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Reading research reports

Presented by Dr Julia Rayner
Using slides taken from Vanessa van der Haam's presentation on readings/analysing Journal Articles (Albany)

Some tips on reading articles

- Rather than read you **study** them
- Respect for writers as persons and researchers
- Researchers write for other researchers
- Trade offs in errors
- Don't get stuck on ...
- Read cooperatively
(Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2004)



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How to Read Strategically

- Getting an Overview
- Looking for Relevant Information

Skimming

- read the **title** and subtitles
- examine **illustrations, graph & table headings**
- read the **first and last sentence** of each paragraph
- read the **introduction** to the text
- read **summaries** at end of text
- read with a **pen or pencil** in hand
- **avoid** detailed, in-depth notes for this sort of reading
- **highlight** your course readings and photocopies but only **sparingly!**
- make **brief notations** in margins

Scanning

- keep the **key words/phrases** in your mind
- cover the **whole surface** of the page as quickly as possible
- **locate** the word/phrase
- **stop** and read closely
- **underline** and **highlight** key words and phrases **sparingly**



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How to Read Strategically

- Getting the Relevant Detail
- Making Efficient Notes

Focused Reading

Read

- more slowly
- actively process the information
- more than once > don't panic if you need to do this – you will build speed as content becomes more familiar

Ask yourself questions

- Where is the writer going with this?
- How does this link to / contrast with other readings?
- Does this reading support my point of view or change my opinion?
- What is the evidence for this argument?

Focused Note taking

Do

- develop a style – visual, structured, organised
- leave blank space
- use abbreviations
- use your own words
- map the key points
- make links to other texts
- use headings, numbering, colours
- record sources fully & carefully

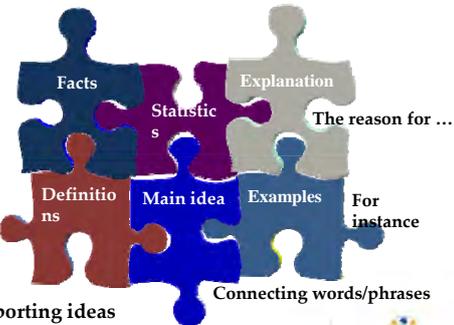
Don't

- copy big chunks out
- write overly detailed notes
- rewrite notes for neatness



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What's in a Text?




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Make Good Decisions

Ask yourself questions to find the purpose

- What is the point of this task?
- Am I reading and taking notes while I try to gain an overview of this topic?
- Am I trying to gain an in-depth understanding?
- Am I researching for an assignment topic?
- Am I revising for an exam?

The purpose should determine the way you read and the type of action you take!



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What is the report about?

- Title
- Abstract
- Purpose

Forester (2002)

Te Karanga
ki Pāwhiri

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Title

- Effects of fungicides on seed-borne pathogens
- Control of seed-borne *Drechslera* by carboxin
- Critical Factors in Recruiting Physicians in Health Maintenance Organisations
- Emphasis on Patient Care Delivery and Collegial Interaction Lead to Successful Recruitment of Physicians in Health Maintenance Organizations

Forester (2002)

Te Karanga
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In an era of unprecedented childhood obesity, uncertainty exists as to whether attitudes and behaviours modelled in food advertising are influencing childrens' diets. An audit of food advertising aimed at children was conducted to identify elements that may influence children's food socialisation.

Quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods were used to provide (1) descriptive statistics of incidence and (2) a thematic analysis of messages contained in a sample of food advertisements screened in Perth, Australia, during children's morning television programming. Across 28.5 hours of children's programming, 950 advertisements were aired, 212 of which were for food products. The qualitative themes evident in the ads were the prevalence of grazing, the denigration of core foods, exaggerated health claims, and the implied ability of certain foods to enhance popularity, performance and mood.

Reasons for research

Aim of research
Specific purpose

Methods

Findings

Quantitative

Qualitative

Forester (2002)

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How does the study fit into what is already known?

- Introduction
- Research purposes
- Related Literature

(Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2004)

Forester (2002)

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Introduction

Over 25% of Australian children are obese or overweight (Royal Australian College of Physicians 2004). While it is clear that child obesity is caused by an imbalance of energy, it is uncertain what has caused this imbalance to reach epidemic proportions. Many factors are explored in the literature, such as increased snacking, reduced physical activity and food advertising. The latter remains one of the most intensely debated and least understood potential causes of child obesity and as such was selected as the focus of this study. The messages embedded in food advertisements targeted at children were content analysed for the purpose of providing practitioners with insight into the possible cumulative effects of advertising on children...

Why is the topic important?

What has been studied before on the on the topic?

What was the focus of this study? Why?

What was done?

Who will benefit?

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Introduction (continued)

It is important for advertisers to be aware of the potential for their messages to undermine healthy eating behaviours and as a result raise concerns among parents and policy makers. Such research is timely as the advertising industry is under increasing pressure to develop practices less likely to undermine healthy eating and more likely to encourage a balanced diet (McDonald 2003).

Content analyses have commonly been employed to assess the possible effects of food advertising on children. The following section outlines previous analyses and is followed by a description of the data collection process used in the current study.

