Value and Effectiveness of an Intervention Reading Course

Imari Rashad Hazelwood

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VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INTERVENTION READING COURSE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Teacher Education
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

By
Imari Rashad Hazelwood

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VALUE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF AN INTERVENTION READING COURSE

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From the beginning of this graduate school adventure, I knew I was destined to be in the Literacy Education program. After many ups and downs and stumbling blocks along the way, my journey may be ending with this program, but my life is just beginning.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1-Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2- Review of the Literature</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3-Method</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4-Results and Discussion</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5-Implications and Recommendations</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Student Survey</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Course Syllabus</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Most to least Impactful/Instruction Component ........................................34
Table 2: Most important component of the intervention reading course.........................35
Table 3: Strategies used in the Intervention Reading Course........................................36
Table 4: Strategies ranked overall most important.......................................................37
Table 5: Strategies by Common Core Standards: Anchor Standards for College and
Career Readiness, English/Language Arts.................................................................42
Table 6: Vocabulary and Comprehension Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Scores……..44
Table 7: Percentage of Positive Vocabulary Growth and Average Overall Grade-Level
Equivalent..................................................................................................................44
Table 8: Percentage Positive Comprehension Growth and Average Overall Grade-Level
Equivalent..................................................................................................................45
Table 9: Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Vocabulary Growth by Instructor............46
Table 10: Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Comprehension Growth by Instructor……..46
Students who graduate from high school and receive a diploma believe they are indeed ready for a college education. What most of these students are not aware of is that many students enter into higher education underprepared for the rigors of college level coursework. There are support programs such as tutoring and intervention reading courses that have been created to combat this problem and further prepare students to handle college level work, specifically reading. This study evaluated the effectiveness of an intervention reading course in terms of student success and growth. Students participated in a semester long course and were taught many reading and comprehension strategies to use in and outside of the class. Students were also given the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test as a pre- and post-test measure of success in the intervention reading course. After collecting and analyzing data, statistics show that the intervention reading course does, in fact, have a positive effect on students’ vocabulary and comprehension growth.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Sixty-eight percent of high school graduates aspire to earn a college degree after completing high school (ACT Research and Policy, 2013). To be accepted into a college or university, however, traditional predictors are required, namely a high school diploma, standardized test scores that meet or exceed the benchmark scores, and an acceptable high school grade point average (GPA), all dependent upon the college or university of the students’ choice or interest. If a student has completed the student application and meets the university admissions requirements, he/she is matriculated into higher education. Students may feel at this point they are college ready because they have met all the college entrance requirements. However, being accepted into a college or university does not always mean students are ready for the rigors of college-level course work.

One of the most frequently heard complaints of college professors is that their students struggle with reading and writing (Fitzhugh, 2011). Many traditional, as well as non-traditional, college students seem to have challenges with reading before they enter the post-secondary level of education. Reading comprehension is a complex skill that is required for adults to succeed and keep up with societal demands (Ari, Santamaria, & Williams, 2011). It is becoming more of a trend that students who struggle in high school will most likely struggle at the post-secondary level. The problem is that students believe they are entering college, after four years of high school preparation, equipped for their academic futures but may be underprepared for the rigors of a post-secondary education. Support programs such as tutoring, freshman seminar/university experience courses, and
remedial or developmental education courses have habitually been the paths that most colleges and universities use to address the needs of these students.

Advocates for adolescent/adult literacy recognize that the issue is broader than simply providing remediation for these students (Biancarosa, 2012). The researcher further suggests that schools should attend to three major challenges students face in making the transition from basic to higher-level literacy:

- mastering increasingly difficult texts,
- understanding the distinctions of reading in different content areas, and
- reading digital content (Biancarosa, 2012, p.23).

Students who struggle with these three challenges will most likely have difficulty when transitioning from basic to college level reading. One of the admissions’ requirements, standardized test scores, is a way that most colleges/universities decide who needs to be placed in remedial or developmental college courses.

Many universities are struggling with how best to serve college students who are accepted but are underprepared for college reading. At a university in south central United States, a three-credit hour, freshman-level intervention reading course is required for students scoring 18-19 on the reading portion of the ACT. The course syllabus (Appendix B) describes this course as:

Emphasis on development of high-level reading skills and strategic approaches to deep comprehension and analysis of academic texts which is required for incoming freshman who scored 18 or 19 on the reading portion of the ACT.
Statement of the problem

There are many students who come from all types of backgrounds and high schools (public, private, charter, or faith-based) who have the perception that they are ready for higher education but are unaware they may not be academically prepared. Students struggle to read for many reasons: difficult text materials, lack of strategic reading knowledge, having a disinterest in reading all together, or any combination of the three. Many college students are underprepared for the rigors of reading at the college level and can profit from developmental reading instruction. Remedial and developmental courses are used as a tool to assist and enhance underprepared students’ skills for college readiness. This research study will focus on the instruction in the 100-level intervention reading course, which will provide underprepared students opportunities to enhance and grow their literacy skills.

