

# Baldwin Wallace University

## The Center for Faculty Excellence

[Visit the Faculty Center Virtual Space](https://www.bwfacultycenter.com/)

<https://www.bwfacultycenter.com/>

The Center for Faculty Excellence at Baldwin Wallace University will strive to:

- **Collaborate** with campus partners and university stakeholders to support continuous professional development for the faculty
- **Facilitate** activities and events to support the holistic development of faculty across all stages of career development
- **Educate** members of the faculty regarding evidence-based best practices in pedagogy, student development, scholarship, and leadership

### MISSION

The Faculty Center promotes innovation, effectiveness, and excellence in teaching, advising, scholarship and leadership to support the students we serve.

### VISION

The Faculty Center will provide Baldwin Wallace faculty opportunities to learn and collaborate as well as access to resources with which they may grow as pedagogues, advisors, scholars and leaders.

### VALUES

To successfully achieve its mission and vision, the Faculty Center will:

- Support faculty throughout every stage of their career;
- Promote collaboration and mentoring within and across disciplines;
- Support the integration of scholarly work and teaching;
- Provide both physical and digital spaces with which to explore and experiment; and
- Provide active and passive resources for faculty in a comprehensive manner.

## Faculty Engagement Sessions

**Purpose:** (1) To provide faculty with interactive on-campus professional development that is immediately beneficial to teaching and advising (2) To encourage faculty to engage across disciplines in common pursuit of improving teaching effectiveness and building community

	<b>Transition Period 15 minutes</b>	
<b>Student Planning Tool Training</b> 30 minutes hands-on training 15 minutes - Question/Answer period		<b>Active Teaching and Learning Strategies</b> 30 minutes hands-on activity 15 minutes - Question/Answer period
<b>Group 1</b> Andrew Watkins and Dianna Spycher MACS Computer Lab Room		<b>Group 5</b> Denise Kohn and Megan Frank
<b>Group 2</b> Karyn Gentile and Robert Montgomery MACS Computer Lab Room		<b>Group 6</b> Kelly Coble and Debra Janas
<b>Group 3</b> Mary Dobrea and Robert Young MACS Computer Lab Room		<b>Group 7</b> Lori Long and Susan Finelli
<b>Group 4</b> Theron Quist and Jim McCargar MACS Computer Lab		<b>Group 8</b> Stephanie Richman and Peggy Slavik

# **Supporting Documents**

## WebExpress vs. Student Planning: Feature/Functions Comparison

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Web Express		Student Planning
EVAL	=	My Progress
Grad Plan	=	Timeline
Schedule	=	Course Plan
Registration Release	=	Advisement Complete
Search for Sections	=	Course Catalog, Advanced Search
Transcript	=	Unofficial Transcript
Test Scores	=	Test Scores

## Four Steps to Course Planning and Registration

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1. Review “Progress” (degree audit)
2. Plan courses by placing them on the timeline
3. Select sections when the schedule is available
4. Register when priority registration opens

## Four New Advising Steps

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1. Advisement Complete = registration release
2. Request Review (initiated by student)
3. Review Complete (initiated by advisor)
4. Archive Plan = record of advising

**Dianna Spycher**  
*Coordinator of Academic Advising*

**Contact Us:**  
*Bonds 102*  
*Phone: 440-826-2188*  
*Email: [advising@bw.edu](mailto:advising@bw.edu)*

**Visit Us:**  
*Advising Blackboard page*  
*BW Portal Advising page*

**Kelly Coble**

**Topic:** Socratic Seminar

**Narrative:** The Socratic Seminar can be a useful alternative to debates, stakeholder activities, and other formats we use to encourage student participation. I share some ideas, roles, criteria, and scoring strategies for improving the quality of student-led critical discussions.

# SOCRATIC SEMINAR GUIDELINES

Adapted for college use from AVID's "Socratic Seminar Handouts," <https://www.avid.org/>

## Before the Seminar

***Read and prepare your text using a process of critical reading.***

1. Make sure you understand the **purpose of reading**. Consult the instructor's reading prompt if provided.
2. **Preview the text**, noting its format and structure. Consider how the reading might link to course themes. Note any background information or context you already know. Who is the author of the text? When was it written? Where?
3. **Interact with the text** to ensure that you read it closely. This includes:
  - Marking the text:
    - Number the paragraphs
    - Circle key terms
    - Underline important parts of the text that are connected to your purpose for reading.
  - Making annotations and/or taking notes:
    - Write notes and cross-references in the margins, or use sticky notes
    - Use a double-entry journal (or a form of notetaking that works for you) to keep track of your thoughts. You want to refer to the text with ease, so be sure to note paragraph numbers, page numbers, chapters or sections, and so on.
4. **Contextualize and interpret the text** by formulating broad questions. In a notebook, write down questions that have no single correct answer and that encourage discussion. Approaches to consider for formulating questions:
  - Ask "Why?" about the author's choices in the text (why this detail, why that example, why this observation?), about a character's motives, about a situation described in the text or the manner in which a situation is described, and so on. Note any recurring themes or details.
  - Ask about the author's perspective (historical, cultural, philosophical, psychological, ideological) and message.
  - Connect themes in the text to current issues, to themes in other texts and media, to topics previously discussed in class.
  - Speculate, "If the author were alive today, what might s/he say about...?" (This works even if the author *is* alive today.)
  - Formulate your own interpretation of the reading. Make connections that throw light on the significant or application of the text.
  - Ask about relevance: "So what?" "What does it matter that . . .?" "What does it mean that . . . ?" "What are the implications of . . . ?"

## During the Seminar

*Use the results of your close reading as a basis for participating in a discussion that probes the text more deeply. Be ready to discuss the text as the scholar you are!*

1. Be prepared to participate and raise good questions. Remember two things. First, the quality of the seminar is diminished when participants speak without preparation. Second, the quality of the seminar is diminished when participants assume that their own perspective lacks worth, is insufficiently “clever,” and so on.
2. Refer to the text often, and give evidence and examples to support your response. Example: “At line 22 the author asserts that...”
3. Show respect for differing ideas, thoughts, and values—no put-downs, sneers, or sarcasm. You can certainly disagree; do so respectfully.
4. Allow each speaker enough time to begin and finish his or her thoughts—don’t interrupt.
5. Involve others in the discussion, and ask others to elaborate on their responses.
6. Build on what others say: ask questions to probe deeper, to clarify, to paraphrase and add, and to synthesize. Examples:
  - **Ask questions to probe deeper:** “Juan’s comment made me think of another point...” or “Sonya, what makes you think that the author meant...?”
  - **Clarify:** “I think what Jeff is trying to say is....” or “I’m not sure I understand what you are saying, Stephanie. What is...”
  - **Paraphrase and add:** “Lupe said .... I agree with her, and ...”
  - **Synthesize:** “Based on comments by Tim, Shanequia, and Maya, we all seem to think that the author is implying ...”
7. Practice active-listening: nod, make eye contact, lean forward, provide feedback, and listen carefully to others.
8. Participate openly (not defensively or offensively) and hold your mind open for new insights, angles, possibilities.
10. Take notes about important points you want to remember or new questions you want to ask.

# After the Seminar

*Think about what you've learned from participating in the seminar.*

1. **Summarize:** Use writing to **summarize interpretations of the text** with a view to capturing new perspectives on the text.

## **Examples of Summary Questions/Prompts:**

- What were the most essential considerations about the text shared in the seminar?
  - How does my understanding of the text connect to other themes we are exploring in class?
  - What textual themes or ideas do I have a better understanding of as a result of participating in the seminar?
  - The two main ideas I'm taking away from this seminar are ...
2. **Reflect:** Use writing to **reflect on the process** of the seminar—both your contribution and the group's process.

## **Examples of Reflection Questions/Prompts:**

- How did I contribute to this discussion—what did I add to it?
  - What questions do I now have as a result of this seminar?
  - Who played an essential role in moving the dialogue forward? How?
  - At what point did the dialogue break down, become repetitive, or lapse into debate? How did the group handle this?
  - Did anyone dominate the conversation? How did the group handle this?
  - What would I like to do differently as a participant the next time I am in a seminar?
3. **Set Goals:** Be prepared to set goals for improvement in the next seminar.

## **Examples of Goal-setting Questions/Prompts:**

- What will I do differently to make the next seminar better?
- Two things I will do in the next seminar to be a more active listener...
- To be better prepared for the seminar, I will \_\_\_\_\_.

# The Elements of Socratic Seminars

A Socratic Seminar consists of four interdependent elements:

## The Text

Texts should be chosen for their thematic richness and ability to stimulate thoughtful dialogue. A seminar text can be a great work of literature or science or philosophy or history, a mathematical proof, a work with central importance to a discipline, or a work of contemporary relevance or application, and “work” can include works of art, photography, film and music (scores or performances). A good text raises important questions for which there are no simply right or wrong answers. At the end of a successful Socratic Seminar, participants should leave with more questions than they brought with them.

## The Questioning

A Socratic Seminar opens with a question posed by the leader or solicited from participants. An opening question has no simple answer, and leads participants back to the text as they interpret, evaluate, define, and clarify the textual themes. Responses to the opening question generate new questions from the leader or participants, leading to new responses. In this way, the line of inquiry in a Socratic Seminar evolves spontaneously rather than following a script or plan.

