

A critique of policy or a piece of research

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Abstract

The abstract is normally a single paragraph that states the main themes of the paper, provide some context to the policy or research being critiqued – for instance, why it may be important to examine the policy now. Conclude the abstract by describing some of the issues and themes and, perhaps, any limitations to the critique. If you have used a particular framework or referenced a notable thinker, it would be important to highlight the significance of this framework or background/ key ideas of the particular thinker.

Keywords

Your choice of keywords is critical to the discovery of your article from search engines like Google Scholar. Give this careful consideration and select a minimum of five keywords.

Introduction

This short section should identify the policy that is to be critiqued; it should also explain why it is timely or important to do so. The purpose of the paper should also be identified, particularly outlining what is to be achieved by critiquing this?

Background

The background section must, at the very least, provide a succinct overview of the work or policy to be critiqued. This should be adequately referenced – what are, for instance, the seminal pieces of work in the

area? Other perspectives on this same piece of work should also be acknowledged, where they exist. In addition, it may be useful to provide an account of the developments that led to this particular piece of research or policy in order to set it in its historical context.

The critique

This section will be structured in a series of sub-headings, each addressing a distinct theme. Try, if possible, apply appropriate sequencing of the ideas. An initial paragraph – or alternatively, a short

methodology section (see the Literature Review template) should state what these sections will be and possibly explain why these, rather than anything else, have been chosen. If you have applied an exclusion criteria – justify why this was merited.

Discussion

Typically, a critique will include a discussion section which examines how the points made in the paper add to existing critiques or provide a new perspective on the history of the area under consideration. It may also include recommendations for future research or touch on the implications for practitioners and/or those in policy.

Conclusions

The conclusion should briefly re-state why it was necessary to carry out the critique, and should summarise the main points made in the paper. If you have structured the paper without a discussion, the conclusions should also show how the paper relates to other critiques or to the history of developments that led to the piece of work. Depending on the flow of the work, you may, instead, opt to consider what the possible implications might be for policy, research and practice in this section rather than the previous section.