

Claire's thought processes when reading this abstract

Harris, J. (2008) 'State Social Work: Constructing the Present from Moments in the Past' *British Journal of Social Work*. 38 (4) pp.662-679.

Social work is often seen as a straightforward response to self-evident human needs and problems or as the outcome of 'professional projects' pursued by social workers.

However, consideration of social work's history suggests that it is a contingent activity, conditioned by and dependent upon the context from which it emerges and in which it engages. The contingent nature of social work is considered by locating it in the contexts of five historical 'moments' that have had significant implications for social work's profile and practice: the nineteenth century origins of social work; social work in the post-war period; the Seebohm Report; the New Right; and New Labour.

The review of these historical moments shows that welfare regimes are key in shaping the manner in which social work is constituted and enacted. Furthermore, aspects from each historical moment have been carried forward into present day social work; the construction of the present always owes something to moments from the past.

Commented [P1]: The title gives a clue that it is about making meaning of the present by looking at the past.

Commented [P2]: I wondered what this meant and re-read but ignored it and carried on.

Commented [P3]: Unsure as to what professional projects might be and unclear but still carried on.

Commented [P4]: Hooked into the idea of a consideration of history because it suggested some kind of chronology and order.

Commented [P5]: I thought this might be difficult vocabulary. Unclear about contingent in this context but carried on.

Commented [P6]: Dependent upon the context gives me a clue into the meaning of contingent. I have now used the context of the word to guess at meaning.

Commented [P7]: Repetition of contingent confirms importance of this word and I now need to pay attention to it.

Commented [P8]: Now the reading gets easier because I'm being given the five historical 'moments' although I don't know why they're called moments. This listing is straightforward.

Commented [P9]: 'Review of these historical moments' tells me now the main focus of the paper is to look at the 5 areas.

Commented [P10]: This part of the final sentence helps me to make sense of the aim of the paper.

Claire's strategies for critically reading the features of the text

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Commented [P11]: The use of a colon in the title offers two pieces of information – the paper is about state social work and it is about making sense of the present from the past. This is a common format for titles. Look at titles and consider language use and meaning. Titles often have to condense a lot of meaning into a few words.

Commented [P12]: The abstract begins with an attempt to summarise a common view of what social work may be. What do you think a common perception of social work might be?

Setting up a commonly held view to be disputed can set the scene for a critical discussion.

Commented [P13]: However – suggests alternative arguments.

Commented [P14]: The contingent nature... is considered (use of passive voice). Where is the author in this text?

Commented [P15]: The author uses a list of the five areas for discussion. This suggests a logical and ordered approach to a chronology of social work.

Commented [P16]: After the 'moments' have been listed the author provides a purpose for what can be achieved by looking at these key historical times.

Commented [P17]: Notice the way that the parts of the abstract have been connected to start to build an argument.