



Lecture 03: Being Critical

An intellectual virtue

Dr. Gordon Wright 

g.wright@gold.ac.uk

October 16, 2023



Attendance QR Code HERE



Key topics today

- XX



The week ahead

This week (week XX) you have your Personality Essay Tutorial



Key topics today

The week ahead

- Personal Tutor Meeting about Mini-Dissertation this week
- also Weeks 8 (ethics), 13 (write-up prep), 17 (Stats)
 - It is your time, PTs have been told to follow your lead
- Critical Proposal overview and tips
- Lab preview - Literature search and management
 - Your Critical Proposal Target Paper



Personal Tutor Meeting Week 3

This week (week 3) you have 50 minutes with your Personal Tutor to discuss the Mini-Dissertation



Your Personal Tutor is ANOTHER source of guidance and support.

Give them the information they need to best help you on this journey.

Dear PTs, “Next week, you are given **no information whatsoever**, and are asked to turn up to your session with nothing other than perhaps a pen and paper, a big smile, and anticipation of lots of exciting research in the making.”



Future PT Sessions devoted to the MD

Week 8 - Check on status of Ethics application, and troubleshooting

Week 13 - Session to support Analysis Planning and Writing up/Submission preparation

Week 17 - Result interpretation, and any concerns arising in the final phase of the MD



Any Questions?



Being critical and evaluating the work of others



This is a topic and skill you've already been shown

PS51015C: Essential Skills for Psychologists (2021-22)

· [Academic Skills 3: Critical Thinking and Analysis](#)

Teaching Week 14 (Fri 11 Feb)

Review these materials and consider your performance of the assessment, and any feedback



This year Critical Analysis has a ‘point’

The objective of the Critical Proposal is that you start to deploy the tools you have practiced in the service of your Mini-Dissertations.

A ‘practical’ exercise, success if determined in light of practical value.

Helping to develop some aspect of your study design or methodology.

You will probably follow this process ‘a few times’ for your final year dissertation!



Reading list items (Barber 2002; 2004)

