

Fall 2004

**English 70 Teaching Community
Lesson Plan/Assessment #4**

Course Outcome: Read to make meaningful connections, personally, socially and academically.

Learning Outcome for this Lesson: Students will learn how to “talk to the text” by underlining, marking, and making marginal annotations in order to develop better concentration, comprehension and retention.

Reading Apprenticeship Model: Dimension Addressed

This lesson addresses the personal, cognitive and knowledge building dimensions of the reading apprenticeship model. It addresses the personal dimension because it explicitly asks students to write comments or pose questions that relate directly to their personal experience with a topic. It is also a metacognitive activity in that annotation is the logical extension and college-level application of “thinking aloud”. And it is knowledge-building in that the act of annotating stimulates the activation of students’ schema for both the content of the essay they are reading, and the structure of the author’s text.

Assessment Instrument:

Students are given a copy of the article, “ A triumph over adversity in Oakland”. After the lesson on “thinking aloud” and annotation, they are asked to read and annotate the article.

Assessment Criteria:

High: Student shows understanding by marking the text effectively, summarizing main points in the margins, posing relevant questions, relating to background knowledge and personal experience, and creatively interacting with the author.

Medium: Student has marked the text to show some of the criteria listed for a “high” score, but markings are not consistently relevant and are fewer in number. A few questions may be posed, but they are superficial.

Low: Student has attempted to mark the text, but marking may be too random, or show underlining only, indicating the student did not really become engaged with the reading.

Lesson Plan:

Students are given an article published in the San Francisco Chronicle entitled, “Triumph over Adversity in Oakland”. Each of 18 paragraphs is numbered. Students also are given a Reading Apprenticeship “bookmark” that prompts them in possible remarks they can make as they “think aloud”, e.g. predicting, picturing, questioning, making connections, identifying a problem, summarizing, etc.

I begin by modeling how I would approach the reading with previewing strategies- thinking aloud about the title, picture, quote, etc. Then I read the first three paragraphs aloud demonstrating how I am using my bookmark prompt to “think aloud” about the reading. As I’m doing this, I ask students to write down which of the think aloud strategies I am using.

Next, I ask for a volunteer to “think aloud” with me as my partner. The student then does his or her “think aloud” for paragraph 4. I take notes on which strategies he is using, and when he is done, I say which strategies I heard him use. Then I ask if anyone in the class used a different strategy. We discuss a number of different ways to “think aloud” in response to text.

I repeat this process with a few more volunteers, then have the students work with a partner to practice on the remaining paragraphs of the article.

For homework, students are told to read the article again, but this time they must write down their “think aloud” in the form of marginal notations. We also discuss how this is different from highlighting or underlining alone. Although I discourage highlighting, strategic underlining is encouraged, as are other notations such as circling new vocabulary words, numbering points in a sequence, question marks for noting confusion, exclamation points for noting something surprising or disturbing, etc.

Assessment Results:

High: 7 students scored in the high range

Medium: 8 students scored in the medium range

Low: 8 students scored in the low range

See student samples of high, medium and low

Note: We practiced the skill of annotation over the course of the semester with several articles. For our course level assessment of English 70, we conducted a pre-post assessment of students’ ability to read, summarize and respond to an essay. Students were not specifically directed to annotate. On the pretest, none of the students in my class annotated the article before writing a summary and response. On the post test, all but one did. I have also included some student samples of this post assessment annotation.