## The Leader

In a Socratic Seminar, the leader, if a student, should play a dual role as leader and participant. The seminar leader consciously demonstrates habits of mind that lead to a thoughtful exploration of the ideas in the text by keeping the discussion focused on the text, asking follow-up questions, helping participants clarify their positions when arguments become confused, and involving reluctant participants while restraining their more vocal peers. As a seminar participant, the leader actively engages in the group’s exploration of the text. To do this effectively, the leader must know the text well enough to anticipate a range of interpretations. The leader must also be patient enough to allow participants’ understandings to evolve and be willing to help participants explore non-traditional insights and unexpected interpretations.

## The Participants

In Socratic Seminars, participants share with the leader the responsibility for the quality of the seminar. Good seminars occur when participants study the text closely in advance, listen genuinely, share their ideas and questions in response to others’, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas. Participants acquire good seminar skills through participating in seminars and reflecting on them afterward. After each seminar, the leader and participants discuss the experience and identify ways of improving the next seminar. When participants realize that the leader is not looking for “correct” answers but instead is encouraging them to think aloud and openly to exchange ideas and possibilities, they discover the excitement of exploring important themes through shared inquiry. This excitement creates participants who are motivated to examine ideas in a rigorous, thoughtful manner.

# Tips for Instructors and Socratic Seminar Leaders

## Leaders

- Your task is not to ensure that participants “cover” the topic but to help them think well. You are a co-learner, not an authority on “right” answers.
- Read the text in advance and take ample notes to have a deep understanding yourself.
- Get the group focused on the opening question as quickly as possible.
- Allow time for reflection. Pauses are OK; participants need time to process information and ideas.
- Model thoughtful behavior. Ask clarifying and probing questions if others seem stuck or are not asking for evidence, reasoning, or connections back to the text.
- Rephrase a question if participants seem confused by it (or ask another participant to rephrase it).
- Don’t let sloppy thinking or gross misinterpretations go unexamined. Ask participants to offer textual support for their thinking or to imagine how the author might reply to a statement.
- Encourage participants to use the text to support their responses.
- Pay attention to what is NOT being discussed. If there is a perspective that is not being represented, introduce it.
- Guide participants to discuss their differences and work through conflicts respectfully.
- Help participants work cooperatively, not competitively.
- Involve reluctant participants while restraining more vocal members. Examples: “What do you think John meant by his remark? What did you take John to mean?” “Jane, would you summarize in your own words what Richard has said? . . . Richard, is that what you meant?”
- Avoid making eye contact with participants if they continually talk to you rather than the group.
- Strive for balance. Do not dominate the discussion or withdraw entirely; you are a participant too.

## Instructors

- Don’t start out with lengthy texts, or lengthy seminars. Build gradually.
- At the start of each seminar, set the stage. Review the guidelines of the seminar (without delivering a lecture).
- Take notes during the seminar: evaluate students, chronicle main ideas, etc. Use these notes during the debriefing, to help coach individual students, and to help students set goals for the next seminar.
- Never neglect the debriefing. The feedback is vital if the group is going to develop with each seminar. Request critical feedback to help improve future seminars.
- Where relevant, use a diversity of print and non-print texts: arguments, proofs, fiction, essays, poetry, quotations, artwork, editorial cartoons, etc.

# Developing Opening, Guiding, and Closing Questions

Seminar participants and leaders can use the ideas below to help develop questions appropriate to key stages of the Socratic seminar. Opening questions should get the seminar off to a start; guiding questions should help to examine deeper meanings in the text and to adjust the seminar if it is getting off track; and closing questions should help the group bring the seminar to a close, though not necessarily to a conclusion.

Opening Questions	
<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stem from context</li> <li>• Direct participants to the text</li> <li>• Elicit more than one-word responses</li> <li>• Are generally specific questions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ When, where, by whom, in what context, was the text written, and why do these specifics matter?</li> <li>□ What does this text ask us to do?</li> <li>□ What is the theme of the text?</li> <li>□ What are the author’s assumptions?</li> <li>□ What could be a good subtitle for this work?</li> </ul>
Guiding Questions	
<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Move participants deeper into the text and to examine the substance of the text</li> <li>□ Help participants examine and revise their own thinking</li> <li>□ Help participants examine the seminar dynamics to keep it on track</li> <li>□ May ask for the interpretation of a specific line or passage</li> <li>□ Are typically “why” or “how” questions.</li> <li>□ Ask for clarification</li> <li>□ May probe assumptions, implications, diverse perspectives, conflicting interpretations.</li> <li>□ Generally move the discussion back-and-forth between specifics and broad themes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ What question are we trying to answer? Why?</li> <li>□ Could you give me an example or a metaphor to illustrate your point?</li> <li>□ Can you find that in the text? Where does the reading support your claim?</li> <li>□ What are you assuming in that argument?</li> <li>□ But what about...? (That seems at odds with what we said before, what the author said here, etc.)</li> <li>□ Do we need to modify or rephrase the question we are examining?</li> <li>□ What do you mean by ____ (key words)?</li> <li>□ I think we are lost. Could someone tell me where we are, where we are going, help me find some “landmarks”?</li> <li>□ To a quiet but clearly engaged member: Angie, what do you think? Is there someone who hasn't yet spoken who might have something to say at this point?</li> <li>□ How can we move from debate back to dialogue?</li> </ul>

Closing Questions	
<p><b>Description</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Establish relevance</li> <li>□ Connect to the real world</li> <li>□ Relate to the participants' lives</li> <li>□ Are often abstract</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Can anyone connect the themes of our discussion to _____?</li> <li>□ How does our discussion bear on ... (what was said before, read last week, etc.)</li> <li>□ Why do these points matter (to you)?</li> <li>□ Where do we find contemporary treatments of this theme?</li> <li>□ How have these points added to our understanding of _____?</li> </ul>

## ROLES THAT CAN BE ADOPTED DURING SEMINAR

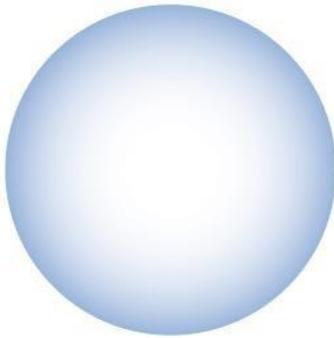
These roles, once understood and practiced, become very useful not only in managing the seminar but in prescribing guidance for specific areas of student weakness in seminar.

As Speaker	As Listener (assuming fishbowl arrangement)
<p><i>Explorer.</i> Let's try a new perspective...</p> <p><i>Gadfly.</i> Everyone seems to be satisfied with assuming x, but ...</p> <p><i>Sherlock Holmes.</i> I think we have overlooked an important clue ... (i.e. passage in the text that complicates an assumption)</p> <p><i>Matchmaker.</i> What you are saying supports what Sue said earlier, namely, ...</p> <p><i>Judge Judy.</i> Let's get to the bottom of your dispute and try to settle it...</p>	<p><i>Journalist.</i> Summarize the important points briefly</p> <p><i>Map-maker.</i> Make a visual chart of paths and terrain covered in the conversation, noting major "landmarks" and "twists and turns"</p> <p><i>Shadow.</i> Listen to and observe one person for a fixed period of time, noting their comments and behavior (effective in large classes)</p> <p><i>Referee.</i> Judge which "moves" in the discussion seem relevant or less so (in terms of content), and exemplary of, or afoul of, the rules of seminar practice</p> <p><i>Coach.</i> Diagnose the overall "play" and propose some new ones, improvements in performance, strategies, etc.</p>

# Socratic Seminar

## Seating Arrangements

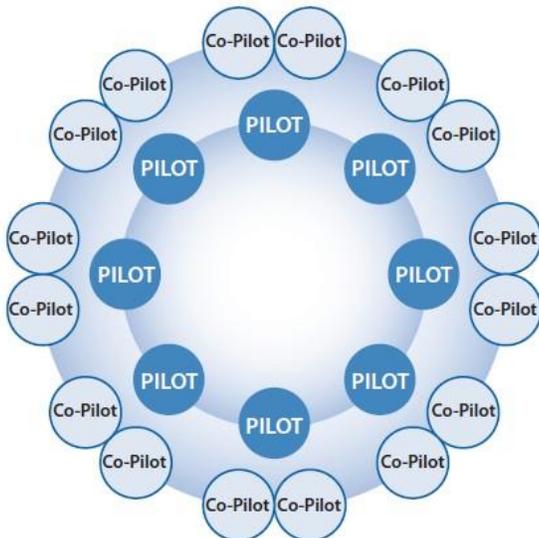
One Large Seminar



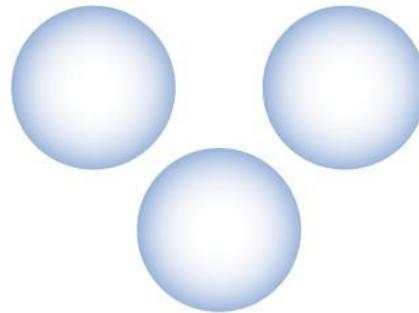
Inner/Outer Circle or Fishbowl



Triad Seminars



Simultaneous



**Inner/Outer Circle or Fishbowl:** Arrange students in inner and outer circles—a “fishbowl.” The inner circle participates in the dialogue while the outer circle observes the process and takes notes. The outer circle can share their observations about the dynamics and progression of the discussion during the debriefing process, with the instructor ensuring that observations have the form of constructive criticisms not judgments. Outer Circle students may be encouraged to keep track of comments to which they would like to respond if the circles switch places, or as part of the debriefing process.

