

Reading Strategies and Metacognition

College level composition classes focus primarily on writing, but many English students also encounter challenges in academic reading. Professors must realize that reading is more than a basic skill. Think-alouds and talking to the text are two effective techniques for helping students approach reading metacognitively. Educators Schoenberg, Greenleaf, and Murphy (2012) described how both strategies "make the invisible visible" and apply to all four metacognitive dimensions: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building (p. 22-23). As students shared text talk and reading processes, they noticed and often appropriated each other's ways of reading. They developed confidence, stamina, and range. They also read more purposefully, broke down the text, and monitored their comprehension. They were more likely to use problem-solving strategies like asking questions and tolerating ambiguity as they built knowledge of texts, language, and disciplinary practices. Mentored by a mindful instructor, students began to see "what goes on behind the curtain of expert reading" (Schoenberg et al., 2012, p. 22) and to adapt the processes to their individual learning needs.

Martinez (2006) defined metacognition as "monitoring and control of thought" (p. 696). He focused on critical thinking and problem solving as crucial aspects of human activity. Whether we are experts, novices, or somewhere in between, we all need to step back and analyze our approaches to learning. We need to ask ourselves if what we do is working, and if not, we need to make adjustments. This is a life skill, not limited to reading or even to school. As Brown (1997) noted, "Checking the results of an operation against certain criteria of effectiveness, economy, and commonsense reality is a metacognitive skill applicable whether the task . . . is solving a math problem, . . . following a recipe, or assembling an automobile" (p. 401).

<Note: This sample begins with page 3 because a formal APA paper also has a numbered title page and abstract.>

References

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