arguments, weighing evidence, evaluating sources, looking for conflicts of interest, questioning underlying assumptions and comparing with other work in the discipline. When reading for a literature review, critical reading also includes locating gaps in the work to which you can contribute through research. It is distinctly different from the passive reading associated with reading novels.

**Strategies:**

Critical reading often requires more than one reading of a text. This is particularly true of work which includes new terms, heavy academic jargon or new concepts.

First Reading: Previewing

The first time you read a text, skim it quickly for its main ideas. Pay attention to the introduction, the opening sentences of paragraphs, and section headings, if there are any.

Second Reading: Annotating and Analyzing

The second reading includes annotating and analyzing the evidence in support of the argument. It should be a slow, meditative read, and you should have your pencil in your hand so you can annotate the text (note taking).

Third Reading: Review

The third reading should take into account any questions you asked yourself by annotating in the margins. You should use this reading to look up any unfamiliar words and to make sure you have understood any confusing or complicated sections of the text.

Instructions: Read the article assigned and answer the following questions on a separate sheet.

Persona: Who is the author? What are the characteristics, credentials, academic background

Aims: What is the purpose(s) of the author?

Thesis: What is the thesis statement/main claim of the author?

Theories: What theoretical framework has the author used to achieve the purpose?

Main arguments: What are the main points the author uses to support the thesis statement

Sources: What evidence/sources has the author utilised to make the main points?

Assumptions: What does the author assume about the topic? What is taken for granted or assumed to be true?

Biases: What specific biases are evident which guide the way in which the paper is written

Does the author address opposing views? If so, are you convinced that the author has treated with them sufficiently. Explain

Limitations: What gaps can you identify? What main critique can you identify? Are there omissions? What other work exists that deals with similar topics?

Further reading and additional strategies

<https://sass.queensu.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/09/Critical-reading-for-graduate-students.pdf>

 