BARBER

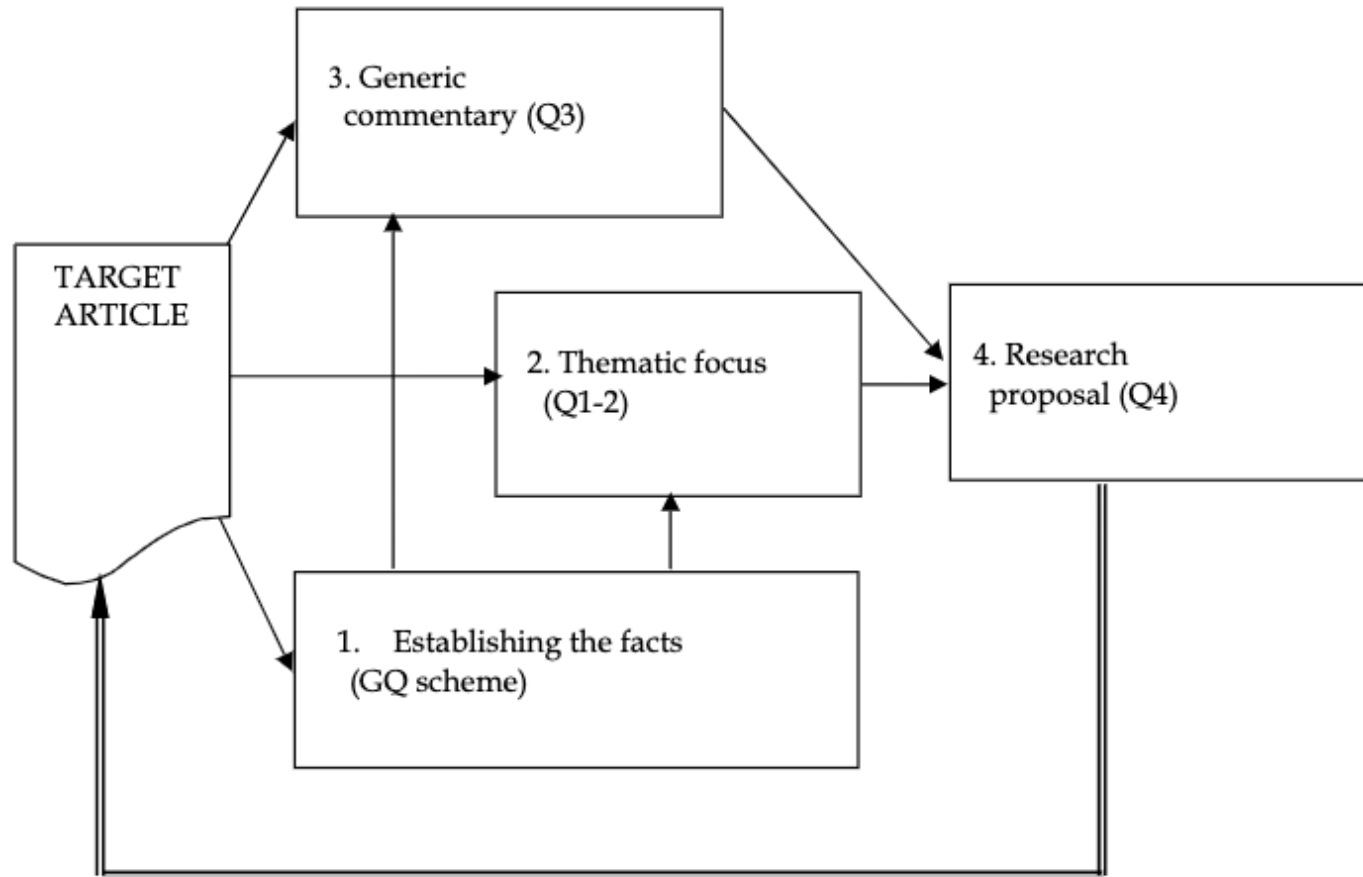


Figure 1

Proposed scheme for a course on critical analysis of psychological research



Table 3

Guiding critical analysis: example of 'orienting questions' for a fictional article

1. How did the authors seek to ensure the 'ecological validity' of their study? What theoretical or methodological issues did this raise?
2. The authors used 'improved' measures of face recognition and sought to overcome experimental design and statistical weaknesses in previous research. Did they succeed in these respects?
3. Write a brief general critique of the study.
4. Reflecting on the state of research on the issues they addressed, the authors observed that 'much remains to be done'. What study or studies would need to be done to bring about a convergence between research on this topic and general accounts of remembering?