**Triad:** Arrange students so that each student in the inner circle, a “pilot,” has two “co-pilots” seated behind her in the outer circle. Pilots participate in the seminar; co-pilots advise the pilot during consultation periods. At regular intervals, or when discussion loses momentum, the leader calls for consultation periods. During these periods copilots might offer pilots ideas or perspectives to bring to the discussion. The seminar leader may introduce a new question and have the triads examine the question before the seminar starts up again. Alternative, the leader can ask the triads to formulate questions for the seminar. During consultation periods triad members can switch seats, with a co-pilot taking the pilot seat. Switching seats is allowed only during these breaks.

This variation gives students who may not yet have the courage to speak in large groups the opportunity to practice in a triad. This variation also involves the whole class, in contrast to the inner/outer circle, which may not engage all students in one seminar sitting.

**Simultaneous Seminars:** Arrange students in a few small group circles as far from one another as possible in the classroom, or if possible in separate rooms (to cut down on noise interference). Simultaneous seminars work best after students have had some experience with seminars and acquired the skillset to maintain discussions with less direction from an instructor. Simultaneous seminars is a useful structure if the instructor wishes for the class to discuss different texts or different sections of a text. A larger Socratic Seminar can then involve sharing and comparing results of discussions.

**Mapping the seminar:** One way to process the seminar dynamic is to assign a student to map the seminar. This student uses either a large sheet of paper that can be displayed on the wall, or a regular sheet of paper that can be displayed on a document camera, to keep track of the flow of the dialogue in the seminar. The student draws a large circle and an X, or little boxes, to indicate each student in the speaking circle. As the dialogue starts, the student draws a line from the first speaker (who asks the opening question) to the second speaker, the third, and so on.

S/he continues to draw the lines through the whole seminar. At the end, the class analyzes the map and makes observations. They determine patterns: who has the most lines—did they dominate the conversation? Who has the fewest lines? Are there many lines back and forth between two people? (And so on.) Based on the map, students can set goals for the next seminar.

**Mapping the dialogue:** Another option is to have outer-circle participants keep track of *what* is said. One outer-circle student can be responsible for scripting the dialogue of one or two inner-circle students. This allows the class to analyze the substance of the dialogue and enables further exploration of themes. The analysis can produce a useful “seminar” in its own right.

# The Double-Entry Journal

Adapted from Bruce Ballenger, *The Curious Writer* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (49-50)

A double-entry, or “dialectical,” journal is essentially a written dialogue between a reader and a text. As a reader, you ask questions, make connections, and note memories and associations. Here’s how it works: first, write down a complete bibliographic entry in MLA format at the top of the page; then, if you are using a notebook, draw a line down the middle of a page to create two columns, or you can use the spine of your notebook for the line and use two opposing pages; if you are using a word processor, create a table with two columns. Use these columns to do the following:

What the Text Says	What I Think
<p>In the left column, write out the passages from the reading that confuse you, surprise you, make you think of other ideas, seem key to your understanding of what it says, and so on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Jot down direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries, facts, claims.</li><li>➤ Note page numbers next to each passage, summary, and paraphrase. Put them in the far right margin next to the borrowed material or ideas.</li></ul>	<p>In the right column, write out your response to those passages. Sometimes you’ll do a freewrite, other times you may simply jot down quick thoughts.</p> <p>Play the doubting game, questioning the source. Play the believing game, trying to find its virtues, even if you disagree.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Shift to other reading perspectives.</li><li>➤ Tell the story of your thinking about what you’re reading: <i>My initial reaction to this is ...but now I think ...and now I think ...</i></li><li>➤ List questions you have about the source’s ideas; your emotional responses; other ideas or readings it connects to.</li></ul>

Continue this process for the entire reading, moving back and forth across the columns. Remember that you want to explore your response to a text, make connections to other works and your own writing, and analyze the writer’s choices with regard to language, style, detail, and so forth. *Be sure to note all the bibliographic information from the source at the top of the page.*

# The Case Against Perfection (excerpt)

Michael J. Sandel, The Atlantic, April 2004

## Introduction

Breakthroughs in genetics present us with a promise and a predicament. The promise is that we may soon be able to treat and prevent a host of debilitating diseases. The predicament is that our newfound genetic knowledge may also enable us to manipulate our own nature—to enhance our muscles, memories, and moods; to choose the sex, height, and other genetic traits of our children; to make ourselves “better than well.” When science moves faster than moral understanding, as it does today, men and women struggle to articulate their unease. In liberal societies they reach first for the language of autonomy, fairness, and individual rights. But this part of our moral vocabulary is ill equipped to address the hardest questions posed by genetic engineering. The genomic revolution has induced a kind of moral vertigo.

Consider cloning. Suppose technology improved to the point where clones were at no greater risk than naturally conceived offspring. Would human cloning still be objectionable? Some say cloning is wrong because it violates the right to autonomy: by choosing a child's genetic makeup in advance, parents deny the child's right to an open future. A similar objection can be raised against any form of bioengineering that allows parents to select or reject genetic characteristics. According to this argument, genetic enhancements for musical talent, say, or athletic prowess, would point children toward particular choices, and so designer children would never be fully free.

## Autonomy and Hyperagency

At first glance the autonomy argument seems to capture what is troubling about human cloning and other forms of genetic engineering. It is not persuasive, for two reasons. First, it wrongly implies that absent a designing parent, children are free to choose their characteristics for themselves. But none of us chooses his genetic inheritance. The alternative to a cloned or genetically enhanced child is not one whose future is unbound by particular talents but one at the mercy of the genetic lottery.

Second, even if a concern for autonomy explains some of our worries about made-to-order children, it cannot explain our moral hesitation about people who seek genetic remedies or enhancements for themselves. Gene therapy on somatic (that is, nonreproductive) cells, such as muscle cells and brain cells, repairs or replaces defective genes. The moral quandary arises when people use such therapy not to cure a disease but to reach beyond health, to enhance their physical or cognitive capacities, to lift themselves above the norm.

Like cosmetic surgery, genetic enhancement employs medical means for nonmedical ends—ends unrelated to curing or preventing disease or repairing injury. But unlike cosmetic surgery, genetic enhancement is more than skin-deep. If we are ambivalent about surgery or Botox injections for sagging chins and furrowed brows, we are all the more troubled by genetic engineering for stronger bodies, sharper memories, greater intelligence, and happier moods. The question is whether we are right to be troubled, and if so, on what grounds.

In order to grapple with the ethics of enhancement, we need to confront questions largely lost from view—questions about the moral status of nature, and about the proper stance of human beings

toward the given world. Since these questions verge on theology, modern philosophers and political theorists tend to shrink from them. But our new powers of biotechnology make them unavoidable.

It is commonly said that genetic enhancements undermine our humanity by threatening our capacity to act freely, to succeed by our own efforts, and to consider ourselves responsible—worthy of praise or blame—for the things we do and for the way we are. It is one thing to hit seventy home runs as the result of disciplined training and effort, and something else, something less, to hit them with the help of steroids or genetically enhanced muscles. Of course, the roles of effort and enhancement will be a matter of degree. But as the role of enhancement increases, our admiration for the achievement fades—or, rather, our admiration for the achievement shifts from the player to his pharmacist. This suggests that our moral response to enhancement is a response to the diminished agency of the person whose achievement is enhanced.

Though there is much to be said for this argument, I do not think the main problem with enhancement and genetic engineering is that they undermine effort and erode human agency. The deeper danger is that they represent a kind of hyperagency—a Promethean aspiration to remake nature, including human nature, to serve our purposes and satisfy our desires. The problem is not the drift to mechanism but the drive to mastery. And what the drive to mastery misses and may even destroy is an appreciation of the gifted character of human powers and achievements.

To acknowledge the giftedness of life is to recognize that our talents and powers are not wholly our own doing, despite the effort we expend to develop and to exercise them. It is also to recognize that not everything in the world is open to whatever use we may desire or devise. Appreciating the gifted quality of life constrains the Promethean project and conduces to a certain humility. It is in part a religious sensibility. But its resonance reaches beyond religion.

## Sports

It is difficult to account for what we admire about human activity and achievement without drawing upon some version of this idea. Consider two types of athletic achievement. We appreciate players like Pete Rose, who are not blessed with great natural gifts but who manage, through striving, grit, and determination, to excel in their sport. But we also admire players like Joe DiMaggio, who display natural gifts with grace and effortlessness. Now, suppose we learned that both players took performance-enhancing drugs. Whose turn to drugs would we find more deeply disillusioning? Which aspect of the athletic ideal—effort or gift—would be more deeply offended?

