

SOC b2500
Sociological Writing
(“Making Sociology Speak”)

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Office 3.66

Consultation Hours:

By appointment

Reading purposefully

- ***Check:***
- the contents page;
- the index;
- chapter headings;
- the first and last chapters;
- summaries at the end of the chapters and at the end of the book;
- the first and last paragraphs in each chapter.

**“Read generously to understand;
read critically to engage”** (Turabian p. 39)

- **Read word-for-word** passages/texts that are of central importance to your work. Takes efficient notes.
- **Skim** the text for a general impression of the contents, key ideas and structure.
- **Scan** for keywords.

Levels of Reading

- *Reading for comprehension*
- *Reading for analysis and structure*
- *Reading for criticism and evaluation*

- Are the arguments consistent or are they contradictory?
- Are they relevant (i.e. do the authors use arguments they know you'll agree with, but which are not relevant to the point they're making)?
- Do they use the same words to mean different things at different stages of the argument (what's known as the fallacy of equivocation)?
- Are there underlying assumptions that they haven't justified?
- Can you detect bias in the argument?

- Do they favour one side of the argument, giving little attention to the side for which they seem to have least sympathy? For example, do they give only those reasons that support their case, omitting those that don't (the fallacy of special pleading)?
- Is the evidence they use relevant?
- Is it strong enough to support their arguments?
- Do they use untypical examples, which they know you will have to agree with, in order to support a difficult or extreme case (what's known as the fallacy of the straw man)?
- Do they draw conclusions from statistics and examples which can't adequately support them?

Dimensions of Reading

- ***Look for creative agreement to:***
 - *Offer additional support*
 - *Confirm unsupported claims*
 - *Apply a claim more widely*
- ***Look for creative disagreement to:***
 - *Contradictions of kind*
 - *Part-whole contradictions*
 - *Developmental or historical contradictions*
 - *External cause-effect relations*
 - *Contradictions of perspective*



STOP!
GRAMMAR
TIME!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otCpCn0l4Wo>

Plagiarism

- **Definition** (from Stern 2006) using someone else's work – words, ideas, or illustrations; published or unpublished—without giving the creator of that work sufficient credit.
- **Intentional vs. unintentional** – when in doubt, document. The purpose of documentation is not only to give credit but also to help the reader locate your source. Besides that, it clearly tells a reader what ideas are yours and what ideas are someone else's, and shows how reliable your sources are.
- There are two parts to documentation – the **attribution** and the **reference**.

What you *must* document:

- ***Quotations*** - If you use an author's specific word or words, you must place those words within quotation marks *and* you must credit the source.
- ***Information and Ideas*** - Even if you use your own words, if you obtained the information or ideas you are presenting from a source, you must document the source.

You do *not* have to document:

- ***General common knowledge*** is factual information considered to be in the public domain, such as birth and death dates of well-known figures, and generally accepted dates of military, political, literary, and other historical events.
- ***Field-specific common knowledge*** is “common” only within a particular field or specialty. It may include facts, theories, or methods that are familiar to readers within that discipline. For instance, you may not need to cite a reference to Durkheim’s concept of *anomie* – consider your audience.

The study presented here takes an unusually comprehensive look at one critical point of entry into academic performance. It shows a group of freshmen in the transition into the academic discourse of college, looking at the ways in which they interpret and negotiate an assignment that calls for reading-to-write. On such tasks, students are reading to create a text of their own, trying to integrate information from sources with ideas of their own, and attempting to do so under the guidance of a purpose they must themselves create. Because these reading-to-write tasks ask students to integrate reading, writing, and rhetorical purpose, they open a door to critical literacy. Yet this same interaction often makes reading-to-write a difficult process for students to learn and to manage.

In Confucianism the ideal self is defined and established in terms of one's relationship to other people. The ideal person is expected to work for the good of the group and to adjust the self according to others' expectations. Because individuals are not seen as separate from other people, they are obligated to work through the groups to which they belong. Therefore, a person's concern for his or her own needs and rights is always considered secondary to his or her social duty or the collective welfare. The Confucian ideal person is not self-seeking but group-seeking.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

- **REQUIRED READING:**

- Instructions for writing response/discussion papers
- Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*, Preface & Chapter 1.

- **HOMEWORK DUE:**

- RESEARCH AND CHOOSE A TEXT RELATED TO YOUR FINAL PAPER.