



Book Review Assessment

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1. How well does the reviewer locate book?

Where is this book situated? When written? Why? Against what backdrop? In what tradition? Famous for what reason? What conversation is it a part of? What other thinkers are a part of that conversation? (50-100)

Wow	Demonstrates grasp of shape of sociology and sense of subfield represented by book. Demonstrates connections beyond the book (background research, course material, etc.)
OK	Reviewer presents material from book that locates it in its place in the wider intellectual/sociological/policy conversation.
Needs Work	Reviewer remarks on the topic, but does not really locate book within sociology, etc.
Not!	Missing or equivalent.

Comments

2. Does writer show that she learned some sociology?

What subfield of sociology would you put this book in? Tell us a little bit about that subfield and how this fits in as an exemplar of work in it. What are the top 3-5 sociological concepts or ideas do you have in your toolbox after having read this book. Say what they are and say enough about them so that your reader believes they are in your toolbox (and that you understand them correctly). (150-250)

Wow	Manages to make the review about sociological ideas not just the book. Concrete not implicit. Solid explanations.
OK	Text demonstrates reviewer learned about field beyond what's happened in class. Explicit examples/explanations.
Needs Work	Included but only suggests having "learned some sociology." Lists, passing refs, reader does not learn from.

Comments

3. Does the reader use author's and her own words to explain what the book is about?

Quote the best "this is what this book is about" (and what the author says she is trying to accomplish in it) sentence you have found. Explicate and expand on this so that the reader understands what the book is about. (150-250)

Wow	Excellent selection of author quotes and deft incorporation into reviewer's text. Explications that demonstrate understanding. Successful communication to reader of what the author says she is trying to accomplish in the book, why it was written, etc.
OK	Reviewer quotes author and explicates for reader.
Needs Work	Quotes without explication, explication without quotes, inapt quotes, dubious explication, etc.
Not!	Missing or multiply flawed.

Comments

4. Does writer tell us what research the book is based on?

What is the "research question" that the book addresses? Was the author trying to find out something or is the book written to show or explain something? Describe the research. Was it empirical research? What did the author do? (150-250)

Wow U R there! Coherent description of what author did, how, why, etc.

OK Research is described.

Needs Work Research question is addressed but only just.

Comments

5. Do we get a sense of the shape of the book and the storyline of its argument?

Paraphrase the author's chapter plan to describe the storyline of the book. Devote, perhaps, a (short?) paragraph to each chapter explaining what the author sets out to do and what she accomplishes in each. Make reader see how chapters contribute to the argument, move us toward book's conclusion. (150-250)

Wow Clear overview of how author gets from start to finish. R gets the big picture and how the details relate to it. Conveys clear sense of how author marshalls evidence and logic to support case.

OK Some but not all of "wow" items

Needs Work R fails to convey sense of book as argument, what its storyline is.

Comments

6. Does the reviewer offer a credible evaluation?

Does the author succeed in doing what she set out to do? Refer back to what reviewer described the author as setting out to do and be sure the evaluation builds on what the reviewer says she author was trying to do. (150-250)

Wow Assessment based on what author set out to do, identification of successes and failures of book

OK Some but not all of "wow" items

Needs Work Unsupported "I liked..." or "I disagree..." statements. Or, complaints that the book is not some other book. Or mere political disagreement or name-calling/*ad hominem* attacks.

Comments

7. Title

- Wow:** Essay's title is uniquely appropriate. If separated from essay it would find its way back. Thoughtful representation of what the essay is about – not just the book – and evidence that writer “went beyond” merely reviewing book.
- OK:** Title is descriptive of this essay. More than just “Review of X” but less than above.
- Needs Work:** “Review of X” and its variants.
- Not!:** Missing or inapt/inept title.

Comments

8. Sentences and Paragraphs?

- Wow:** Paragraphs have easily identified topic sentences. All sentences in each paragraph belong there. Complete sentences throughout. Reader gets the feeling that writer “wordsmithed” sentences and paragraphs. Reader can completely focus on content of essay and understand exactly what writer wants to say. Easy to decide “I agree with writer or I don’t and I know why.”
- OK:** Mostly competent paragraphing with topic sentences, but shy of “wow” criteria.
- Needs Work:** *Runon sentences and paragraphs. Arbitrary paragraphing. Fragments and non-sequiturs. Distracting.*
- Not!:** All one paragraph. Very difficult to read/follow.

Comments

9. Diction, usage, basic grammar?

- Wow:** Essay is easy to read, no distractions in the writing.
- OK:** One or two things to gripe about. Occasional awkward usage.
- Needs Work:** Plentiful examples of same old mistakes, no attention to writing suggestions made earlier in course. Periods outside quotes, misuse of quantity words, disagreement of number to get around gendered pronouns, subject verb disagreements, awkward phrasings, sentence fragments, general evidence that English I has not had much effect.
- Not!:** Writing is so much of an issue that it is hard to evaluate the essay for content.

Comments

10. Proofreading?

OK: General absence of typos/writes that would be caught by going over printed document.

Needs Work: Reader easily spots numerous mistakes that writer could have caught.

Not!: Does not even appear to be spell checked.

Comments

11. References?

OK: Quotes and paraphrases properly referenced and "works cited" section is included and properly formatted.

Needs Work: Some attempt to reference cited work but incorrectly or incompletely done.

Not!: Missing, disregarded, or too sloppy to be called "Needs Work."

Comments

12. Length guidelines adhered to?

OK: Yes

Not!: Too little? Too much?

Comments