Some might say effort: the problem with drugs is that they provide a shortcut, a way to win without striving. But striving is not the point of sports; excellence is. And excellence consists at least partly in the display of natural talents and gifts that are no doing of the athlete who possesses them. This is an uncomfortable fact for democratic societies. We want to believe that success, in sports and in life, is something we earn, not something we inherit. Natural gifts, and the admiration they inspire, embarrass the meritocratic faith; they cast doubt on the conviction that praise and rewards flow from effort alone. In the face of this embarrassment we inflate the moral significance of striving, and depreciate giftedness. This distortion can be seen, for example, in network-television coverage of the Olympics, which focuses less on the feats the athletes perform than on heartrending stories of the

hardships they have overcome and the struggles they have waged to triumph over an injury or a difficult upbringing or political turmoil in their native land.

But effort isn't everything. No one believes that a mediocre basketball player who works and trains even harder than Michael Jordan deserves greater acclaim or a bigger contract. The real problem with genetically altered athletes is that they corrupt athletic competition as a human activity that honors the cultivation and display of natural talents. From this standpoint, enhancement can be seen as the ultimate expression of the ethic of effort and willfulness—a kind of high-tech striving. The ethic of willfulness and the biotechnological powers it now enlists are arrayed against the claims of giftedness.

## Parenting

The ethic of giftedness, under siege in sports, persists in the practice of parenting. But here, too, bioengineering and genetic enhancement threaten to dislodge it. To appreciate children as gifts is to accept them as they come, not as objects of our design or products of our will or instruments of our ambition. Parental love is not contingent on the talents and attributes a child happens to have. We choose our friends and spouses at least partly on the basis of qualities we find attractive. But we do not choose our children. Their qualities are unpredictable, and even the most conscientious parents cannot be held wholly responsible for the kind of children they have. That is why parenthood, more than other human relationships, teaches what the theologian William F. May calls an “openness to the unbidden.”

May's resonant phrase helps us see that the deepest moral objection to enhancement lies less in the perfection it seeks than in the human disposition it expresses and promotes. The problem is not that parents usurp the autonomy of a child they design. The problem lies in the hubris of the designing parents, in their drive to master the mystery of birth. Even if this disposition did not make parents tyrants to their children, it would disfigure the relation between parent and child, and deprive the parent of the humility and enlarged human sympathies that an openness to the unbidden can cultivate.

As May points out, parents give their children two kinds of love: accepting love and transforming love. Accepting love affirms the being of the child, whereas transforming love seeks the well-being of the child. Each aspect corrects the excesses of the other, he writes: “Attachment becomes too quietistic if it slackens into mere acceptance of the child as he is.” Parents have a duty to promote their children's excellence. These days, however, overly ambitious parents are prone to get carried away with transforming love—promoting and demanding all manner of accomplishments from their children, seeking perfection. “Parents find it difficult to maintain an equilibrium between the two sides of love,” May observes. “Accepting love, without transforming love, slides into indulgence and finally neglect. Transforming love, without accepting love, badgers and finally rejects.”

The mandate to mold our children, to cultivate and improve them, complicates the case against enhancement. We usually admire parents who seek the best for their children, who spare no effort to help them achieve happiness and success. Some parents confer advantages on their children by enrolling them in expensive schools, hiring private tutors, sending them to tennis camp, providing them with piano lessons, ballet lessons, swimming lessons, SAT-prep courses, and so on. If it is permissible and even admirable for parents to help their children in these ways, why isn't it equally

admirable for parents to use whatever genetic technologies may emerge (provided they are safe) to enhance their children's intelligence, musical ability, or athletic prowess?

The defenders of enhancement are right to this extent: improving children through genetic engineering is similar in spirit to the heavily managed, high-pressure child-rearing that is now common. But this similarity does not vindicate genetic enhancement. On the contrary, it highlights a problem with the trend toward hyperparenting—namely, the one-sided triumph of willfulness over giftedness, of dominion over reverence, of molding over beholding.

In a social world that prizes mastery and control, parenthood is a school for humility. That we care deeply about our children and yet cannot choose the kind we want teaches parents to be open to the unbidden. Such openness is a disposition worth affirming, not only within families but in the wider world as well. It invites us to abide the unexpected, to live with dissonance, to rein in the impulse to control. A Gattaca-like world in which parents became accustomed to specifying the sex and genetic traits of their children would be a world inhospitable to the unbidden, a gated community writ large. The awareness that our talents and abilities are not wholly our own doing restrains our tendency toward hubris.

(...)

## Instructions

- 1) Form groups of 4 participants each. Each group chooses a timekeeper (who also participates) who has a watch or digital chronometer.
- 2) Each participant silently identifies what s/he considers to be (for him or her) the most significant idea expressed in the text, and underlines that passage. Each participant then writes down on a sheet of paper the thoughts that the passage has elicited, or the questions it has raised in her mind, and so on.
- 3) When the group is ready, a volunteer member reads the passage that she selected aloud. This person (the presenter) says nothing about why she chose that particular passage.
- 4) The group should pause for a moment to consider the passage before moving to the next step.
- 5) The other 3 participants each have 1 minute to respond to the passage—saying what it makes them think about, what questions it raises for them, etc.
- 6) The first participant then has 3 minutes to state why s/he chose that passage and to respond to—or build on—what the others said (having “the last word”).
- 7) Follow the same procedure until all members of the group have had a chance to be the presenter and to have “the last word.”
- 8) Choose a passage that generated a good discussion and share it and some of the group’s reflections with the class.

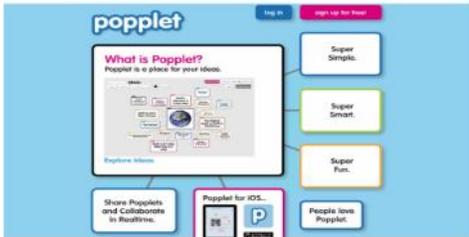
**Susan Finelli-Genovese**

**Topic:** Collaborative Learning Boards: Using Digital Platforms to Engage 'Every' Student.

**Narrative:** This hands-on session will allow participants to experience the learning tool of *Padlet* and gain ideas for how this, and similar digital platforms, can be used for student collaboration in both face-to-face and online settings.

# Digital Platforms for Collaboration:

recap,  
by swivl



A Blank Wall to Post....



buncee blog



linoit.com



"Easy to post it, see it and peel it off!"

**Megan Frank**

**Topic:** Increasing Student Engagement in Class

**Narrative:** The more students are actively engaged with the material, the better they retain it. In this session, we will review and engage in several active learning techniques that you can implement in your class Day 1.

## Active Learning: Sounds great, but how do we do it?

### To start, here are some important tips for any active learning activity:

- Prep the students for the activity during the class session before you do the activity.
  - o You don't have to fully describe the activity before, but at least give them an idea of what they will be doing.
  - o This can include asking them to ponder a question that you may use for discussion at the end of the activity.
- Don't feel like you have to implement all of these into the same course at the same time!
  - o While these are very adaptable, they may not be right for the course, your students, or you.
  - o Start with one or two and go from there
- If it doesn't go perfectly, that's okay!
  - o Just be sure to reflect on what happened and revise as necessary

### Activities:

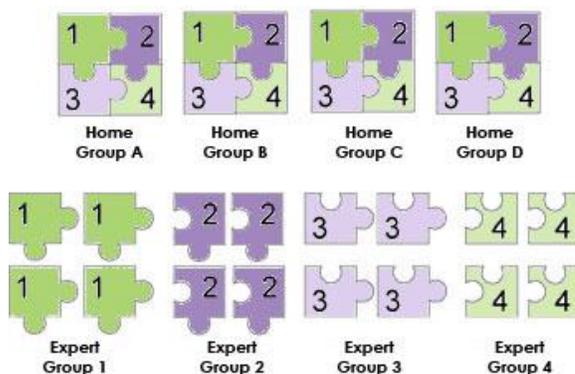
- Active Listening
  1. Have students pair up.
  2. Present students with a prompt.
  3. Student A talks about that prompt for 3 minutes while Student B just listens. It is important that Student A continue talking for the full 3 minutes.
  4. At the end of the 3 minutes, Student B has 1 minute to reflect back what Student A conveyed verbally, emotionally, or both.
  5. At the end of 1 minute, Student A confirms that Student B reflected the information back correctly.
  6. Repeat the process, this time with Student B starting.
  7. Notes:
    - This is easily adaptable to any topic or time length.
    - I sometimes give Student A and Student B different prompts, although both should be related.
    - The point of this activity is not necessarily for the students to lay out everything that they know in the 3 minutes. Instead, the listening part is most important.
- R.A.F.T.
  1. Role, Audience, Format, Topic
  2. This can be an individual, paired, or group activity
  3. The student(s) need to role play or convey information regarding the **topic** your provide in a given **format** (i.e. writing a letter)
  4. The student(s) assume a **role** and convey the information to a chosen **audience**.
  5. Notes:
    - This can be a good way to make sure we, as instructors, are conveying and putting emphasis on correct pieces of information, and that they students are understanding that material.
    - You can decide and change the R.A.F.T. to the needs of your class and the content.