Purpose for the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate a 100-level intervention reading course in terms of student reading growth, course evaluation, and student perceptions of the course value through an assessment and a survey for student participants. This study: 1) will inform the instructors of the 100-level intervention reading course regarding what was effective and what was ineffective, and 2) will give insight to the instructors on advising their future students about how to be successful in this course according to past successful students. At the end of the semester term, students will be asked to complete a student survey. Along with the survey, students’ pre- and post- Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test (NDART) scores will aid in answering the following research questions:
1. What do students self-identify as the most impactful components of an intervention reading course?

2. Which strategies, taught in an intervention reading course, do students self-identify as most helpful?

3. How do pre-post scores in the NDART inform us about student growth in vocabulary and comprehension?

Need for the study

Students who come to college academically unprepared are frequently placed in remedial and developmental courses and most do not know why. These courses are pre-requisites for college level courses but no credit is given upon completion. To experts, not giving college credit for a non-college level course makes sense but to these students, if not explained properly, taking the course looks like a waste of time and money so many may not take it seriously. The researcher hopes that analyzing the effectiveness of the intervention reading course will give awareness on how to meet the needs of the students.

Summary

By examining the components of an intervention reading course for underprepared college level students, this study will serve to inform instructors regarding the instruction for this identified population of students in an effort to inform future students on how to become successful in the course.

Chapter two discusses the importance of college reading, intervention/support programs, and how students can become successful.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention reading course. As shown in the course syllabus (Appendix B), this course is required and designed to emphasize the development of high-level reading skills, strategic approaches to deep comprehension, and analysis of academic texts for college students who scored 18 or 19 on the reading portion of the ACT. This chapter is divided into five sections, centered on the value and importance of college reading for underprepared college students taking this intervention reading course and how to become successful.

Underprepared for College Reading

Post-secondary institutions are concerned about the problem of high dropout rates among college students. Ryan stated, (as cited by Chen 2012), that National data consistently indicated that approximately one-fifth to one-quarter of college students drop out at the end of their freshman year. There are many reasons for this phenomenon: medical emergencies, financial problems, lack of college fit, poor work ethic, or entering college underprepared. There are also those students who do not test well. In college, according to the placement exam scores, those who fall below the benchmark score are required to take classes as preparation for college level courses. To ensure that these students do not drop out or at least not give up after their first year, students are placed in remedial, developmental, and/or supplemental classes. Although these are support programs, they are intended to prolong students’ education. Math, reading, and English are the most recurrent courses taken by underprepared students before they can take the college level courses (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Albritton, Gallard, & Morgan, 2010).
These types of courses have been offered for many years with varying levels of success in improving students’ preparation for the rigors of college.

**Value and Importance of College Reading**

From childhood to adulthood, reading is essential to everyday life. The youth of today may devalue reading, not see its importance, and be more likely to not appreciate voluntarily reading for pleasure. Activities that require intense, focused attention, such as reading novels, are decreasing among young people, while those that require the division of attention, such as instant messaging and other Social Medias, are on the rise (Bowman, Levine, & Waite, 2007). Berry, Cook, Hill, & Stevens (2011), stated how surprised professors would be if they knew that students spent significantly less time reading and studying now than they did twenty years ago. The authors go on to state that 37.5% of first year college students reported studying less than six hours a week.

Low reading and writing abilities among a sizable proportion of post-secondary students have been an ongoing concern in the United States since the 1970s (Perin, 2013). By the time students reach college, their lack of ability to handle college-level coursework is based not only on their academic prowess and effort but also on a cumulative set of influences from family, teachers, peers, and schools (Howell, 2011).

Academic influences may include textbook content difficulty, faculty’s opinion of reading, high school experiences, technology, and unpreparedness for the rigors of college level reading. These influences can cause college students to form bad habits that could decrease the likelihood of academic success and led them to diminishing reading abilities. On the other hand, interventions and other programs could be a positive way to combat this problem and have a greater influence on these students. The importance of
reading at the post-secondary level should be expressed frequently across the discipline areas. The following section discusses the academic influences on college students and some intervention programs that may help students achieve success.

