Close Reading: Evaluating an Article as a Whole

Close reading is an extremely important skill for writers in all disciplines. For most assignments, writing is based in close analysis of some sort of reading, whether it’s an English class in which you’ll be analyzing characters, metaphors, narrative voice, etc, in novels, poems, etc.; a sociology class in which you’ll be relying on good research reading to make your own arguments; or any other of a number of classes. You need to be able to read closely and critically—to clearly understand the nuances of the readings and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses—before writing about most texts.

General Notes on the article:
What kind of article is this? Is it a journal article, a book chapter, or a webpage? Does it seem reliable to you? Why or why not?

How many citations does the article include? Do you think these sources are used effectively? Why or why not? Are there any sources that you should go and read?

What year was the article written? Do you think it represents an idea from the past or that it’s very new research? Do you need to also read something more recent?

Thesis:
Summarize the thesis in your own words.

Are you persuaded by the thesis? Why or why not?

Does the article clearly answer the “so what” question? Ie. Can you tell why this thesis matters?
Does the article address counter-arguments? Are you persuaded by the rebuttals?

Evidence:
What are the major types of evidence that support the thesis?

Is the evidence credible? Why or why not?

In what ways does the evidence connect to the thesis? Which pieces of evidence are used as background, support, counter-argument?

Final Notes:
Overall, how would you evaluate this article? What are its general strengths and weaknesses?

Do you think you could use this article in the next paper you write for this class? If so, how would you use it? As background, evidence for your thesis, or counter-argument?

More questions? Contact the Avery Point Academic Center at 860-405-9058 or email us at apac@uconn.edu.