- Posters

1. Have posters set up around the room when students arrive. Each poster should have a different idea/theory/topic on it.
2. Have the students get into small groups (3-4 works best)
3. Each group goes around the room and adds 2-3 things that they know about the particular topic to the Poster. Then they move on to the next one.
4. They can only add to the information on the Poster, they cannot duplicate.
5. Once each group has contributed to each Poster, allow some time for them to reflect on what could be added or elaborated on. Then allow for a second round.
6. After the second round, briefly review each board with the class and highlight some of the main points.
7. Notes:
  - You may need to change the group size or the number of things each group is able to add based upon the size of the class.
  - I have typically done 2 rounds with this activity. The first round without notes or book, the second round with notes or book.

- Jigsaw

1. Breakout into groups:
  - Ask students to make small groups and allocate each one a color. This is their home group.
  - Ask students to find others with the same color as them and create a separate group. This is their expert group.
  - Assign each expert group a concept, framework or theory to master. As a group, they should determine a way to explain their piece of the puzzle to others.
2. Report back to home group:
  - Ask students to explain their piece of the puzzle, ensuring that all their home group members understand the material.
3. Discuss with home group:
  - Ask students to connect the various pieces and put together the whole jigsaw, so that students are able to see where each part fits into the bigger picture.



More resources are available at:  
<https://www.jigsaw.org>

4. Notes

- You can set the time parameters for each portion of this activity.
- This provides the students to opportunity to practice and become more comfortable with discipline-specific language.
- It allows the students to chance to teach their peers, and therefore better engage with the material

**Remember:** It's okay if it doesn't go perfectly! We are only human, and therefore prone to err. We will try again.

**Debra Janas**

**Topic:** Student Engagement: From the K-12 Classroom to Yours

**Narrative:** Many of the strategies used to engage students in the K-12 classroom can be modified or used directly in the college classroom. In this session, we will review those strategies in their college-modified version. You will easily be able to use one or more of these strategies daily in your classrooms.

## Student Engagement

Low/No tech:

Student Response Boards



### KWL Chart

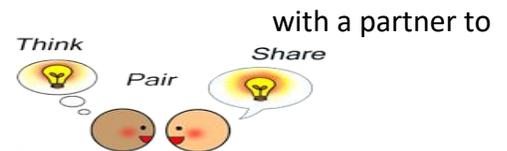
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Know	Wonder	Learned
What do you think you already know about this topic?	What do you wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.	After you complete your project, write what you learned.

KWL Chart

Think Pair Share: Pose a question, give 30 seconds think time, pair discuss response, share with group.



Group Text Annotation:



Small Groups work together to color code a section of text. The group can decide the tags for the coding or the instructor can prescribe them ahead of time based on topic.

Jigsaw:



Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that enables each student of a "home" group to specialize in one aspect of a topic (for example, one group studies habitats of rainforest animals, another group studies predators of rainforest animals). Students meet with members from other groups who are assigned the same aspect, and after mastering the material, return to the "home" group and teach the material to their group members. With this strategy, each student in the "home" group serves as a piece of the topic's puzzle and when they work together as a whole, they create the complete jigsaw puzzle.

1. Introduce the strategy and the topic to be studied.
2. Assign each student to a "home group" of 3-5 students who reflect a range of reading abilities.
3. Determine a set of reading selections and assign one selection to each student.
4. Create "expert groups" that consist of students across "home groups" who will read the same selection.
5. Give all students a framework for managing their time on the various parts of the jigsaw task.
6. Provide key questions to help the "expert groups" gather information in their particular area.

7. Provide materials and resources necessary for all students to learn about their topics and become "experts."
8. Discuss the rules for reconvening into "home groups" and provide guidelines as each "expert" reports the information learned.
9. Prepare a summary chart or graphic organizer for each "home group" as a guide for organizing the experts' information report.
10. Remind students that "home group" members are responsible to learn all content from one another.

Taken from: <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/jigsaw>

Quick Writes:



Studies show that the proper ratio of direct instruction to reflection time for students is ten to two. That means that for every ten minutes of instruction teachers need to provide students with two minutes for reflection. This activity is a great way to provide students with that much needed reflection time! In this activity, the teacher asks a question about a topic or concept that has just been taught. Then the student produces a written response and either shares it with a neighbor or is invited to share it with the entire class.

Taken from: <https://www.readinghorizons.com/blog/14-classroom-activities-that-increase-student-engagement>

Gallery Walk: similar to a Jigsaw but with more movement. See the link below for a description

<https://www.mudandinkteaching.org/new-blog/2016/8/18/best-practices-the-gallery-walk>

*Tech based:*

Kahoot

<https://kahoot.com/>

Near Pod

<https://nearpod.com/>

Plickers

<https://www.plickers.com/>

Pear Deck for Google Slides

<https://www.peardeck.com/>

Voicethread

<https://voicethread.com/>

**Denise Kohn**

**Topic:** Tips for Creating Writing Assignments

**Narrative:** As professors, we know what we want in a paper, but sometimes it's difficult to convey that idea to students. This session will cover some quick tips on creating writing assignments.

## Creating Writing Assignments: Some Considerations

### THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

**AUDIENCE:** The instructor—but is there another audience? Students in the class who have read the same book? College students who are not familiar with the topic? College-educated women in Ohio? Sophomore biology majors? Parents of toddlers? Future employer? *[An audience besides the instructor can make writing experience more authentic for students.]*

**THE WRITER:** What persona or image of the writer should be created in the writing? Should the writer use language and tone to convey formality, friendliness, authority, artistic sensibility, open-mindedness, professionalism, field-specific knowledge, etc.? Should the writing be free from “voice” or express the writer’s personality in a way that is appropriate to the subject? *[Students need to be given a sense of the self they should create in their writing. As instructors, we need to remember that students’ personae will also be shaped by their age, experiences, family and peers, religion, education levels, and political ideas, even though these factors may not be immediately applicable to the writing assignment.]*

**PURPOSE:** What is the overall goal of the assignment? Persuade? Entertain? Summarize? Evaluate? Express? Analyze? Interpret? Narrate? Explain? Report? Reflect?

**TOPIC:** To what extent is the specific topic shaped by the instructor and/or the student? Does the instructor offer the topic and then the student create a specific claim/idea? Is there a specific prompt that must be answered? Does the student know enough to write about the topic? Is the length of the assignment appropriate to the topic?

### WRITING PROCESS

Prewriting --- Drafting --- Revision --- Editing --- Publication

Not all assignments will go through all stages. For major assignments, instructors may need to devote some class time to prewriting through whole and small-group discussion, concept mapping, outlining, etc. Peer review in class or writing conferences during office hour can help with revision. Student work can be published through class presentations, Ovation, Blackboard, websites. For short assignments, students may be expected to go through the first four stages on their own.

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

Rubrics, scoring guides, and/or criteria for different grades should be part of the assignment to help students make sure they include the parts of the assignment that are important.

### MODELING

Samples of previous student work can quickly clarify your expectations. Examples of appropriate vs. inappropriate thesis statements for an assignment can get students on the right track quickly.

**Lori Long**

**Topic:** Building Better Teams

**Narrative:** Team projects can help students build valuable collaboration skills, but can be difficult for faculty to manage. This session will help you facilitate better team experiences for your students with ideas on team formation, encouraging self-management, and peer evaluation.

# Building Better Teams

## Fall Conference 2018

*Contact:*  
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(440) 826-2419

### **Team Formation**

I take a hybrid approach, allowing students to indicate their team preferences, but making the final assignments. To identify preferences:

Speed Networking: I use one class period to allow students to network with each other so that they have an opportunity to meet everyone in class before sharing their preferences.

Team Preference sheet: I ask each student to complete a sheet indicating their strengths, preferences, and scheduling concerns.

When possible I try to assure each student has at least one preferred team member.

### **Managing Team Collaboration**

Annotated Bibliography: Each student completes independent research on the topic before the project begins. This ensures all students contribute at the beginning of the project.

Team Agreement/Project Plan: The teams spend time discussing how they will work together and document their plan in a written agreement. As part of this process we discuss collaboration vs. “splitting the work.”

Peer Evaluation: Students complete a detailed peer evaluation. This process serves to not only provide feedback on peers, but also help the students learn from their experience. They receive half of the credit for this assignment based on their peer’s feedback, and half of the credit based on the quality of the peer evaluation they submit.

## Team Preferences

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Key Role Strengths:

*Rank from 1-5 (1 = your strongest ability):*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Technician (good with software applications, audio, video, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Creative (able to help the group envision all that is possible)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Researcher (skilled at conducting primary or secondary research)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Writer (a clear, organized and technologically sound writer)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Human relations (skilled at bringing group to consensus and addressing conflict)

### Preferred Team Members:

List 2 or 3 preferred team members. Leave blank if no preference.

### Topics of Interest:

*\*\*\*\* NOTE: THIS VARIES DEPENDING ON COURSE. MAY INCLUDE A LIST OF SPECIFIC TOPICS TO CHOOSE FROM, OR IF STUDENTS CAN SELECT THEIR OWN PROJECT TOPIC – ASKS FOR THEIR IDEAS/PREFERENCES\*\*\*\**

### Schedule Limitations:

Explain any schedule limitations that are consistent across the semester (i.e. work all weekend, evening classes scheduled, live off-campus, etc.)

### Other Considerations:

List any other concerns you have with your assignment to a team.

