Getting Students to **READ**: Scaffolding Students’ Reading, Engagement, Analysis, and Discovery through Texts

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The Problem: Getting Students to READ

• Persistent problems across all disciplines
• Not one size fits all solution

https://thehelpbyastrids.com/the-value-of-reading/
The Method: Student Survey

• Asked students to tell us about what helps them READ

• Survey administered to ~300 students across diverse disciplines
The Results:

- Number of classes: 4 – 6 classes on an average
- Number of pages: discipline specific
  - 50 -100 pages for most
  - >150 pages for some
- Complete an average of 50-60% of the reading but strongly depends on the class
  - Read just before class
  - Comprehend an average of 60% of the reading
- Reading is more regular until Midterm
The Questions: What helps you complete your reading assignments?

- Answering questions in class
- Answering written questions
- Explaining the context of the reading
- Knowing the reading is connected to a major test or assignment
- Knowing there will be a quiz on it
- Lighter load that week/Had the time
- Pre-reading activities in class
The Questions: What is the largest obstacle limiting your understanding of the reading?

- Cost of the textbook
- Difficulty of reading material
- Lack of context
- Lack of examples
- Lack of interest
- Vocabulary
The Interventions:

- Reading Quizzes
- Loaner Textbooks
- Providing Context
- In-Class Discussions
- Group Journals
- Tailored Assignments
The Successes:

- Drop in % students not reading due to book cost
- Higher assignment averages
The Wishlist:

• Conduct a Student Focus group
Students in PSYC 324 were asked to develop a survey interview about why students don’t read for class. In doing so, they identified potential reasons for exploration in the FLC survey. Utilizing the FLC survey, 100 students in PSYC 211 and 65 students in PSYC 324 were asked to complete a survey on reasons for not reading. From that data, 3 issues were identified by the instructor as strong factors. Those issues are listed in the table below. 32 PSYC 324 students in SP 2019 were surveyed regarding the strategies utilized to increase reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified by students as factors in not reading FA2018</th>
<th>Implemented to address factors in WT 2019 and SP2019 PSYC 324</th>
<th>Feedback from Students Midterm SP2019 (response rate roughly 70%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost of Text</strong></td>
<td>Greater attention was addressed to helping students explore low cost options for text. Digital copies of first readings were provided to enable time to explore low-cost options. Students with financial difficulties were encouraged to see the professor who loaned out copies of the text.</td>
<td>Only 4% of students in SP2019 identified lack of a text book as a reason for not reading.</td>
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<td><strong>Demands outside of academics</strong></td>
<td>Accommodations were made to make sure students were allowed more time as necessary to complete assignments and accommodations were made for dropping an assignment for grading.</td>
<td>45% reported “not having time” as a reason for not completing the reading. This was the most frequently reported reason.</td>
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<td><strong>Cost/Benefit analysis of reading</strong></td>
<td>Efforts were made to increase the benefits of reading by linking reading the assignments to the practical mission of the course (learning to interview others) Students were provided a prompt to consider reading akin to interviewing an expert and consider questions they’d have for the expert 3 other previously utilized strategies for increasing the benefit to reading were also assessed at midterm SP2019</td>
<td>23% of respondents indicated that the prompt was useful to completing readings Of the previously employed strategies: 86% found homework based on the readings as useful to encouraging reading. 27% found frequent quizzes helpful and 23% found utilizing reading as an opportunity to practice the interview skill of “restatement” useful</td>
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Students Lack:

- Interest 84%
- Time 57%
- Understanding of vocabulary 25% or Text 39%
- Examples within Text 25%
- Context (how reading relates to class) 20%

67% Read Assignment “Just before class”
61% Comprehend the Reading
Teaching Strategies

Currently:
• Preview Readings in Class
• BB Readings and Response Questions
• On-Board Matrix highlights, quotes
• 25-point or 30-point assignments

Future:
• Survey of time spent, clarity of purpose
• Share results with students/relate to class grade
Before
- Connect to previous topic(s)
- Distribute definition of terminology sheet
- Share reading guiding questions

During
- Collect answers to sheets and questions (graded on completion)
- Open book/notes group discussion of guiding questions
- Use application/discussion/class activities

After
- Connect topic/ideas/theories to course assignments and/or exam
Getting students to read in the discipline of FOREIGN LANGUAGES

I have focused on my two intermediate Spanish courses (SPAN 201 & 202) for this FLC. Short readings are one of the different authentic resources to familiarize students with the culture in these two courses. Students complete a comprehension questionnaire online before coming to class. Problem, not all students do it. OR they do not understand what the reading is about.

After analyzing and discussing the FLC survey, for my classes, in group they write a short summary “on their own words” of the reading. Then moving to work on three reflection questions in order to compare and to connect with the main topic of the chapter. I plan to continue exploring strategies to improve on “getting students to read for SPAN 201 & 202”
Trend: Students read fairly regularly until around mid-term. This is the second year that this was obvious, in this small seminar, due to the impact on class discussion.

Group journaling is part of my expectations and their final grade. The reading often happens, even if late, because they are forced to respond to each other. Per our data, students do most of their reading right before class, which does not ensure time to reflect on what is being read.

Next year, I am going to be more strategic in the assignments for the journals. I will tie the prompts even more closely to the readings, and, when possible, the journal responses will actually be ahead of the class topic. This will help my students be more prepared for discussions. I naively thought that for first year students learning via class discussions would help with the quality of their journals, but that is not really the case. The journals are better and more connected to the readings when they learn from each other, and then we process the material as a class.

The goal will be to keep them engaged with the reading for the entire class, not just the first half, and to establish reading behaviors that occur earlier so there is some preparation. The outcome would be greater contributions to discussions and, perhaps, a deeper understanding of the material.
Reading Interventions: 100-Level Composition Course; WMST 101
(Paige Rogers)

A. Survey Data:
   - Fewer than 50% read more than 25% of assigned readings
   - Reasons include (most to less frequent) lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of skills, and lack of interest
   - Implications include poor course performance, boring class discussions (quiet and irritated students), low morale (me)
   - One student wrote: “In my last English course, we weren’t graded on reading. He made it fun to read for debates. Sadly, I don’t think I’ll ever have a class like that again” (I gave reading quizzes this year)

B. Original Methods and Techniques:
   - Discussion, in-class questions in small groups, reading quizzes online (open text), formal writing assignments, exams (WMST 101)

C. Interventions/ New Methods Based on FLC Work:
   - In-class individually assigned questions, small group discussion, class discussion, small application-based assignments, reading short articles aloud in class, in-class closed book “tests,” reading response portfolio assignments

D. Results to Date for 100-Level Composition Courses:
   - 60% or more read more than 35% of assigned readings
   - Higher class assignment averages, better essays, more engagement, better discussions
   - Only two students stated that they still would have read for class if there were no reading tests
Implemented changes to Engl 300 inspired by the results of the reading survey

• A reading quiz for each reading assignment
  • The goal here was to create a material consequence for unpreparedness with a low stakes quiz. Even though a quiz is only worth two points, it’s enough to draw attention.

• Rotating group presentations based on reading assignments
  • The use of this strategy allowed me to leverage peer pressure and the challenge of public speaking towards a deeper level of preparedness.

• The incorporation of Padlet, which is a website designed to share and visualize ideas.
  • Some students reported that they had difficulty understanding how the readings connected to each other. Padlet was used to map out some of the main points from the readings