Berry, Cook, Hill, and Stevens (2011) used an Internet-based survey which assessed finance students in 10 different courses across three universities regarding their use of textbooks in the classroom. They found that even though students knew it was important to read, their professors expected them to read, and that reading would impact their grades, most students still did not read their textbooks. The authors recommended that providing students with ancillary materials and alternatives to traditional textbooks, such as multimedia applications, would be an easier and more relatable way to engage students in college reading. However, a negative consequence of this approach could be confusion on behalf of the students on how to effectively use these many resources. There are a multitude of educational tools available for these students but lack of knowledge of which tools are best for them could easily turn into a barrier instead of a support.

Expectations of students who enter college with a high grade point average (GPA) from high school are already set and are expected to continue with good academic standing. Honken and Ralston (2011) surveyed first time, full-time engineering students at one medium-sized, urban, engineering school who had performed extremely well in high school. Along with collecting data from student records, the authors wanted to determine whether a relationship existed among constructs of self-control, academic ability, and academic performance. This turned out to have a negative relationship with first semester GPAs for this particular group of students who almost all had achieved
high GPAs in high school. The design of this study was not adequate to conclude that first semester GPA was, in fact, related to academic ability and lack of self-control, but it did state that in the end, academic ability and having self-control were important traits for students to have to become academically successful.

There are many key factors such as textbook difficulty and lack of prior knowledge that can decrease the value of reading for students. There are programs and learning opportunities that students can utilize to increase the value of reading such as intervention programs. Gross and Latham (2013) created a program called “Attaining Information Literacy Project,” which was designed to scope out first-year college students with below-proficient information literacy skills to gain an understanding of their self-views and perceptions of information literacy and their instructional experiences and preferences. They tested and found 65 students who met the criteria and participated in six “paid for participation” focus groups, which lasted about 90 minutes each. Through a series of questions, the researchers found that students placed a high value on content when it is relevant. It also was crucial for students to have demonstrations, hands-on activities, and interactions with professors and classmates. The study further indicated that incentives were vital for participation. Materials in handout form were helpful as well. This article, amongst others that follow, gives information that can be very helpful when teaching students who are below the norms of what is expected when reading at the college level.

**Progression of Remedial, Developmental, & Supplemental Courses**

The Foundation of Learning Assistance programs and courses for students who struggled in school have a lengthy history, specifically at the post-secondary level. As
research illustrates, there have been a plethora of learning assisted programs created to assist in student academic success. These courses were mainly offered for certain content areas. Howell (2011) stated that 75% of postsecondary institutions in the United States offer remedial courses in mathematics and English. Other researchers specified that math, reading, and English are the most frequently taken courses by underprepared students before they can take the college level courses (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005, p. 22; Albritton, Gallard, & Morgan, 2010, p. 16). Parsad and Lewis’s study from the U.S. Department of Education (as cited in Howell, 2011), stated that of the total first-time college freshman entering a post-secondary institution, 28% lack the skills necessary to perform college level work. This means more than one-fourth of the students entering college for the first time are underprepared for the rigors of college. This has been and continues to be a problem for higher education. Post-secondary institutions have implemented these courses to help improve the aforementioned.

ASHE Higher Education Report (2010) published an article which encompassed in great detail the history of learning assistance programs. The following section starts with the root of and the contrast between remedial and developmental education and then further explains the creation of supplemental instruction.

*Remedial Education*

Learning assistance or support programs, such as tutoring, have been around since the early 1600s, but remedial education did not come about until the 1870s (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010). Remedial education was the most frequently used term that described learning assistance programs. ASHE Higher Education Report (2010) stated that as a pre-requisite to college, remedial education was needed to refine the skills
and knowledge at the post-secondary school level. Chambers, Ferlazzo, Ho, Pearson, & Radford (2012) stated that remedial education refers to courses taught within postsecondary education that cover content that is a prerequisite to college-level coursework. Remedial education targeted students’ skill deficit and employed new educational approaches. ASHE Higher Education Report (2010) continued that the purpose of remedial education was to meet students at their individual levels to provide skills that would allow them to be more prepared for college level courses. Chambers, Ferlazzo, Ho, Pearson, & Radford (2012) state that students who were required to take remedial education classes faced two adverse consequences:

1) They were less likely to complete their course of study; and

2) They may take longer than four years to complete their studies (p.1).

Although there may be challenges for remedial education students, there is still a chance for them to succeed. With a study on 438 first-time true freshman, Kreysa (2007) compared persistence for remedial and non-remedial students. Out of all his findings, Kreysa found that there was no difference between the graduation and retention rates of remedial and non-remedial students, which suggested that remedial education allows students time to “catch-up” with their peers and graduate from college. Remedial education worked for a while but was not fully meeting the needs of its students, and as a result, 100 years later, developmental education was created (Arendales’ Exhibit 1 Table, p. 24, from ASHE Higher Education Report 2010).