## Annotated Bibliography

To support your work on your team project, you will need to do research to learn about best practices, current theories, and other relevant research related to the topic of your project.

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. You should research your topic thoroughly and prepare an entry for each reference that includes:

1. Citation using MLA or APA style.
2. Explanation of main points of the source which shows among other things that you have read and thoroughly understand the source.
3. Verification or critique of the authority or qualifications of the author and/or the source (publication or website).
4. Comments on the worth, effectiveness, and usefulness of the work in terms of both the topic being researched and/or your own project.

Websites (.com' that are not news sources in particular) should only be included if they are evaluated and determined to be credible resources. You can earn up to 5 points for each source you identify (50 points maximum). You will only earn the full 5 points if it is a credible source and you include all of the information noted above.

### ***Resources to evaluate the credibility of websites:***

<http://libguides.bw.edu/c.php?g=321230&p=2150128>

<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k70847&pageid=icb.page346375>

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/web-eval-sites.htm>

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/howdoi/webeval.html>

## Team Agreement/Project Plan

The purpose of this activity is to allow your team to establish some 'ground rules' in working together. Before you break out into your teams, take a few minutes and reflect upon your past team experiences. Make a note of your biggest frustration in working with a team (what is your 'pet peeve' or what really bothers you about what a team member does or doesn't do?). Next, make some notes about what has worked well in your past team experiences.

Once you are in your teams, share your biggest frustration with your team members. Next, discuss with your team things that have worked well in your past experiences. Finally, work as a team to write a Team Agreement that includes the following:

- \* Collaboration plan: Determine how you will work together to complete the project. How will you collaborate to contribute to the project?
- \* Project plan: What are the steps necessary to complete the projects? What are your deadlines for each step?
- \* Team roles: Will you have a team leader? Will you have specific roles within the team? If so, what who will be responsible for what (i.e. proofreading, submitting assignment, preparing presentation etc.)? Who will take responsibility for the tasks necessary to complete the assignment?
- \* Communication: What tools will you use to communicate? How will you use Blackboard? How often will you communicate about your project?
- \* Meetings: Beyond class meetings, you will need to meet as a team. Determine when you will have team meetings (specific days and times).
- \* Problems: What will you do if you can't come to an agreement? Or, if one member does not contribute?

Post your agreement on your team Blackboard site, and submit to the instructor.

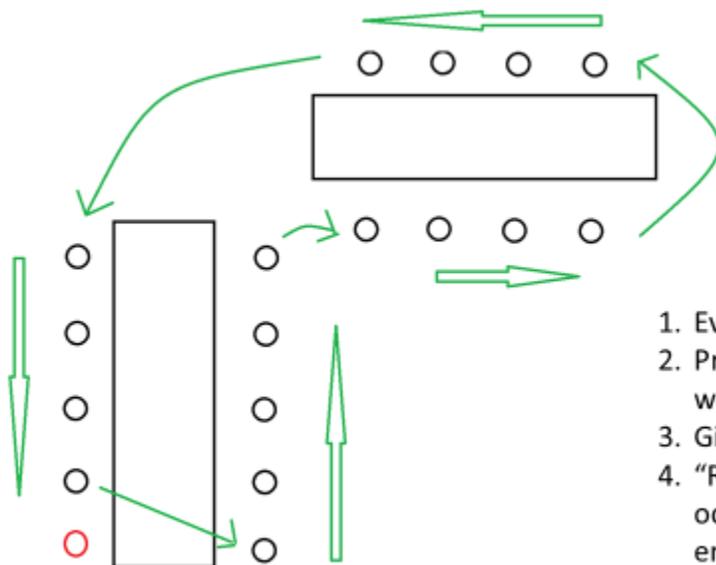
## Peer Evaluation

Reflecting on your team experience in this course can help you understand how to improve team performance for future team projects. For this assignment, each team member will assess the performance of: (1) the team overall, and (2) each of its members. The assessment of the team as a whole should be a succinct but thorough analysis of the team's strengths, major obstacles to effective team processes, and recommendations for improving the team's interactions for future involvement (i.e., carefully explain what would need to be done to help the team function more effectively if it were to continue working as a team in the future).

In assessing individual members, you will use a total of 15 points to distribute among teammates (do not include yourself). You are not required to use all 15 points, but you may not use more than 15. Because it is almost impossible for each team member to contribute to the group absolutely equally, the number of points assigned to each member must be different. For example, Member 1 may be assigned 9 points because s/he went above and beyond in his/her contributions to the team, Member 2 may receive 2 points because they contributed little, and Member 3 may be assigned 4 points.

For the individual assignment of points, include the following:

- Team member's name
- The number of points assigned
- The rationale for the grade- be very descriptive in your reasoning. For example, what portions of the project did the team member take on? How well did he or she perform his or her assignments? How did he or she interact with team?



### Facilitating Speed Networking

1. Everyone takes seat to begin.
2. Provide students with a sheet with all names to take notes.
3. Give ideas on questions to ask.
4. "Red" seat- stays stationary. (If odd number, red seat stays empty)
5. Rotate every "x" minutes.

## **Stephanie Richman**

**Topic:** Improving Students' Reading Comprehension

**Narrative:** Students (sometimes) do their reading, but they don't always understand it. This session will give you the tools to help your students connect with their readings. We will review and engage in several activities based on literacy research that you can take back to your own classes.

Carol Porter-O'Donnell

## Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching Annotation Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension

Annotating a text can be a powerful strategy to comprehend difficult material and encourage active reading. High school teacher Carol Porter-O'Donnell provides several activities and tools to help students learn to purposefully mark up what they read.

**T**he hottest-selling item at the university bookstore when I was a college student was the yellow highlighter. I know because I stocked and sold them while working my way through college. I also purchased them and made the pages of my books very colorful. Annotating, or marking the text to identify important information and record the reader's ideas, was a skill I had observed other learners using but never practiced myself because I did not own the books I read in high school. The yellow marks in my college textbooks, which left little of the page in its original color, did not help me to learn very much. Unfortunately, I was nearly a junior in college before I knew how to highlight key ideas and write marginal notes that helped me make connections, pose questions, and interpret ideas.

I still did not know how to teach this skill effectively until two years ago, when I worked with two teachers—one who had the language for teaching annotating and one who was making the process of marking a text visible to his students. Janell Cleland and Tom O'Donnell co-taught a reading class and, by bringing Janell's language and Tom's methodology together, their students and mine are no longer left to learn this process by chance.

### What Is Annotating, and How Do I Teach Students to Do It?

Annotating is a writing-to-learn strategy for use while reading or rereading. Annotating helps readers reach a deeper level of engagement and promotes

active reading. It makes the reader's "dialogue with the text" (Probst) a visible record of the thoughts that emerge while making sense of the reading.

### Determining Categories for Responding to Text

Before teaching annotating, we ask that students examine their written responses to a short story and determine the ways readers think about text after reading. Students read a sentence from their responses and we ask the class, "What type of comment is this? What category would that sentence fit into?" Once a category is named and recorded on newsprint or an overhead transparency, we have students read additional sentences that would fit into the category. Students can hear what each type of response sounds like and see the variety of ways to react or respond to a text.

Typically, classes generate six or seven ways of responding. Readers usually make predictions, ask questions, state opinions, analyze author's craft, make connections, and reflect on the content or their reading process. Once the list of categories is completed, we have students create a cluster or another visual aid that they can use as a reference while writing about their reading. Depending on the class and the responses that emerged, we might continue adding categories and specifics related to the categories as we examine more responses to text. For example, students might make connections to similar personal experiences or their actions in similar situations, but they might add connections to other "texts" (books, short stories, movies, TV shows, lyrics, artwork, and so forth) on their visuals to remind them of the varied ways of making connections.

## Using the Categories to Teach Annotating

To introduce annotating, we use a short story that can be read aloud in one class period. We make each student a copy of a story from the class anthology and make an overhead transparency of each page. In addition, we make a transparency of the Annotating Text bookmark, shown in Figure 1, with ideas for symbols to use and marginal comments to make. My colleague Monica Fairman was influential in designing this format to support active reading. We also help students to distinguish between marks and marginal notes they might use for surface meaning and other marks for identifying deep-meaning ideas. For example, students might create a coding system of circles, squares, and underlining to identify information related to the surface meaning (vocabulary, who, what, when, where, and why) of the text. While annotating for deep meaning or underlying messages, students might mark these areas with a symbol such as an asterisk, and marginal notes would be shortened versions of the types of responses readers write after reading.

While listening to the first page of the short story, students use the symbols listed on the overhead to mark information typically found in the opening pages. At the end of the first page, or at a natural pause in the text, we stop reading and give students time to go back and add marks. Next, we ask them to share what they have marked, and we make the same markings on the transparency of the first page of the story. We also ask if anyone wrote any comments in the margins. Typically, if the problem or conflict has been introduced, several students will have written a prediction. If this happens, we write the prediction on the overhead. If there are none, the teacher can write a prediction, a question, or a connection to the story that has been read to this point. Finally, we ask that students go back and make at least one marginal comment related to this portion of the text.

