

# **Basic Skills Needed for Public Policy Analysis**

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- 1. time management
- 2. critical reading & note taking
- 3. clear, logical, sequential, pragmatic thinking to solve problems
- 4. top notch research and synthesis
- 5. solid quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- 6. abstract thinking- using and creating frameworks for analysis
- 7. original, exciting, and to the point writing and verbal skills

**What skill sets are needed?**

- Hard work, hard work, hard work
- Planning- never enough time, but need structured daily time for each task: reading, reflection, writing (multitasking does not work)
- Daily, steady work
- Communication to nip problems in the bud

**Time management**

- Do not read word for word.
- Read key titles and intro and conclusion.
- Understand the logic of the argument.
- Focus in on the sections needed.
- Examine the methodology.
- Take notes.
- Compare to other authors.  
Why do they differ?
- Prepare questions/comments for meeting.

## Critical Reading

- Identify the key question and the sub-q.s.
- Criticize, but then suggest.
- Understand the constraints of knowledge, methods, context.
- Examine generalizations, assumptions, metaphors, appropriateness of cases/data for answering the question posed.
- Suggestion and examine alternatives. Which are practical, from a technical, economic, and political pov? Why do you favour a particular alternative?

## Logical Thinking

- Use books as your first step.
- Articles are 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Then public policy reports.
- Internet search comes last.
  
- Know what you are looking for; what q.s you want to answer. You will have to read context first.
- Do not over-generalize.
- Define the frontiers of knowledge.
- Borrow frameworks.
- Use original data.

## Research Skills

- Analysis covers a problem that recurs across space and time.
- A framework can be applied successfully to a variety of situations.
- A set of hypos fr. the fwork are only valuable if they are falsifiable.
- Do not prove the obvious.
- Match questions to variables, actors, relationships, and data.
- Run the test and be prepared to interpret all of the possible outcomes.

## Analysis

- Use the least amount of words possible.- edit, edit, edit
- Have a clear idea.
- Create a blueprint.
- Get multiple feedback.
- Embrace criticism.
- Use peer review, learning commons, communicate with profs before sinking in too much time.
- Writing allows for complexity- but this requires depth of reflection and time for creating multiple layers of questions, logic, and testing.

**Writing well**

### Introduction

- general & specific importance of issue
- tie in to class, audience
- Key research question- categories & methods of evidence

### Literature Review

- Addresses what we know about the q. now
- includes schools of thought/logical approaches, and key authors
- analyzes these in contrast to each other, offering a new synthetic view

### Data Analysis

- reviews hard empirical evidence, incl. stats and case studies
- discusses empirical literature and its conclusions about data
- again, offers new synthetic view

### Original Analysis

- offers a new theoretical and empirical analysis
- explains superiority of this view
- applied to case(s) or stats-cond'ns, assumptions

### Conclusion

- answers research questions w/approp. conditionalities
- summarizes implications of new analysis, for lit, data, & policy
- gives policy & future research recommendations

**Keys 1:**  
**Modularity,**  
**Linkages,**  
**symmetry-**  
**Write an**  
**outline!**

**Keys 2:**  
**Trajectory**  
**no**  
**repetition;**  
**originality**

**Keys 3:**  
**Concise, no**  
**repetition,**  
**economy of**  
**words; graphs,**  
**tables, formatting**  
**inviting to the**  
**reader**

- Type in numbers, eg
- Country by year
- Hit graph button
- You now have a graph.

**Using Excel**