Developmental Education

Developmental education came from the notion that students would develop new skills and knowledge throughout college. They would also use these courses as a starting
point to ascend to the next academic level of courses. An advantage developmental had over remedial education is that with its instruction, students’ strengths were growing and their weaknesses were being transformed. The determinants for placement in these courses were students who scored below the benchmark score on placement tests. Albritton, Gallard, and Morgan (2010) reported that colleges were facing an increasing population of students who began their college experience in developmental education classes in reading, math, and/or English. The authors further wrote that interventions are critical for beginning community college students as well as any students who need developmental education. Students who were required to take developmental education courses were faced with the same adverse consequence as those who took remedial education courses, with an additional problem – the cost of tuition. Developmental classes are not recognized as credit hours; therefore, students taking these courses have to pay for them but will not receive credit. This can lead to higher dropout rates because students may not see the importance of the developmental courses or students may run out of financial aid to cover tuition costs. Pretlow and Wathington (2012) stated that nationally, developmental education at public institutions in the academic year of 2004-2005 was estimated to be about $1.13 billion. Students who were able to barely exceed the requirements of developmental courses did not have the problem of paying for non-credit courses but did have extended college careers for supplemental courses.

**Supplemental Instruction**

Supplemental Instruction (SI) courses are for students whose scores will not allow them to qualify for developmental classes but still need assistance based on college rigor. SI was originally developed at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in the schools of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy for students who had no apparent academic
weaknesses but were having academic difficulty in “high risk courses” (Ogden, Russell, Simons, & Thompson, 2003). SI courses were used to offer students peer-guided activities to improve course learning (Oja, 2012, p. 344). They started outside of the classroom. The three main goals of SI were to:

1) Improve student learning,

2) Reduce attrition rates in historically difficult courses, and

3) Increase graduation rates (University of Missouri, 2007, p. 344).

These classes were filled by about 29% of all entering college freshman who were underprepared for the rigors of college (Byrd and MacDonald, 2005, p. 22).

SI is defined by most in a similar way. Drake (2011) stated that SI has been “traditionally characterized as a peer-assisted academic support program” aimed in increasing student learning and is a proven strategy to increase student success (p.135). Oja (2012) agreed, stating that SI is offered to improve course learning. Gilbert, Hurley, and Jacobs (2006) stated that SI was developed to increase the performance and retention of students in high-risk classes and Hurley, James, McKay, and Scott (2003) add that SI is a means of delivery of challenging materials and concepts. There has been much research conducted on the effectiveness of SI. SI can be taught in many ways: subject specific, instructor-led, outside of class sessions, web-based, peer-led/peer-advised sessions, and through learning center programs.

Drake (2011) conducted two experiments, one in the fall of 2009 and the other in spring of 2010. In the fall, he piloted an instructor-led supplemental instruction program that was required in three freshman-level general education courses. Taught by their instructors, 2,579 students participated in this study and were taught two SI sessions a
week. Results concluded that students who attended four or more SI sessions, per course, had improved exam scores. Out of those who attended regularly, only two students saw their course grades decrease from mid-semester to the end, while 185 students experienced an increase of at least one full letter grade. Students stated that they appreciated the opportunity to practice and review course concepts in an atmosphere that offered little risk academically and socially. During the second experiment, Drake (2011) wanted a more controlled experiment and aimed at testing the respective benefits and challenges of peer-led and instructor-led SI but only in one of three courses from the fall semester. One hundred and ninety-six students were taught in a three-hour time block one evening a week. Those involved were course professors and Learning Assistants (LA). Each led the sessions at least twice a week. One hundred and fifty-four students attended at least one session during the whole semester. On average, their final exam grades were positively correlated with student attendance, especially for those students who attended more than four sessions. These results were similar to the fall semester results.

In a quasi-experimental design, Oja (2012) conducted a study using SI sessions to predict the effect on students’ performance in the classroom and students’ persistence to the following semester. She collected data from 30 course sections which offered SI in nine different subjects. There were a total of 2,005 students who participated. Students’ information (demographics, performance data, and participation in the SI sessions) was collected regularly and kept in the schools’ own database. The results indicated that participating in SI sessions improved students’ performance during the semester they
attended, although their SI experiences did not seem to encourage them to persist in college to the following fall term.

SI can be used outside of class as a session or a program, led by non-instructors: graduate students, facilitators, and peers. Ogden, Russell, Simons, and Thompson (2003) conducted a study using 248 undergraduate students who were all taking an introductory political science class and were enrolled in one of two sections taught by the same professor. They were classified by their enrollment entry status as traditional, regularly accepted, or conditionally accepted students. Using a predicted grade point average (calculated by high school grades, previous freshman classes, and verbal/math SAT scores); students started with a baseline academic score. Students voluntarily participated in SI sessions led by graduate students. The graduate students attended and participated in the political science classes by taking notes in preparation of leading the SI sessions. Conditional students who participated in SI had significantly higher short- and long-term outcomes compared to conditional non-participating students as well as those who reenrolled the following term.