We continue reading aloud and stopping every few paragraphs, at the end of the page, or at a natural break in the text, and we continue to solicit marginal comments from the class and record them on the overhead transparency. If we see that some types of comments are not being used, we ask for annotations based on a certain type. After going through a short story in this way, we provide each student with an individual bookmark with the same information that was on the overhead. Many students use it as a

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**FIGURE 1.** Annotating Text

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### BEFORE READING

- > Examine the front and back covers (books)
- > Read the title and any subtitles
- > Examine the illustrations
- > Examine the print (bold, italics, etc.)
- > Examine the way the text is set up (book, short story, diary, dialogue, article, etc.)

As you examine and read these, write questions, and make predictions and/or connections near these parts of the text.

### DURING READING

Mark in the text:

- > Characters (who) ○
- > When (setting)
- > Where (setting) □
- > Vocabulary ~~~~~
- > \_\_\_\_\_ Important information

Write in the margins:

- > Summarize
- > Make predictions
- > Formulate opinions
- > Make connections
- > Ask questions
- > Analyze the author's craft
- > Write reflections/reactions/comments
- > Look for patterns/repetitions

### AFTER READING

- > Reread annotations—draw conclusions
- > Reread introduction and conclusion—try to figure out something new
- > Examine patterns/repetitions—determine possible meanings
- > Determine what the title might mean

Use the "After Reading" strategies to write a notebook entry.

---

reference while they read and to guide their written responses. In the next days of class, students practice annotating short stories or the opening chapters of a novel that they purchase.

## Improving Annotations through Analysis

Examining and analyzing models of annotated texts have been successful ways for students to see what can be done when using annotation as a reading strategy. Students have found that models of the same annotated texts that they are reading are the most helpful. These models can be from former students (see fig. 2), and we often share our own annotations of the

FIGURE 2. Annotation of "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome. There would be no one to live for her during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination. And yet she had loved him—<sup>sometimes</sup> ~~often~~ she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of her being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering. Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven's sake open the door." "Go away. I am not making myself ill." No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his grip-sack and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills. but chances are, after her realization of this new sort of "freedom"; she most likely wouldn't have been especially thrilled to see him.

the realization that she'd never see him alive again is finally hitting her.  
← welcoming the unfolding future/ accepting his death.

feeling guilty

this is only the way humans function. It's always a love-hate relationship because we will never fully relate to someone else. More on this later.\*

glad he's dead, in a half-sies kind of way.

it almost sounds insane...

Through death, she finds a new exuberance in life.

little does he know...  
↓  
but he's still alive!!

\* "Often times she had not."  
I think we're all guilty of this at times. Even our closest relatives, best of friends, and trustworthy companions will get on our nerves. Unfortunately, distaste and hate are facts of life. Opinions will differ, and actions will upset us. But ultimately, I find that forgiveness gets the better of me. 😊

texts we are reading with them. They will see that specific marginal comments recorded in these texts may vary from one reader to another and comments can change with the demands of the text, the purpose for the reading, and the background experiences of the reader. They can also see that there is no one right way to annotate but that there are patterns and categories that seem to be used by readers as they work to make sense of their reading.

**Alternatives to Annotating:  
My Students Don't Have Books**

**Photocopy Selected Documents  
and Public Domain Texts**

Reading aloud portions of informational texts provides students with a foundation for understanding topics that they will encounter in later readings. This is also an opportunity to model the interplay between written and visual texts and the thinking processes required to put the parts together. Newspaper, magazine, or online articles are also excellent sources for annotating that can provide alternate viewpoints, more in-depth information, or present-day applications of topics being studied.

Many students have developed the habit of reading without pausing to consider the ideas. By reading aloud and having students annotate, the teacher can force this pausing, and students can begin to see the benefits. This is especially helpful when students are first learning annotation skills.

**Use a Dialectical Journal**

In a dialectical journal (Berthoff), students record a quote, phrase, or word with a page number in the first column, and in the second column they record their reactions or interpretations (see fig. 3). This is an ex-

cellent tool to use with informational texts because the journals can be used as study guides for tests—especially if they are designed so that class notes can be added. A variation is to use index cards—one for each bold heading in a textbook. One side of the card can be used to record important information and the other side for writing a response.

**Use Sticky Notes or Highlighter Tape**

Readers can make their comments on removable pieces of paper and then stick them on the margins of the text. Or, students can highlight texts that don't belong to them with highlighter tape, which can later be erased with an eraser or their fingertips. With either tool, students mark the portion of the text they want to comment on and then record their thoughts in their dialectical journal.

**Benefits of Annotating**

Some students complain about annotating. By asking probing questions and having students reflect on their growth as readers through the use of annotations, we are able to see the source of their complaints and either offer them solutions or talk to them about the difference between reading for enjoyment and reading to learn information.

At the end of their first semester, I asked students in my ninth-grade English classes and my ninth-grade reading class to reflect on their changes as readers and their use of reading strategies to support comprehension. From their reflections, I saw that annotating had helped students see that *reading is a process* and that applying the ways of responding to text through annotation *changes comprehension*. Because *annotating slows the reading down*, students discover and uncover ideas that would not have emerged otherwise. Many students discovered that this helps them become more *active readers*. The italicized phrases are the categories that emerged from my sorting of student reflections. Students' statements and my interpretations and insights explain the categories more fully.

**Annotating Helps Teach Reading  
as a Process**

I had intended to teach the struggling readers that reading is a process, but I worried that proficient

**FIGURE 3.** Dialectical Journal

INFORMATION	INTERPRETATION

readers would find such teaching to be a hoop they had to jump through rather than a technique to help them process information. Daniel, a proficient reader, reveals that he understood the surface meaning of the text before he learned to annotate, but he now understands reading as a process. He can flexibly apply different ways of thinking about the reading, which changes both his process and his understanding.

At the beginning of the year I really enjoyed reading, but I do not think that I knew how to really comprehend what the book was trying to tell me as well. At that point, I saw reading as a form of entertainment, not necessarily as a way to learn. Deep and surface meaning might not have been as clearly interpreted a few months ago. . . . I have learned how to effectively annotate by trying to understand the author's craft, connecting the story to other ideas, reflecting and most importantly trying to find deep meaning. My attitude towards reading has remained the same, but the way that I read has changed. I can now read by using writing as a comprehension skill.

Manny's reflection in his reading portfolio reveals that his cluster of the different ways to respond to text made the invisible, mental reading process visible to him. He then applied this newly found understanding through the use of annotating and writing responses. This helped him to *really* read.

The cluster was the thing that helped me a lot. Before making the cluster, I didn't even know there would be so many different ways to think about the story while reading and annotating or ways to write about the story after I read. . . . Annotating makes me understand better because I can look back, and I'm writing so it gets more in my head.

Daniel is using his knowledge of annotating and other writing-to-learn strategies to become a more sophisticated reader, while Manny is finally seeing the complex thought process involved in making sense of text that previously remained hidden to him.

### Annotating Changes Comprehension

The many different ways to think about a text, in particular analyzing the author's craft and making connections beyond similar personal experiences, change the ideas readers consider and the associations they make. The act of connecting the new to the known is enhanced because both the new and the known have

been expanded to include many more sources of information. In her reading portfolio, Lucy describes this change in comprehension as simply thinking more about things. She is no longer just asking questions to clear up parts of the text that she didn't understand; she is now curiously and confidently asking questions for which the answers don't specifically reside in the text.

My reading now has changed. It has changed because now when I read I understand things that I am not always interested in. The annotating and written responses help me understand things now. This has slowed my reading down where I think about more things. I think more about what the meaning is and when I think that I analyze that more and think, Why could they have said that? and Why did that happen? Stuff like that. It's weird because now when I read a book at home I feel like annotating it and writing a written response so I can put all my thoughts down on a piece of paper. I don't know, it would feel weird not to do that.

Daniel reveals that annotations have helped him read more carefully and distinguish between literal information and underlying, inferential analysis.

I feel challenged by the analysis of books we read without feeling overwhelmed. I think that the extensive use of annotations has taught me how to be a more careful reader. At the same time, I sometimes feel frustration by the amount of annotations required because they interrupt the flow of my reading. . . . Surface meaning was what I was taught to look for in middle school, but deep meaning and underlying themes have become the focus of literary analysis this year. The bookmark [with ideas for annotating] was useful in cutting through the surface meaning and finding common ways to locate deep thoughts and themes. . . . While this was very time consuming, my annotations allowed me to make great meaning of the text.

Daniel's frustration with annotations interrupting the flow of his reading led to our designing a short lesson for the class because many students shared this concern. We decided that marking important quotations or passages with an asterisk while reading would help with the problem of interrupting the flow. These students would then go back into the text to reflect on the importance of the passage and record their thoughts in the margins of the text and/or write about these important passages in their journals or use some other writing-to-learn strategy.

### Annotating Slows Down the Reading

Interestingly, slowing down the reading was not as much of a problem or a source of complaint for struggling readers because they found that the time it took to annotate was less than the time it took to reread the text several times. Manny indicates that annotating takes more time because now he really has to read. In part, he is being forced to read because he is required to record his thoughts.

Annotations do make me read a lot slower and I wish I didn't have to do them. It is so much harder to fake read if you have to annotate like we have to do now. So now I actually read, because it's too hard to fake annotate.

