



Explicitly Teach Critical Reading in Your Discipline

What? Students should already know how to read!!!

Do you believe that your students already know how to read scholarly articles in your discipline? Did you know that “70 percent of student citations come from the first or second page” of a scholarly source (Citation Project research as cited by Warner, 2018, p. 190). In fact, many student citations are taken from abstracts!



Help Students Read Critically



“Don’t be a mother robin—chewing up the text for the students and putting it into their beaks through lecture. Teach them instead how to read the text for themselves, actively and analytically. Focus, in other words, on teaching students how to read the text not on ‘reading the text for them’” (Paul & Elder, 2019b, p. 46).

Students are used to looking only for quotations to support their claims and often misinterpret concepts and ideas to fit their own preconceived notions, rather than reexamine their own beliefs and schema. They may “not know how to adapt their reading strategies to different genres,” and they may lack reading strategies for different genres (Nilson, 2013, p. 25).

Possible Strategies to Teach Students to Read Critically

- Consider using an article analysis assignment to help students begin to capture disciplinary nuances in scholarly writing (Contact Joyce if you would like some examples)
- Require students to take “double-column notes—one column for substantive notes and the other for reactions” (Nilson, 2013, p. 27).
 - Stop reading after every paragraph – on one side of the column of text, write the main idea of the paragraph; on the other side of the column, ask a question

How Do I Know if Students are Learning to Critically Read?

Do NOT add more load to your teaching!! Instead, consider ideas from the following list to “save” time in class that you might spend “reviewing” assigned reading or to generate class discussion & participation.

Activities to assess student learning from critical readings (3-10 minutes):

- Pair & share – students compare ideas from the readings
- Pair & share – one student summarizes & explains the readings & the other student fills in the gaps (switch next time)
- “Quick thinks” – Post a statement from or about the reading that has an error – students should identify the error
- Complete a sentence such as a definition, an example, a counterexample, a cause-and-effect relationship, an implication, a category, or rationale
- Create a concept map or picture of the reading
- Provide a matrix for students with categories, etc., and have them complete the matrix using the readings
- Compare & contrast current readings with past readings or lectures
- Reorder a list of “steps” from the reading
- Post a statement & students must use “evidence” from the reading to counter or support the statement (Nilson, 2013, pp. 39-45).
- Minute papers or “mind dump” of the reading
- Reading Quizzes on the reading

We can reduce our frustration with student writing as we clarify our expectations for both ourselves and our students and teach the pertinent skills

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