To prepare those who wanted to become SI facilitators, professional development was offered to train student instructors. Deaton and Deaton (2012) led a study which supported 11 courses, comprised of about 120 sections. This study examined the overall impact of mentoring relationships between mentors (SI leaders) and their pupils (participating students). The study was led by one SI coordinator, 130 SI leaders, and three graduate assistants (GA). A mentoring model was developed as a continual professional development tool for new and experienced SI leaders to enhance their knowledge and abilities to support students in math and science courses. The training
was set up to teach both the mentor and his/her pupil. Mentors were selected based on these four criteria: 1) previous course evaluations; 2) years of experience; 3) willingness to collaborate with other SI leaders; and 4) agreement to participate as a mentor. They also had to participate in a mentoring workshop and complete their mentoring tasks. Three themes occurred in the responses of the mentoring relationships interviews/surveys:

1) pupils gained confidence in their content delivery;
2) pupils gained students’ participation in the SI sessions; and
3) mentors gained a valuable professional relationship with their pupils during this mentoring program.

Other SI programs have been student-led and peer-advised. Hurley et al. (2003) conducted a Supplemental Instruction Project (SIP) in the Integrated Study of Disease I course, which was managed by second year medical students (tutors) and offered to all first-year medical students on a voluntary basis, free of charge. The topics taught were chosen by the mentors based on what they thought were the most difficult topics of the class. Five tutorials were conducted during the project and each was comprised of class lectures and quizzes. Two evaluations were given, one after session three and one after session four. The results indicated that most of the first-year students attended at least one session. Most students cited that their main reason for attending the SI session was to gain a better understanding of the material. Ninety-five percent of the participating students stated that they would recommend SIP to future students. From the tutors’ perspective, nearly all reported a positive experience in the SIP. Through an analysis of this project, students seemed to retain knowledge over time which made SIP an
acceptable, practical, and effective method to supplement challenging information to first-year medical students.

Not only can SI assist in the improvement of academic performance in traditionally “high-risk” courses, (Gilbert, Hurley, & Jacobs, 2006), but SI can also be a benefit to graduation rates. Bates, Bowles, and McCoy (2008) conducted a study to address this assertion. During the fall of 2001 and the spring of 2002, 3,905 students were selected to be enrolled in commonly known freshman courses which offered SI. From 2002 to 2005, the participants’ attendance, course grades, ACT scores, high school GPA, and demographics were amassed. The Registrar’s Office provided the researchers with data on whether these students had graduated or had filed a graduation application. Using a treatment effects model, the researchers found that SI attendance in freshman level courses had a statistically significant influence on graduation success and increased the probability of timely graduation by approximately 11 percent.

SI provides extra skills and knowledge to the students before enduring the rigors of college-level reading and course work. SI, regardless of the mode of delivery, has been proven through numerous research studies to have a positive effect on academic performance as well as graduation rates.

**Intervention Reading Course**

The intervention reading course evaluated in this research project is entitled “Analysis and Critical Reading.” It is a three-hour 100-level course designed for students scoring 18-19 on the reading portion of the ACT. The Analysis and Critical Reading intervention course includes “cognitive-based” models in the assigned brain research
project and the personal success plan that all students are required to complete. The course syllabus (Appendix B) includes the following philosophy statement:

Reading is inquiring about, constructing, and evaluating one’s own understanding of texts and real world issues. It is a natural, strategic process of interaction between readers, their context, and text. Strategic reading is a dynamic process that evolves through ongoing dialogue and experimentation.

Studies (Cox, Friesner, and Khayum, 2003) have emphasized the connection between underprepared students, graduation rates, retention rates, and the effectiveness of reading courses. The authors go on to state that research on reading intervention courses show that students who enter college underprepared to read at the college level and who take and pass a reading skills course experience significantly greater success in college over the long term compared to similarly underprepared students who either do not take, or do not pass, such a course (p. 189).