Lucy's reading portfolio reflection is not unlike those of other students in the class who have difficulty focusing on the reading.

I find it a lot easier to annotate or make notes about what I am reading because it is easier to comprehend. I have also learned how to be less distracted when I am reading. Annotating basically helps me comprehend and focus easier when I am reading. I used to get distracted easily which would cause me to read something over and over so that I can completely understand. I have found reading a lot easier for me and more enjoyable.

Students who felt that they could read and "understand" without annotating seemed to be the ones who complained the most about annotating; it took them longer to read when they had to mark in their texts. Because students examined their annotations and written responses over time and reflected on how their reading had changed with the use of these strategies, they discovered that they understood in different ways when they slowed down—they became more actively involved in the reading and their comprehension changed. In her English portfolio, Sunny writes,

I think I really understand texts a lot more than I used to . . . I really don't mind annotating. I think pausing to comprehend what is going on helps me rather than just swallowing a lot of information and then trying to analyze it.

Lauren describes the ways that annotating made her think, which, along with slowing down the process, changed her comprehension.

It [annotating] has helped me gain understanding of the text and it is easier to connect my readings to real life situations. It also is an easier way to make predictions and see what the author does to write the piece. I have learned to not read very fast so I can comprehend the reading better. I used to read fast and it made me not understand what exactly I was reading. I discovered that even if annotating is an annoyance it can really help in the end. It helped me with studying and writing responses.

In writing their reflections, students discovered for themselves that annotations were serving their intended purpose. When the reflections were shared in class, students who were concerned about annotations consuming their free time were able to see from their peers that slowing down may not be such a bad thing, especially when they considered the learning activities and assignments that required a close reading of the text.

### Annotating Promotes More Active Reading

The previous reflections hint at, and the ones that follow state explicitly, the belief that when readers slow down they become more active. Readers give themselves the opportunity to become more aware of their thinking process when they are active, and they consider and work to make sense of ideas that they may not have been aware even existed when they read quickly. Many students found themselves reading to make meaning rather than reading to complete the assignment or to prove to the teacher that they understood the information presented. Katie describes this change in her reading:

I have found that by annotating I am a much more active reader. I understand the literature a lot better and have interesting responses to it, which makes reading more enjoyable.

Daniel describes a similar change that produces different results:

[A]t the beginning of the year I was more of a factual reader. I would absorb all of the main facts but I would miss some important details that aren't exactly in the text. This is the information that you really need to read between the lines to find that may help understanding the deep meaning of the story . . . annotating and writing written responses

made me more of an active reader. I have really thought about what I was actually reading more.

The sorting of student reflections into these categories was easy but also difficult. It was easy because, when I consider my use of annotating, I am able to see how all of these categories apply to my own experiences. The difficult part has been writing about them as if they are separate and distinct. My movement of student quotations from one category to another while writing and revising attests to that fact. For example, annotating changes comprehension because it slows the reading down, which helps readers to be more active, and they are more active because they have more thinking tools available to them now that they see reading as a thinking process. Becca's reflection shows the interconnectedness of these reading skills and approaches to making meaning of text, and she describes how they work together to support her comprehension.

I have found that my style of reading and comprehending has changed drastically. Instead of approaching a book passively, I have used the skills I have acquired through annotating to really analyze the book as I read. . . . I truly believe that my comprehension has improved through the development of these skills, and I believe this is why I am not so frustrated with complicated stories. The skills of being an active reader through annotating allow me to grasp a better understanding of the literature and now I feel more confident taking on more complex pieces of writing. Through this new level of comprehension, I have noticed another big difference in my reading. I still love getting very emotionally involved with a book, and still feel strongly about reading material that appeals to these emotions. However, I acknowledge that this won't always be possible for me in school, and that I will need to read literature that I wouldn't have otherwise picked on my own. But now, I am able to achieve many more deep meanings through reading that aren't so obvious, so I am still able to find interest in stories that I least expected. For example, in *Of Mice and Men*, I didn't originally like the setting, style of writing, or characters of the story. But by analyzing the story through my annotations, I found many ways in which this story related to friendship, desire, and many other rich and layered human emotions that intrigued me.

Having students reflect on their growth and the experiences or reading strategies that helped or did not help to move their learning forward is beneficial to the learner on a metacognitive level. However, these reflections are just as important to the teacher because they provide important instructional feedback. For example, from Becca I learned that annotating can help students connect to a piece of literature on an emotional level—something I want to learn more about. From several other students, I learned that annotating supported them in their writing.

### Annotating Helps Improve Writing

Since I hadn't specifically taught students to use their annotations while writing, I was surprised to read Katie's reflection.

I have also found annotating extremely helpful when I was writing responses to literature. . . . I feel that I didn't have a very good writing quality at the beginning of the year. I would jump from idea to idea and only cover the surface meanings. Yet, as I became more experienced I was able to focus on important ideas in my writing. I used my annotations as a resource to uncover deep meanings, and wrote about my finding in my responses.

Raven writes that annotations helped her writing by providing her with a record of her ongoing thoughts.

Knowing how to annotate has resulted in better responses because I am reflecting thoughts that struck me throughout the reading rather than just at the end.

And, in her reading portfolio, Chelsea reveals that annotating helped her find supporting evidence to incorporate into her writing.

Annotating helps me because if I have to write an essay and I need to know something out of the book I can quickly find it. Also annotating helps me because I can keep better track of what is going on.

The use of annotating to help with writing was something I hadn't intentionally taught. I'm wondering if I can make it work for more learners by structuring my teaching to focus on the use of marginal notes to support students' writing.

As a reading teacher, I have introduced students to many reading strategies they can use before reading a chapter, short story, article, or novel. Like many teachers, I have students use a variety of strategies after they complete their reading to assist them in clarifying what they don't understand and in arriving at interpretations and new ideas about the text. But, aside from reading aloud and then stopping and discussing, I haven't learned of many strategies to help readers *while* they're reading. Marking a

text while reading is something that readers do outside of school; it is what we need to do with the students in school, too.

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## Join the NCTE Reading Initiative: A Professional Development Network Making a Difference in Schools across the Country

NCTE's Reading Initiative can make a difference at your school! Educators who have worked with this versatile professional development program find it valuable. Read on to learn of their experiences.

Southridge High School in Huntingburg, Indiana, is completing its third year of affiliation with the Reading Initiative network. Group leader Keith Younker pulled together staff from across the curriculum: the vice principal who teaches one class and math, science, English, social studies, health, and business teachers. Affiliation with NCTE was one component of a school plan to increase the literacy achievement of students in this rural, low SES school community. The spring 2002 state test scores reflected the time the study group committed, as well as the inclusion of silent sustained reading two mornings a week and writing throughout the day. Southridge is one of sixteen Indiana high schools that received four-star status in 2002–03 due to increased scores. Group members shared key strategies that led to their success at the Atlanta 2002 convention: <http://www.ncte.org/profdev/onsite/readinit/groups/tour/110177.htm>. Read more about their efforts at <http://www.ncte.org/profdev/onsite/readinit/groups>.

Discovery K–8 School in Glendale, Arizona, sought out the NCTE Reading Initiative to better focus their commitment to offering quality literacy experiences and hands-on, project-based instruction, an investment in teacher knowledge and decision-making rather than in the scripted literacy curricula adopted by nearby schools. Classified in 2002 as a low-performing school, Discovery experienced overall gains on 2003 reading test scores and achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). But more important to this school community was the movement toward a research-based understanding of the reading process. Teachers report that connections between the Reading Initiative experiences and classroom research have made a significant impact on Discovery's classroom instruction. See more at <http://www.ncte.org/profdev/onsite/readinit/site/111126.htm>.

Visit our Web site at <http://www.ncte.org/profdev/onsite/readinit> to read more about how the NCTE Reading Initiative is effecting K–12 school change across the country. Contact us at 800/369-6283, ext. 3627 or 3604, to learn more about how your school community might share this professional development resource in support of literacy teaching and learning.

INSERT (Interactive Notation System for Effective Reading and Thinking)

Codes:

√	<b>Confirms what you thought</b>
χ	<b>Contradicts what you thought</b>
?	<b>Puzzles you</b>
??	<b>Confuses you</b>
*	<b>Strikes you as very important</b>
→	<b>Is new or interesting</b>
R	Reminds me of.....
T	Text to text connection
L	New learning
K	Key idea
!	Surprising idea
I	Inference
D	Disagree
S	Supporting detail
Sk	Skip or skim



New idea

# Making Connections

- Text-to-Self connections:
  - o What does this text remind you of?
  - o Can you relate to the characters in the text?
  - o Does anything in this text remind you of anything in your own life?
- Text-to-Text connections:
  - o What does this remind you of in another text you have read?
  - o How is this text similar to other things you have read?
  - o How is this text different from other things you have read?
- Text-to-World connections:
  - o What does this remind you of in the real world?
  - o How are events in this text similar to things that happen in the real world?
  - o How are events in this text different from things that happen in the real world?

Passage or Quote from Text	Explain the connection you made to yourself, another text, or the real world.	What kind of connection did you make?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
		<input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Self <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-Text <input type="checkbox"/> Text-to-World
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