Table 4

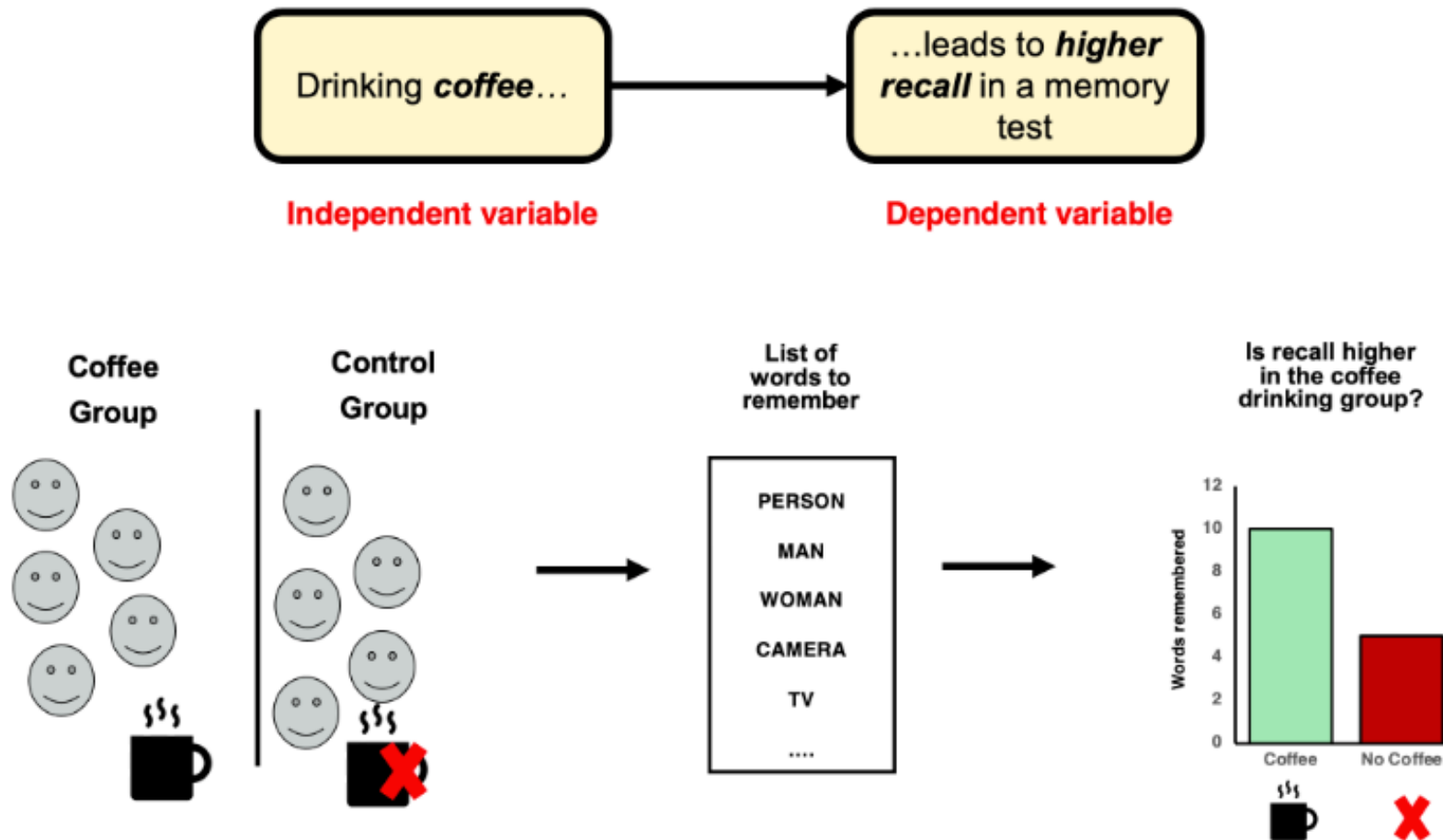
Towards a general critique: the JORIPF checklist mnemonic

Justification	Has a case been made out for conducting the investigation reported?
Operationalisation	Have the hypotheses been appropriately realised?
Replicability	Has sufficient detail been supplied for a replication to be done?
Internal validity	Is the internal logic of the research (design) satisfactory? Have the results been analysed correctly and thoroughly?
Presentation	Are there any serious flaws in the presentation of the paper (language, format)? Have the data been presented effectively and in sufficient detail?
Interpretation	Have the data and analyses been interpreted satisfactorily and correctly?
External validity	How far can the findings be generalised?
Final judgement	Has the psychological importance of the study been established? Did it achieve any progress with the topic matter? Is the study a competent piece of research considered overall relative to the declared (or emergent) objectives? Are there any grounds for doubting the decision to accept the article for publication (given the circumstances applying when it was written)?



Let's look at the example from last week

A toy example





How do I do it? [one approach]

Review literature on a key part of your 'puzzle' (an IV, a 'tool', the DV etc)

Apply critical evaluation to carefully chosen paper(s)

Consider how it might realistically guide or inform your own research

Identify a procedure to partially replicate, replicate, or replicate and extend/improve

Detail how that takes shape and reflect on your confidence, skill base, perception of value



or

You could approach it strategically as a group.