Likewise, whereas several research-based and effective non-traditional remediation courses are represented in the literature, leaders in the field still push for more innovation in course design and delivery. Newly custom-designed initiatives could be crafted to fit the specific student populations, more acutely meet student needs, and enhance retention and graduation. The trend is to design courses that are more “student or learning-centered” rather than “remedial” or developmental in nature (Caverly & Flippo, 2009, p. 371). Cognitive-based models should replace the stigma-charged and outdated deficiency models that often do not improve underprepared students’ skill and strategy development or do not improve dropout and graduation rates (Gourgey, 1999;
Mt. San Antonio, 2008; Caverly & Flippo, 2009; Bohr, 1994; Adelman, 1996; Maxwell, 1997). Research, presented in the September 29, 2009 release of CCSSO’s Career and College Readiness Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening, included the following notation (Syllabus, Appendix B):

To be college and career ready, students must engage in research and present their findings in writing and orally, in print and online. The ability to conduct research independently and effectively plays a fundamental role in gaining knowledge and insight in college and the workplace (http://www.corestandards.org/Files/ELAStandardsSources.pdf).

Students need to be in constant connectivity in engaged, inquiry-based, learning communities (Kinzer & Leu, 2000). Francis, Simpson, and Stahl (2004) indicated that any new initiatives must ensure that students know when, why, and how to apply any new strategy; students must have time to apply new strategies; strategy instruction must be content embedded; and students must be metacognitive in their reflection and evaluation of their own learning.

Choice is another aspect of program planning that should be considered. Wink (2005) is one of many researchers who indicated that students need to take control over their own learning. Providing choice is one way to honor students as independent learners by allowing them to make decisions about what they want to learn and how they want to learn. Also by choice, students can choose to become successful in this course, college, and in life.
Successful Students

Success can be defined in many ways: completing a task, reaching a goal, or not completely failing at a task or idea. Many times success is determined by the ones who want and commit to be successful. Harsh and Mallory (2013) defined success as the result of convergence of factors that pave the path to success. When it comes to education, specifically post-secondary education, success in most cases can be defined as retention and degree completion. To be successful in the pursuit of a degree, students need to achieve a level of commitment to their career, academic goals, and the institution (Maulding, Roberts, & Sparkman, 2012). In addition to students making commitments and achieving success, the faculty members that will be in charge of teaching these students will have a crucial part in their students’ success. To do their part, instructors can create classroom instruction and other learning tasks to fit the needs of their students. This can help to make students more comfortable and willing to learn. Harsh and Mallory (2013) believe that students who move from an at-risk state to one of success have to acquire the following changes in their lives in order to become successful:

- Acquire new knowledge and behaviors;
- Abandon old practices in favor of new ones; and
- Integrate their new state into all facets of their lives (Harsh & Mallory, 2013, pg.19).

Students’ success can be impacted by non-academic factors as well, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, family and friend support/ knowledge about higher education, as well as other outside-of-school related factors including their life experiences. If students can understand how to become successful and create that frame
of mind that includes the three changes listed above, they will have a much greater chance of being successful.

**Summary**

This chapter started with a discussion on why students may struggle with the rigors of post-secondary education and the value and importance of college reading. Support programs such as remedial, developmental, and supplemental course were discussed as a solution to the college student with specific deficiencies in reading and reading comprehension. The intervention reading course was described in detail and its structure was explained as to what students could hope to gain. Lastly, what students can do to become effective was defined. As professors begin to reshape and create their curriculum and objectives, they should be aware of the importance of reading but also that their students may be academically underprepared for college reading.

Chapter three discusses the methodology of this study in three sections: research design, data collection, and data analysis. Data were collected using two sources: Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test pre- and post-test scores and a self-reported student survey.
Chapter 3: Method

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodological framework of this study. This chapter begins with a rationale for implementing a mixed methods approach to examine the value of an intervention reading course and its effect on college students who have tested as underprepared for the rigor of college-level reading. The context of the study and participants are discussed as well as a synopsis of the intervention reading course and ends with the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Intervention Reading Course

The emphasis of the course is on the development of high-level reading skills, strategic approaches to deep comprehension, and analysis of academic texts. Key course experiences include exploration of and practice with a variety of strategies for gaining meaning from print and the study skills that college students need to be successful. Students develop self-awareness of their reading capabilities as they grow as efficient and flexible readers. Students have choice in different ways to improve their reading and study skills strategies, including group sessions, individual mentoring, and on-line modules/applications. Upon completion of the Intervention Reading Course, the student will be able to:

- Demonstrate strategic reading processes both inductively and deductively;
- Understand underlying grammars of discourse in the disciplines;
- Consistently identify and apply understandings of question-answer relationships at the textually explicit, textually implicit, and scriptally implicit levels;
- Demonstrate competency in interpretation of and critical thinking within academic texts;
- Demonstrate deep and meaningful college-level academic vocabularies including strategic use of clustering, contextualization, linguistic mnemonics, and semantic systemization;
- Employ cognitive strategies to construct meaning at the critical, interpretive, and creative levels;
- Demonstrate metacognitive strategies as personal understanding of text is exhibited, created and monitored; and
- Demonstrate enhanced fluency and automaticity (Appendix B).

