

Read critically
Alex Baratta
London, Sage, 2020, 100 pages
ISBN 9781529713350 (pbk) £ 4.50

Reviewed by Violet Hejazi

Read Critically is an exciting, concise and easy-to-read book that offers more than merely new reading techniques. It discusses a relatively different approach to academic reading in general, particularly assignment questions. It consists of eight sections, summaries of 10 and 60 seconds are provided at the beginning of each section to make the reader aware of the main ideas to be delivered and discussed in each section. Sections are concluded with a check-point or an activity that allows readers to test their knowledge and what they learned.

The author introduces the topic by explaining the concept of criticality regarding reading, thinking and, later, writing. The ultimate goal is to develop the ability to show critical thinking through learning to read critically.

Being critical in day-to-day life is said to improve the ability to demonstrate critical thinking in an exam-based situation or other learning environments and, therefore, demonstrate critical writing. It is beneficial and can be achieved simply by looking at any information the person is presented with and think about its value and meaning. The book discusses this by answering the question, 'What does this mean to me?'

The book explains that being critical does not merely mean criticism, but criticism can be part of being critical. When critically thinking about a piece of information, the person will interpret the matter and reach conclusions based on their interpretation and the meaning and effect of the information presented. The emphasis is on using own interpretation as critical thinking involves making a personal evaluation derived from personal experiences, and therefore, there is no right and wrong interpretation. It provides two examples from famous films to better demonstrate the idea. It also highlights the different ways to understand interpretations and provides examples to show that.

Constructing critical answers starts with critically reading the question, gathering critical thoughts, and then presenting them in a critical write-up.

The author discusses the idea that critical reading of exam questions can result in a more comprehensible and consistent answer as it allows for the arrival at a definite understanding of what the person is required to do. He also highlights the concept of critical language and the significance of practising hedging when answering discursive essay questions. It reflects some level of doubt required in this type of academic answers.

Read Critically targets learners of higher education levels and serves as a source of useful reading techniques. I completed reviewing this book while working on the evaluation stage of the final project I have to do for college. I was required to evaluate my research and benefited from the book as I learned about the Hedging practice.

I would recommend finding the time to read this book for learners or anyone who enjoys reading.

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