

Preparing ELLs to be College-level Readers

1. **Getting to know each other:** What brings you here?
 What experiences and questions do we bring to this session?

2. **Purpose of this session:**
 - a. Compare trends in high school and college-level reading
 - b. Look at “gaps” between the two settings
 - c. Present strategies and resources that help fill those gaps
 - d. Discuss, reflect, apply, critique, etc.

High School vs. College Reading

High School Reading	College-level Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have training in pedagogy—often including literacy. • Mix fiction and non-fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Larger quantity of fiction ○ Non-fiction usually textbooks, newspaper articles, and other informational texts • Most texts written for a student audience, or general public • Most texts used in class somehow (discussion, writing assignments, etc.) • Some explicit instruction in reading strategies (but perhaps not enough!) <p><i>Others???</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many professors have little or no training in pedagogy, including literacy. (May suffer from “expert blind spots”) • Largely non-fiction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-fiction usually scholarly articles, essays, primary sources, etc. • Many texts written for an expert audience (i.e. “above students’ heads”) • Texts not always used in class. (Wider variety of purposes for reading assignments) • Little or no explicit instruction in reading strategies <p><i>Others???</i></p>

Skills often assumed of first-year college students:

- A. Awareness of genre, disciplinary, etc.
 - What are the features of textbooks, journal articles, theoretical books, charts/graphs, etc.?
 - How do readers approach these texts differently?
- B. Ability to process (“skim”) large quantities of material and get the “gist,” as well as implications
 - What are the most important terms, concepts, and ideas in this text?
 - “So what”?
- C. Self-monitoring techniques
 - Am I really comprehending what I’m reading? If not, why not?
 - What do I do if I’m struggling with this reading?
 - When should I look up a word/concept that I don’t know?
- D. Use of readings in writing (i.e. textual borrowing)
 - Which sorts of texts are “credible” for different purposes?
 - When and how do I need to cite other authors?
 - How do I quote/paraphrase/summarize within the context of my own writing?
 - How can I find credible sources for my paper?

What can we do in the high schools?

1. Expose students to a variety of texts, both fiction and non-fiction
 - a. Include texts that are extra-challenging, and show students how get the “gist”
2. Talk explicitly about texts: genre, purpose, strategy, etc.
3. Teach the “reading process” (see other handouts)
 - a. Emphasize pre-reading, prediction, and self-monitoring
 - i. Model with “think aloud”
 - b. Use graphic organizers (see Academic Reading Worksheet)
4. Help students evaluate what they don't know or understand, and decide what to do in response.
 - a. Try “Reading Log” (also known as “Double-Entry Diary”) (see separate handout)
5. Help correct myths (e.g., “Look up every word you don’t know” or “Highlight everything that’s important in the text.” or “Don’t skip anything.”)

What can we do in the colleges?

1. Articulate reading (and writing) expectations throughout the curriculum
 - a. How do the readings fit into the curriculum?
 What are students expected to get from the readings?
2. Assign appropriate amounts of reading, and give clear guidance on what, when, why, how to read.
 - a. Clearly identify “required” vs. “suggested” or “optional” readings
3. Give guiding themes/questions/concepts that students should focus on in the readings.
4. Craft discussion questions and/or writing assignments that help students engage more deeply with course readings.
5. Other suggestions???

Additional Resources

Online:

1. http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/writing/academic_resources.htm (list of college/university websites on academic reading)
 - a. esp. note <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/reading.html>
2. <http://www.readwritethink.org> (sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English- NCTE)
3. <http://www.uefap.com/reading/readfram.htm> (interactive student guide for academic reading)
4. http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/bibliographies/readingbib.html (CAELA, annotated bibliography)
5. <http://www.literacy.uconn.edu/adolit.htm> (bibliography of online resources for adolescent literacy—also see LH sidebar for resources particular to certain groups/grade levels)
6. <http://www.readingmatrix.com/> (international online journal)

A few others:

Cohen, R. (Ed). (2009). *Exploring Second Language Reading* (TESOL Classroom Practice Series).

Lunsford, A. and Ruskiewicz (2007). *Everything's an Argument*. New York: Bedford St. Martin's.

Tovani, C. (2000). *I Read It, but I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

STUDENT HANDOUT #1: Academic Reading Strategies

1. Preview text (alone or with classmates)

- a. Consider purpose for reading (To prepare for lecture? To write a response? Other?)
- b. Look at overall length, organization, headings, visuals, keywords/main concepts, etc.
- c. Reflect on your own background and prior knowledge and make some connections.
 - i. Consider doing a short internet search if needed to build up your knowledge base if content is completely unfamiliar
- d. Predict what the overall argument(s) might be.
- e. Try to consider WHY this reading was assigned. What does it offer, in relation to the class overall?

2. As you read

- a. Notice (or form) sections in the reading.
- b. Consider the best sequence of reading: (Intro/conclusion first?)
- c. Try to identify main arguments, thinking about the “new” perspective this author brings
 - i. In other words, What is he/she saying? and Why does it matter?
- d. Engage physically with the text (margin notes and symbols, underlining)
 OR
 Make a “reading log” with quotes/main points + comments/questions
 - i. Try to have at least one note, marking, or comment per page
- e. Test yourself at various points: See if you can summarize the author’s main points and offer some kind of response/reaction.
- f. Take breaks as needed (usually brain efficiency peaks within 15-20 minutes)
- g. DON’T look up every word you don’t know
- h. DON’T try to memorize everything in the reading
- i. DON’T worry if you only understand parts of the reading
 - i. See “Tips for Difficult Reading Passages” (separate handout)
 - ii. Remember: Confusion is the first step toward understanding!!

3. After you read

- a. Try to predict what concepts, points, examples, etc. might be brought up in discussion
- b. At minimum, try to come out with “3, 2, 1”
 - i. 3 main points or concepts
 - ii. 2 comments or connections
 - iii. 1 question
- c. Re-evaluate your strategies over time
 - i. Are you able to meet your goals? (to participate in class discussion, write the response paper, use the reading in another way...?)
 - ii. Consider using different strategies with different kinds of readings

STUDENT HANDOUT #2: Dealing with difficult reading passages:

Individual words/sentences

- Mark '?' and move on
- Look for clues in the rest of the paragraph
- Don't linger too long! You can always skip a passage (particularly if it's not that long).

Short sections

- Adjust reading speed
- Read aloud
- Identify key words
- Focus on first and last sentences of paragraphs
- Make personal connections to anything in the text
- Consider WHY you don't understand. Is it...
 - a key word/concept (then maybe Google it)
 - the structure (then look for subject/verb)
 - too abstract? (then read aloud and try to make a connection)
 - boring or repetitive? (then keep reading and look for connections)
- Bring questions to class to ask peers and/or instructor

Most of the text

- Make sure you preview
- Map out the text—at least know keywords and topics
- Make your own Reading Log: main point/concept + comment/question/connection
- Don't be afraid to read secondary sources
- Don't give up—try to get at least a few points from the text!