The syllabus includes the following rationale for the existence of the Analysis and Critical Reading intervention course for a post-secondary institution (Appendix B):

**Rationale:** Many students are underprepared to read ("comprehension" implied) at the university level even though they have adequate or even high ACT scores and/or high GPAs from high school. This course is designed to facilitate students in developing content area reading skills and strategies necessary to be successful in college coursework. Additionally, students receive instruction and practice in practical applications of study skills, time-management skills, goal setting, test preparation, and organizing to learn. This course encompasses the six traits of successful university students (Nelson, 1998; Ibrahim, Weber, & Yaworski, 2000):

1. Attend class
2. Are prepared for class
3. Perceive instructors as experts
4. Take responsibility for their own learning
5. Develop a repertoire of study skills/strategies
6. Adhere to an organized study routine
Research Design

The research design of this study is a mixed method approach. This tactic can help develop rich insights into various phenomena of interest that cannot be fully understood using only quantitative or qualitative methods (Bala, Brown, & Venkatesh, 2013). The research questions that guide this study include:

1. What do students self-identify as the most impactful components of an intervention reading course?

2. Which strategies, taught in an intervention reading course, do students self-identify as most helpful?

3. How do pre-post scores in the NDART inform us about student growth in vocabulary and comprehension?

The research questions addressed by this study are answered using two data gathering instruments:

- A survey of participants in a 100-level intervention reading course and
- The pre-post results of the Nelson Denny Adult Reading Test administered to the participants in a 100-level intervention reading course.

To fully understand and dissect the parts of the 100-level intervention reading course and its impact on increasing comprehension and vocabulary levels of the students within the course, many things have to be taken into consideration. Information on the reading/study strategies and personal characteristics of students were collected by survey. The Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test was used to determine a change, if any, between the pre and post comprehension and vocabulary scores of these students.

Participants
At a south central public university, participants for this study were those who had an ACT Reading score that fell in the 18-19 range. Because of this, these students are placed in the 100-level intervention reading course. There are 178 students from eight sections of said course taught by three instructors. This course is designed to prepare students for the rigors of college reading by manipulating increasingly complex text to grow the reading “muscles” they would need to achieve deep comprehension, allowing the students to:

- read more critically;
- read to their potential; and
- read more as a part of their everyday lives (Course Syllabus, Appendix B).

Data Collection

The data in this study were collected during the 2013 fall semester, for a total of 15 weeks. Data sources for this study included the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test and a student survey. Each method of data collection is described below in more detail.

Nelson-Denny Reading Test

The Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test’s (NDART) primary purpose is to provide a valid and reliable assessment of student academic achievement in three areas: vocabulary, reading comprehension, and reading rate (which was not used in this study) (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993). The norms provided by the NDART are by semester or year-long for high school and undergraduate university students (Hayes & Masterson, 2004). The test is composed of two subtests: vocabulary and comprehension. The NDART long-passage reading comprehension component can be used with adolescents and adults (Chaudhry, Ready, Schatz, & Strazzullo, 2012). This test was administered at
the beginning and end of the semester by the instructors, who have been trained professionally for administering, scoring, and interpreting these types of tests. The NDART has proven many times to be a valid instrument for predicting academic success (Brown, Fishco, & Hanna, 1993). Murray-Ward (2012) stated that some predictive and screening validity evidence may be inferred from the studies cited in the technical manual and was used as a quantitative measure to determine grade-level growth in vocabulary and reading comprehension. This test was appropriate for this study because it not only served as a key component to the intervention reading course as a pre- and post-test measuring students’ growth in reading comprehension and vocabulary, but it also allowed the researcher to have another way to measure students’ academic achievement.

**Student Survey**

Porter (2011) stated that surveys of college students have become one of the largest and most frequently used data sources. He also reported that surveys play a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness of college and university programs and policies. For this study, a survey was created for students to complete in hopes of supporting instructors’ beliefs and understanding about the population of student participants. The survey questions were created specifically for this population of students, asking questions that could assist this research study as well as questions that could benefit future studies and course reconstruction. The survey asks students to self-identify personal characteristics and habits as learners and readers and prompted for non-academic characteristics that students felt were important to their academic success. The survey is comprised of 27 questions. Demographic questions are asked in the beginning, as well as questions about students’ academic habits. The survey included a mix of fill-
in-the-blank, multiple choice, Likert-scale of 1-10 (1-least important and 10 very important), and open-ended questions. The survey was administered by the participating instructors during class time. Participation was on a voluntary basis, therefore, no incentive was given to students who completed the survey and no punishment was administered for those who chose not to participate. The survey was conducted during class time; as the students were already present and it permitted time at the end of the semester to share their opinions about the intervention reading course. Porter (2013) posed a question that he believes should be answered with a positive “Yes” but could create other questions for the validity of survey research: Can learning be measured simply by asking students how much they have learned? He followed this question with a response that several scholars have asserted; self-reported learning gain (SRLG) questions are indeed valid measures of learning.