Structural cues

Explanation of benefit to field

How has the topic been studied in the past?

Researcher justifies research topic and research method

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Content analyses *Brief review of the literature:*

Content analysis research has a long history in the field of advertising to children, originating with studies by Barcus in the 1970s (summarised in Barcus 1980). Hastings' review of the literature on advertising to children identified 41 content analyses of food advertisements aimed at British children (Hastings et al. 2003): 16 surveyed the amount of food advertising to children, 21 considered the nutritional value of the foods advertised, 8 compared advertised foods to the recommended diet and 15 analysed theme appeals. A primary finding was that food advertised to children is overwhelmingly unhealthy and not supportive of healthy eating guidelines. This finding is consistent with the outcomes of numerous Australian studies (Dibb 1996; Hill & Radimer 1997; Australian Divisions of General Practice (ADGP) 2003; Zuppa et al. 2003; Morton et al. 2005; Neville et al. 2005).

Review article

Rich source of leads to articles on the topic

What did the review find?

How does this compare with the findings of other studies?



The existing content analysis literature provides much information about the quantity of food advertising and the types of foods advertised. Little is known, however, about the food attitudes and behaviours implicit in this advertising and how children might interpret these messages. This study addresses the first of these issues by examining the themes most evident in a sample of food advertisements targeting children... This study provides both frequency data and a thematic interpretation that in combination offer greater insight into the extent and nature of the messages children are exposed to when viewing food advertising.

Lead up to main point

Summary: Existing knowledge on the topic

Gaps in the research

How study addresses gap(s)

What is the contribution of this research?



How was the study done?

Method

- Participants
- Research design
- Instrumentation
- Procedures
- Analysis

(Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2004)



Method: How was the research conducted?

Quantitative and qualitative content analysis methods were used to provide descriptive statistics of incidence and a thematic analysis of messages contained in a sample of food advertisements screened in Australia during children's television programming ... Three weeks' data were collected (Monday to Friday on Channel 10 from 7–8.30am and Saturday on Channel 7 from 7–9am) from the two Perth commercial television channels with morning children's programming...

Do you need to analyse or use the study's methodology for your own research?



Method Sections

Example

The sample of 1,023 pregnant women was drawn from two public prenatal clinics in Texas and Maryland. The ethnic composition was African American ($n = 34$, 4%), Hispanic, primarily Mexican American ($n = 412$, 34.2%) and White ($n = 377$, 31.3%). Most women were between the ages of 20 and 29 years; 30% were teenagers. All were urban residents, and most (94%) had incomes below the poverty level as defined using each state's criteria for women, Infants and Children (WIC) eligibility.

(Adapted from Pyrzek & Bruce, 1998, pp. 65)



Method Sections

Unpublished instruments should be described *in detail*.

Example:

Attitude toward school was measured with a questionnaire developed for use in this study. It contains nine statements. The first three measure attitudes toward academic subjects; the next three measure attitudes towards teachers, counsellors and administrators; the last three measure attitudes toward the social environment in the school. Participants were asked to rate each statement on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire is shown in Appendix A.

(Adapted from Pyrzek & Bruce, 1998, pp. 68-69)



What was found?

Results

- Description of findings
- Figures
- Tables

(Locke, Silverman & Spirduso, 2004)

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Results (and Discussion here)

Quantitative results

Frequencies

The 28.5 hours of children's television programming sampled contained 950 advertisements. This equates to more than 33 advertisements per hour of television viewed. These advertisements included 212 advertisements for food products and represented 30 discrete advertising campaigns.

It is notable how few food products were advertised in the three-week period. Several of the 30 campaigns were repeated many times, often appearing twice in the same break. In one particular morning slot (1.5 hours), Twisties Bag of Bones was advertised 11 times and JJ Snacks were advertised seven times. This degree of repetition highlights the need to consider the implications of intense repetition for behavioural/attitudinal modelling as described in social learning theory (Bandura 1977).

Implications of results

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What do the results mean?

- Discussion and conclusions

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Conclusions

Over three weeks of children's commercial morning television, 212 advertisements for food products were aired. Food advertising comprised 22.3% of the ads sampled and 30 discrete food campaigns were identified. Analysis of the food groups advertised revealed consistency with previous Australian quantitative content analyses that found the most frequently advertised foods to be... In addition, the messages contained in the advertisements communicated numerous themes that disregard healthy eating practices.

The outcomes of this study are relevant to numerous stakeholders, including the food and advertising industries, policy makers, child health advocates and academic researchers. Fuelled by concerns about childhood obesity, there is escalating demand for responsible food advertising to children (McDonald 2003). To respond appropriately to these concerns, the food and advertising industries need to focus on the overall, cumulative effect of food advertisements as this will determine how much external influence may be brought to bear on these industries in the future. One means of doing this is to improve their ability to review campaigns for potentially harmful messages that may have unintended consequences for children. This study provides an example of how such a review can be performed.

Summary
of findings

Comparison
with previous
research

Discussion
of meanings
and
implications
of research

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