The ABCs of Getting College Students to Read

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......how to study a textbook without melting your brain.......(Hugley, 2008)
Or Is Google Making Us Stooid (Carr, 2008)
Agenda

• Reading & Critical Thinking
  – Reading-Writing connection
  – Current Status

• Reading basics
  – Terms (e.g. digital literacy)
  – Efficiency
  – Reading material (e.g. texts, articles, etc.)

• Barriers

• Strategies (General & Specific)

• Sharing and brainstorming (roundtable discussions)
Not going to cover......

• “Slow reading” or “close reading” for literary value
  – Poetry
  – Essays
  – Fiction
  – Anthologies
Why this seminar?

• Increasing trends:
  – Renting/not owning textbooks

• Reading digital literacies
  – Future student population expectations
  – *Time* spent reading digital literacies
  – “Information Age”
    • Great for research
• Student population who need more assistance:
  – identifying *what to read* (relevancy & quality)
  – how to *interpret* information
  – reading enough “quality”
Ultimate goal....... 

*Develop students who can.......critically think*
Reading and Writing

• Need to move beyond simple comprehension and beyond simple responses to answer complex questions (Flower, 1990)

• Thinking about course material that’s been read, classroom discussion and student’s own ideas = critical thinking process. This is often communicated through writing. Engaging Ideas by John Bean (2011), “They Say...I Say” by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (2009)
• Need to see excellent models of writing (reading) to be able to produce excellence in writing (MIT, 2011)

• Plagiarism is both a reading and writing problem (Horning, 2007)
  – Patchwriting (paraphrasing) (Howard, 1995)
  – If unable to read critically, will not think critically thus will not be able to demonstrate critical thinking when writing! Thus tempted to plagiarize/paraphrase
Current status

• World literacy
  – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Murray, et al., 1998)
    • Only ½ of populations in developed countries function at the highest levels of literacy
    • 2003-2012 : Literacy decade declared by the U.N
Current Status cont.

- 50% of students either taking the ACT or who enter college receive a degree (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2005; American, 2006)
  - ACT students: ½ scored 21 or less reading section
- National Survey of Student Engagement
  - 1 in 5 “frequently” attended class without completing readings/assignments
  - 2 out of 5 freshman never discussed readings or classes with faculty outside of class.
    (Steinberg, 2009)
Reading Defined

• Obtaining meaning from print
  – Reading is a “learned” behavior
    • Inhibition of Return
  – Analyze, synthesize and evaluate
  – “Critical literacy”
    • “..psycholinguistic processes of getting meaning from or putting meaning into print and or sound, images, and movement, on a page or screen, used for purposes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation;…..” (Horning, 2007)
Foundational Literacy

• Leu and colleagues defined ‘foundational literacies’ – traditional elements of literacy that have defined both practice and research (e.g. decoding skills, vocabulary, inferential reasoning, spelling, responding to both literature, etc.)

(Leu et al, University of Connecticut 2004)
Digital Literacy

• “A person’s ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment... Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments.”

Barbara R. Jones-Kavalier and Suzanne L. Flannigan: Connecting the Digital Dots: Literacy of the 21st Century

http://www.library.illinois.edu/diglit/definition.html
Digital Literacy vs. Print Based

• Digital
  – “Open System”
    • Easily accessible
  – Multi-modal
    • Hypertextual (link to link)
    • Facilitates rapid exchange of information
  – Dependent upon technology
  – Susceptive to multi-modal persuasion
    • Creative publishing possible!
  – Sensory changes

    (Les Loncharich, 2006; Alice Horning, 2007)
Digital Literacy cont.

• Equal “access” equate to equal “quality”
  (MIT, 2011)

• Not only changing the way one reads, but also the way one thinks
  – University College London experiments
  – “Staccato” thinking (Bruce Friedman)

  (Carr 2008)
Blended Literacy....

