**Critical analysis video transcript**

When your tutor provides feedback on an assignment and uses the term critical analysis, what do they mean?

Well, the term critical means expressing the relative merits and faults of something. Analysis means a detailed and methodical examination of something.

It can be all to easy when you’re writing an assignment to fall into the trap of just getting down the information and evidence that you want to communicate, without imparting your opinion on how important that evidence is and where it fits into the overall argument that you are trying to make.

You’ll impart this nuance, or level of detail, in the language you use.

Critical analysis means analysing and evaluating your own and others’ work and presenting an evidence-based point of view.

When writing at level 6 and above, you need to show that you are a critical, as well as an analytical thinker. At this level, it is not enough to just support your writing with the work of others. You will need to offer a view on the merit (or credibility) of the evidence you are using.

Let’s take an example statement and critically analyse it…

There are many issues for lecturers and students associated with giving and receiving feedback.

So, let’s start: What is the topic and why is it important? You’ll find several definitions, research papers, criticism, advice and comments. You’ll analyse the topic to explore and explain its meaning. What are the different purposes of feedback? Are there strengths and weaknesses in different approaches to feedback?

So, now that we’ve clearly explored and defined what we mean by the term feedback, we need to make sure that our analysis has a clear structure so that we can make sure we don’t miss anything and so that our reader can understand it.

So, let’s start with: Whois involved and what is their role in giving and receiving feedback? You will need to explore several different viewpoints. For example, the viewpoint of the student, the lecturer, the marker, the student’s mentor if on practice.

Then what does the literature say? Your sources could include research papers, literature reviews, best practice statements or guidelines.

Make sure you understand how to critique research papers. For example, you will need to consider sample size, data collection methods and analysis of findings. This will allow you to comment on whether the evidence is valid, reliable and credible, and to identify possible limitations. It will also allow you to decide whether the evidence can support your argument and whether it relates directly to the points you are making in your essay.

Your writing might be persuasive, but if you’re only arguing from one viewpoint, it will seem as though you’ve prematurely come to a conclusion and you haven’t really tried to tackle the complexity of the subject.

Ask yourself: Have you answered the question? Have you discussed the issues from different perspectives, included findings from different studies about giving and receiving feedback? Are there different recommendations for overcoming feedback issues?

In summary, to meet the critical analysis criteria, you need to show that you can make a judgement about the quality of evidence and that you know when it can and can’t support your argument.