Small Steps to Support Academic Reading Strategies

Though reading skills continue to evolve throughout a student’s academic career, concrete reading strategies are rarely talked about or explicitly taught at the college level. Instructors can scaffold and frame assigned readings to have significant impact on students’ reading effectiveness. When you teach reading strategies, students will be more likely to learn more and produce quality work.

**Encourage Skimming**
- Indicate more important sections of a text so students know where to read closely and where to skim
- Look at the table of contents or headings with your students so they know what to expect, and they can then manage their reading time accordingly
- Model and discuss your reading habits for determining where it is appropriate to do a close-reading versus a skim

**Contextualize the Reading**
- Tell your students why you are assigning the texts you are asking them to read
- Provide students with contextual information about the reading which will help them situate it within the larger body of work
- Bridge what students are currently reading with prior knowledge or experience

**Promote Responding**
- Provide questions for students to consider so they may address them and know what textual support to look for as they annotate
- Encourage students to see themselves in conversation with the author/text rather than just reading to regurgitate facts

**Leverage Accessible Technology**
- Assign texts that may be adapted to multiple formats (digital PDF, printable hard copy, video with captions, etc.) so students may access the material in the modality that works best for them
- Direct students toward assistive reading technology available to them like Read & Write Gold so they may use annotation, translation, or read-aloud functions for digital reading

For more information or to discuss how you can support students, contact the Writing in the Disciplines Program at wid@uvm.edu.

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