• Traditional texts augmented by digital literacy
  – Access codes to student/teacher on-line resources
    • Study Helps (e.g. flashcards, digital images, etc.)
    • Test Banks
  – DVDs
  – Library
    • Student access to e-books
    • On-line literacy resouces (e.g. citation, abstract critiques, etc.)
Efficient reading

• Speed:
  – Rate:
    • 250 wpm Average reader (too slow for college)
    • 400 wpm Good general reader (minimum for college
    • 600 wpm Strong college reader
    • 1000 wpm Excellent college reader

(Jamieson, 2005)
Skim vs. Scan

• Skim
  – Rapid reading
  – Not Precise
  – Gist/Main idea
  – Headings/Graphics
  – 1,000 words per minute

Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, MD
http://www.aacc.edu/tutoring/file/skimming.pdf

• Scan
  – Finding a piece of info
  – Anticipate what it will look like
  – Visualize the topic/word
  – Scan several times
  – Skip over large sections
  – 1,500 words per minute
Reading slowly due to…..

• Word-by-word reading
• Lack of practice
• Unfamiliar vocabulary
• Unable to identify relevant info
• Poor attention/concentration
Reading slowly due to.....

- Word-by-word reading
- Lack of practice
- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Unable to identify relevant info
- Poor attention/concentration
- Slow perceptual reaction time
- Inefficient eye movements
- Poor short-term recall/trying to remember everything

(Jamieson, 2005)
What is being read?

• *Primary* sources (original work) Research reports and journal articles
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• *Secondary* sources (summarize/interpret primary sources) Texts, book chapters
Research Articles vs. Texts

• Research Articles
  – Original Work
  – Evaluative
  – Reading specific information

• Texts
  – Building fund of knowledge
    • Learn facts, memorize
  – Summative
  – Skim/scan chapters
Key Features: Texts

• RSVP:
  – Relationships: Among ideas or characters
  – Richness: Quantity of sophisticated information
  – Structure: How it’s organized
  – Style: Author’s tone and use of language
  – Vocabulary: Word choice
  – Purpose: Intent of the text

(American, 2006, pg. 17)
What is being read?

- *Primary* sources (original work) Research reports and journal articles
- *Secondary* sources (summarize/interpret primary sources) Texts, book chapters
- Power Points (non-evaluative)
- Tests (reading accuracy)
- Peer Reading (e.g. 1-page papers, abstracts, etc.)
- Notes (student author)
Barriers to Reading: Lack of ability

• Lack of instruction and motivation
  – Need to move beyond just identifying the main idea
  – Familiarity of text makes a difference as differences diminished between undergraduate and graduate students

(Haswell et al., 1999; Haas and Flower, 1988)
Barriers to Reading: Lack of practice

• Time on task (Rebekah Nathan, 2005)
  – National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 437 colleges
  – Higher Education Research Institute  30,000 1st year students (2005, p. 121)
  – Students do not spend 25 hours a week in class preparation
  – 80% of seniors attend class without reading/preparation (2005, p. 122)
  – More students working?
Barriers to Reading: Perceived Need

• Perceived view that *foundational literacy* is not as critical given digital literacy
  – Given time students spend with texting, visual displays, etc. (Leu, 2004)
  – Everything is on the computer (well almost!)
    • Still need to *read!*
    • How to *critically* read digital literacies (Odell & Katz, 2006)
      – Analyze web site layouts, interpreting pictorial graphs, etc.
Goals: Reading Across The Curriculum

• Read faster given amount of material/info
• Read better (critical literacy)
  – Educate students how to read
  – Focus on critical reading skills
  – Model/practice critical reading skills, and
  – Understand different conventions for different types of reading (chapters vs. journal articles)

• Tony Becher (1989, pg. 77-89) from University of Sussex investigates communication styles from 12 different fields of study (e.g. social science, law, math, etc.)
Strategies
What doesn’t work well......

• Highlighting a lot of passages
• Reading while listening to music with lyrics
• Retyping/rewriting class notes
• Writing an outline of a chapter

University of New England, Learning Assistance Services, Biddeford, ME.
Student Strategies: Basic Principles

- Highlight & note importance of info
- Find a place to read..... that works
- Read in 50 minute blocks
- Study time = self test vs. rereading material
- Join a reading group
- Take ‘exercise’ breaks
Specific Strategies

Preview, Read and Review
One example......