Identify areas to take ownership of, then divide and conquer!

Or fly solo and agree to later apply the same process to a mutually beneficial part of your study



Critical Proposal Support

 [Coursework Briefings and Rubrics](#)

Critical Proposal, Mini-Dissertation and CHIP Learning Log briefings and rubrics

Critical Proposal

[Critical Proposal Briefing](#)

[Critical Proposal Rubric](#)

[Example Critical Proposal](#) - This example achieved a first, but still has a few instructive problems/opportunities to improve.

- Consider how well it 'stands alone', i.e. can you fully establish the merit of the claims made without reading the original paper?
- It is too long, 1,826 from first word of Intro to last word of discussion. There needs to be more information included to clarify some points, so overall, it could do with being more incisive, or selective about which arguments to follow. Which would you cut?
- Do you see any areas where the clarity of expression could be improved to better deliver the argument?
- The reflection is thoughtful and illustrates group and individual perspectives though.



Briefing



Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Critical Proposal Coursework Brief

Write an 1,800 word critical evaluation on an empirical paper from a Psychology Journal within your chosen field of research, including critical reflection of how you and your group might improve upon it, and/or build on its strengths

70% of your mark will depend on the quality of your critical assessment, 30% will depend on your suggestions for how your individual and group efforts in the Mini-Dissertation might improve research in this area.



Please follow these

- You must choose a paper from a Psychology Journal that permits criticism of a behavioural task or a psychometric, personality or behaviour measure (e.g. a questionnaire).
- We stop marking at 1,800 words. No penalty for going over, but the words you use after 1,800 words cannot win you marks
- Worth 15% of your module grade for PS52007D (30 Credits)
- Your reference list does not count towards the word count
- You must use the Critical Proposal Coversheet and use **ONLY** your 8 digit Student ID in the filename
- You must focus on an empirical article (i.e. an article that reports the collection of quantitative data) from a Psychology Journal. You are perfectly permitted (encouraged!) to confirm the suitability of your paper with your Lab Tutor!
- You **MUST** provide a full APA reference to your chosen paper at the top of your essay.
- Although lab groups are collaborative, this must be your **individual work** and collusion or plagiarism may result in a penalty or misconduct review



More tips

- Please review the “SUGGESTED ESSAY OUTLINE” in the coursework briefing
- No need to follow it robotically, be strategic & selective in terms of details
- Selection of a ‘good’ paper to focus on is an integral part of the assessment!
- Do you think the first google result will be a fruitful paper? No, of course you don’t!
- Use your Lab Tutor and me to get a sense of confidence. Early.
- Tell us how you are searching and what you are looking for
- Confirm the paper with us in a lab session [Priority given for this]



Even more tips

- Use some of the tools presented in the lab activity to help track down a suitable paper
- Give yourself time to read, review, re-read and select your juiciest points
- Avoid any discussion of methodologies that cannot inform your study directly
 - e.g. Clinical diagnostic procedures, fMRI technicalities, Criminal Record or Case Study review procedures



You can (will) use LOTS of this in your MD!

This isn't a sidetrack exercise. It's a critical step in your project

Note your references, note your main points, be organised



Weeks 4 & 5

Talking about Variables and the 3 ‘flavours’ of ANOVA in week 4

Week 5 is ‘power calculations’ and opportunity to discuss CP

But we will be moving on and the CP will be part of your independent study

Same opportunities for RASA submissions/summer deferrals & resubmissions



Questions?



New Teaching Fellow in Lab 03 WB300 9:30-11:30

Dr. Faize Eryaman

I'm going to meet her directly after this.

New to Goldsmiths, but a fantastic researcher and teacher.

Please help her settle in!



Roving Gordon

I shall be more available across all the labs now, and looking to help out as much as I can!

I'm looking for opportunities:

- To share good ideas or practice
- To help confirm consistency and give you confidence
- To be another “guide at the side”
- To challenge you
- But not to confuse you or contradict your Lab or Personal Tutors



Questions?

