Writing Through the Research Process

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Agenda

1. Develop a Process for Research Notes
2. Create a Research Space in Your Writing
1. Develop a Process for Research Notes

Freewrite:

How do you take notes for reading you do for coursework or research?

Do you have a particular process you follow for reading and taking notes?

How well do you think it’s working? How long does it take for you to read/take notes on an article/chapter?
### Reading Notes as a Process

- Summarize
- Analyze
- Organize
- Synthesize

### Marissa’s Project - Nutrition

**Structure:**
- **Type:** Independent Thesis Project with a faculty advisor
- **Topic:** Health Literacy in Mothers
- **Stages:** Proposal, Lit Review, Critical Commentary

**Timeline:**
- **Sept-Nov:** Reading and notes
- **Nov-Dec:** Identifying gap, writing the literature review draft
- **Jan-Mar:** Supplementary Reading, revising Lit Review
- **Apr-May:** Draft commentary
Make a Spreadsheet

Key Information:
- Citation
- Type of publication

Purpose/Design of Study:
- Study aims/purpose
- Focus of study
- Type of participants
- Study Design

Methods/Tools:
- Methods
- Tools/Instrument
- Relevant Variables

Findings:
- Results

Evaluation/Synthesis
- Limitations
- Notes/Reactions

Make an Outline

Key information:
- Citation
- Key Words

Summary/Reference:
- Short paragraph summary
- Descriptive outline
  - Headings from article structure
  - Bullet point summaries for each section
- Key quotations

Analysis:
- How effective is the argument?
- Critique of argument/methods
- Questions about article

Synthesis:
- Relationship to my work?
- Questions about my own work
Other Tips for Note Taking

- Pick a system!
- Plan ahead based on how you’ll be using your notes several weeks or months later (Reference argument? Group/categorize sources?)
- Take time to put things into your own words (summary, responses, reactions)
- Be consistent

2. Create a Research Space
Map the Research Landscape

- What are the major landmarks in this area of research?
- Are there groups or sides in the scholarly discussion?
- What kinds of relationships do you see between authors? How do they speak to each other?
- How are other authors currently trying to answer similar research questions to yours?

Identify a Gap or Opportunity for Your Research

Evaluate the scholarly conversation as you currently understand it:

- How well does existing scholarship answer your research question?
- In what ways is existing scholarship limited (in terms of data, method, theory, perspective)?
- Why is this limitation important and why should motivate further research?
Occupy the Research Space

Explain how your work resolves or addresses the gap or opportunity
- How do your ideas move the conversation forward?
- Why is your research necessary or helpful to this field?
- What are implications to this research (practical, scholarly, social)?

In Practice: Creating a Research Space

Landscape
Gap
Argument
Reflection

Freewrite:

What strategies do you want to try for your own research process?
What kind of notes might help you for your own research process? When does it make sense for you to do low-stakes writing as part of your notes/reflection? What questions do you have?

Takeaways for Research & Writing

- Take time to reflect & make changes to your process, especially as you face new challenges.
- Make conscious choices and be consistent about how you use notes to support your research. Notes should still be useful to you weeks or months later.
- Use existing research to motivate & frame your work—show how you extend scholarship or address an important problem.
Questions?
Get in Touch!

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