• SQ3R Reading Method
  – Good reading is selective
  – Quiz self vs. re-reading
  – Goal = Find Facts
    
    (Maxwell, 2001)

• S=Survey

• Q=Question

• 3R’s =
  – Read,
  – Recite, and
  – Review

    (Robinson, 1970)
Reading: Preview the material

- Read ‘headings’
- Identify **terms**
- Read introduction
- Read chapter objectives
- Read captions under graphs/pictures
- Read summary
- Read chapter ?’s
Question

• Turn headings into questions
• What do I already know about this subject?
• What did my instructor say about this chapter?
• Read questions at the back of the chapter
Read....

...then while reading - answer your questions

• Re-read captions, headings
• Reduce speed for difficult passages
• Try to connect new information with something you already know.......
Recite

• After each section, recite what you’ve learned
• Summarize and or answer your own questions
• Take notes but write content in your own words
• Underline/highlight ONLY important points
• Use a multi-sensory approach:
  – Triple strength: See, say, hear
  – Quadruple strength: See, say, hear & write
Review

• An ongoing process
  – Day 1: Write questions for concepts highlighted or notes taken
  – Day 2:
    • Skim through text/notes
    • Cover content, ask ?’s – orally recite answers
    • Make flash cards
  – Days 3-5:
    • Alternate between flash cards and notes
    • Study what you do not know
Variations on a theme

• SQ5R (record & reflect) (Modification of the SQ3R)

• OK5R (overview, key ideas-read, record, recite, review and reflect) (Jamieson, 2005)

• P2R (preview, read and review) (VanBlerkom, 1994)
Journal Articles

• “How to Read A Scientific Research Paper” (Ann McNeal)
  – Skim for structure of article, main headings
  – Vocabulary
  – Read in it’s entirety
    • Introduction: What ?’s will be addressed thru research
    • Methods
    • Results
    • Discussion
    • Critique
  – Provide Rubrics to set clear expectations
Teacher Strategies

• Develop guided activities
  – Help them *find* credible sources to read
  – Provide exemplars for projects (find relevant information)
  – Provide outlines to help them search for certain information (e.g. intake case history form – diagnostic)
  – Alert students to campus resources

• Textbook selection
  – Are we asking students to read more complicated texts than they are capable (readiness)
  – Online help for students from publishers
Teacher Strategies

• Tests/Projects
  – % of information on test from required readings
  – Detail expectation for essay questions (break down essay into parts)
  – Problem based learning- “read alouds” (e.g. case studies)
  – Test questions: Are we testing the students IQ or if they know the information?

• Syllabus

• Power Points
  – To use or not to use..........
  – Benefits (Yawoski, 2001)
  – Disadvantages (Voss, 2004)
Teacher Strategies

• Change the curriculum
  – MIT coursework (4=communication based)

• Publisher’s Resources
  – Customized textbooks
  – On-line resources (students & faculty)

• Digital resources
  – Marking up the web (Diigo)
Specific Resources

• *Teaching Reading in Content Areas* by Harold Herber (1978). Syracuse University (e.g. reading guides)
Resources

• Community Colleges
  – Cuyahoga Community College (OH)
  – Anne Arundel Community College (MD)

• Academic support services
  -Cornell University
  -University of New England
  -UTEP (Univ. Texas El Paso)
  -Dartmouth College

http://reading.utep.edu/modules.html
Resources cont.

- College library(s)
  - Find credible resources
  - Updates re: changing literacies

- Colorado State University
  - Writing Across the Curriculum (national clearinghouse)
    - [http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/](http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/)
  - The Institute for Learning and Teaching
    - [http://tilt.colostate.edu/](http://tilt.colostate.edu/)
Quick Review

• We are all reading teachers!
• Motivation is key
• Reading is a *learned* skill & needs to be *active*
• Students reading more, but differently
• Familiarity with vocabulary is essential
• Become familiar with on-line resources!
Questions........

• Continue the learning....
  – Break up into groups
  – Work through discussion guide
  – Be sure to leave contact information...so I can summarize thoughts, strategies, resources
  – Last 5 minutes...we’ll quickly discuss most important shared information
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