

# Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	x
<i>Author Biographies</i>	xii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<i>How to Use This Book</i>	xiv
<i>Online Resources</i>	xviii
<b>Part One Becoming a Critical Reader and Self-Critical Writer</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 What it Means to be Critical</b>	<b>3</b>
Learning to be critical in academic enquiry	4
Academic traditions and styles	7
Being critical as a requirement of academic study	8
Task-driven critical reading	10
Linking critical reading with self-critical writing	11
Where now?	13
<b>2 Making a Critical Choice</b>	<b>14</b>
Deciding what to read	14
From long-list to short-list	15
Support texts	16
‘Frontline’ texts	18
Using the Internet	22
Varying your reading strategy	26
What next?	27
<b>3 A First Look: Interrogating Abstracts</b>	<b>28</b>
Using the abstract as a resource	29
Asking questions of an abstract	30
How the questions help you think	31
Two worked examples	31
Welcome to critical thinking	34

<b>4</b>	<b>Getting Started on Critical Reading</b>	<b>36</b>
	Focusing through a central question and review questions	37
	Evaluating the usefulness of what you read	37
	What makes an argument convincing?	39
	Identifying the conclusion and warranting of arguments	42
	Incomplete or flawed arguments	42
	Five Critical Synopsis Questions	44
	Applying the Critical Synopsis Questions to an abstract	46
	A Critical Synopsis of a text	49
	From Critical Synopsis to Critical Summary	52
<b>5</b>	<b>Getting Started on Self-Critical Writing</b>	<b>53</b>
	Developing your own argument	54
	Writing for your audience	55
	Structuring a Critical Summary of a single text	57
	Building up a Critical Summary: an illustration	59
	Structuring an account to develop a convincing argument	61
<b>6</b>	<b>Creating a Comparative Critical Summary</b>	<b>63</b>
	Structuring a Comparative Critical Summary	64
	Building up a Comparative Critical Summary: an illustration	65
	From critical reader to self-critical writer	73
<b>7</b>	<b>Developing Your Writing Skills to Communicate Effectively</b>	<b>74</b>
	Learning from what you read	75
	How to start the writing process	75
	Presenting your ideas effectively	77
	Checking your work for recurrent problems	80
	Making productive use of feedback	80
	Making progress as a critical reader and self-critical writer	81
<b>Part Two</b>	<b>Developing an In-Depth Analysis</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>A Mental Map for Navigating the Literature</b>	<b>85</b>
	Developing your mental map	86
	Reordering the components: putting the mental map together	93
<b>9</b>	<b>Tools for Thinking and Ways of Thinking</b>	<b>95</b>
	Tools for thinking: concepts, metaphors, labels, perspectives, models, theories	95
	Ways of thinking: assumptions, philosophical positions, ideologies	103
	Thinking about thinking	109

<b>10 Reasons for Conducting the Research</b>	<b>110</b>
Four sorts of intellectual project	111
<b>11 Knowledge Claims and Their Key Characteristics</b>	<b>117</b>
Kinds of knowledge claim and types of literature associated with them	117
Communicating knowledge claims in different types of literature	122
Knowledge claim characteristics: the degree of certainty and generalization	125
<b>12 Developing a Critical Analysis of a Text</b>	<b>134</b>
From five Critical Synopsis Questions to ten Critical Analysis Questions	135
Your Critical Analysis of an article reporting research findings	143
<b>13 A Worked Example of a Critical Analysis</b>	<b>144</b>
An illustrative Critical Analysis of a text	145
Taking charge of your Critical Analysis of texts	160
<b>14 Developing Your Argument in Writing a Critical Review of a Text</b>	<b>162</b>
Structuring a Critical Review of a text	163
Your Critical Review of an article reporting research	166
Our Critical Review of Wallace's article	166
Structuring a Comparative Critical Review of several texts	170
Gearing up for writing Critical Reviews of texts	172
<b>Part Three Putting Your Critical Reviews to Work</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>15 Focusing and Building Up Your Critical Literature Review</b>	<b>177</b>
What makes a literature review critical?	179
Structuring a Critical Literature Review from completed analyses	181
What might such a Critical Literature Review look like?	183
Extending the structure for a review constructed from your completed analyses	186
Structuring a Review informed by Critical Analyses and Critical Synopses	189
Developing independence as a critical reviewer of literature	193
<b>16 Integrating Critical Literature Reviews into Your Dissertation</b>	<b>194</b>
Why the literature is important in empirical studies	194
The reality of the study process versus the written account	196

Maximizing your chances of convincing your examiners	197
Applying your critical frame of mind	214
<b>17 Critical Literature Reviews in Alternative Dissertation Structures</b>	<b>215</b>
Building up the logic of your overall argument within 'multiple-shot' structures	216
Adapting two or more warranting units to create dissertation structures	218
Creating a cumulative exploratory and main study structure for a dissertation	219
Creating a structure for investigating independent themes in a dissertation	223
Creating a combined cumulative structure and parallel dissertation structure	224
Deciding which structure is most appropriate for your purposes	224
<b>18 Tools for Structuring a Dissertation</b>	<b>226</b>
Checking the logic of your developing argument	226
Adapting the template for alternative structures	232
Outline of the core structure for a dissertation	235
Tracking the logical flow of your overall argument	239
Constructing an effective abstract for your dissertation	240
The structured dissertation as a foundation for your next steps	242
<b>19 Using the Literature in Research Papers, Oral Presentations and Posters</b>	<b>243</b>
Developing your overall argument in a written research article	244
Developing your overall argument in an oral presentation	248
Creating your abstract for an academic journal article or presentation	252
Presenting your work as a conference poster	255
Crafting how you communicate with (and so convince) different audiences	257
<b>20 Developing Advanced Writing Skills</b>	<b>258</b>
Precision writing: choosing your words carefully	258
Making citations and quotes work for you	260
Using tables, figures and appendices effectively	260
Elegance: the art of good academic writing	261

## Contents

Keeping to word limits	262
Examples of a less well and better crafted draft	262
The beginning of the end, or the end of the beginning?	264
<i>Glossary</i>	265
<i>Appendix 1: Abridged article: ‘One word or two?’ (Wray and Staczek, 2005)</i>	271
<i>Appendix 2: Abridged article: ‘Sharing leadership of schools through teamwork’ (Wallace, 2001)</i>	282
<i>Index</i>	297