Procedure

Including all research data aforementioned, this study’s intent is to gain knowledge and data from the students’ self-reported survey and NDART pre- and post-test scores to measure the success of the intervention reading course. In the fall of 2013, three-credit hour 100-level intervention reading courses are taught. This course was created to emphasize the development of higher reading skills, teach strategic approaches to deep comprehension, and analyze academic texts. The course lasted for 15 weeks from the end of August to the middle of December. In this face to face class, students and instructors met for 80 minutes, twice a week. There were eight sections of this course taught by three instructors. The class sizes ranged from 25 to 34 students.
Early in the fall semester of 2013, the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test was given to the students to assess their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. This test was given so instructors could have a better understanding of students’ reading level academically at the beginning of the course. Different forms of the same test were given to the students at the end of the semester to measure the students’ reading comprehension and vocabulary growth during the progression of the semester. Students are coded by number during post-data analysis to maintain confidentiality.

At the end of the semester, students were given instructions regarding the survey and a consent form which gave the instructors and researcher permission to use their information given on the survey. Instructors were given a copy of the survey for students to fill out during class time. The survey was given in hopes of addressing the research questions about which components of the course were most beneficial, which reading strategies they found most helpful. The hope was also to have a parallel to take place between the NDART results and the self-identified academic habits of students who were determined to be successful in the course. The researcher also hoped to find out what helps students who enter college underprepared for college level reading become successful during the intervention reading course using the data collected.

**Data Analysis**

The research questions for this study are

1. What do students self-identify as the most impactful component of an intervention reading course?

2. Which strategies, taught in an intervention reading course, do students self-identify as most helpful?
3. How do pre-post scores in the NDART inform us about student growth in vocabulary and comprehension?

To answer the first and second questions, the self-reported student survey was used to determine the component that is most impactful and which strategies students felt are the most helpful in the intervention reading course. The third question is answered using the NDART scores for students to see if there was any vocabulary or comprehension growth among these students.

During the post-data analysis, the researcher coded the students by number and created Excel sheets which are comprised of all student data collected from the survey and NDART scores by instructor. During this process both data sources are individually and carefully viewed and analyzed for accurate participant data.

**Summary**

This chapter discusses a mixed method approach, which centered on research design, methodology, data collection, and data analysis. This study is conducted over a 15 week semester within eight sections of a 100-level intervention reading course. The intervention reading course is described and explained as to what students could hope to gain from it. There are two sources of data used in this study: a student survey and the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test (NDART). The data for the NDART were collected at the beginning and end of the semester for pre- and post-data results. The survey was collected at the end of the semester. Surveys were conducted with instructors available to help answer any questions. Data were coded and analyzed using an Excel spreadsheet.

Chapter four introduces and describes the results of this study for each research question in chart and narrative forms.
Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

This study represented information gathered from college freshmen scoring 18-19 on the reading potion of the ACT through a survey and a nationally normed reading test at a public university in the south central part of the United States. Patton (1990) described this population of participants as a purposefully selected, information-rich group in a research project. The purpose of this chapter is to use data collected to describe the concluded results.

The Setting

The majority of the student participants in this study were first time college freshmen. The participating university is a public university which offers academic education to over 21,000 students. To be considered as a participant in this study, a consent form had to be read and signed by the student before the survey could be administered. Demographic information was gathered through the survey (Appendix A). Through this course, students develop higher level reading skills, strategic approaches to deep comprehension, and analysis of academic texts. There were eight sections of this three-credit hour intervention reading course, taught by three instructors. The classes met twice a week for a total of two hours and forty minutes. The class size ranged from 25-34 students per class. The next section describes how the data were collected and analyzed.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collected provided the means for a mixed method. The purposes of this data gathering stemmed around capturing the perspectives of participating students on their opinion of reading and then describing what was most helpful to the students in the
intervention reading course. This study also served as a tool for instructors by giving insight into how to reshape the course objectives to fit the needs of this population of students. Student responses to the survey provided specific data for instructors on how to improve the course. The purpose of these data collection procedures were a means of course assessment for increasing course effectiveness. This research project sought to gather and interpret data from a student survey and students’ Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test (NDART) pre/post scores. Research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What do students self-identify as the most impactful components of an intervention reading course?
2. Which strategies, taught in an intervention reading course, do students self-identify as most helpful?
3. How do pre-post scores in the NDART inform us about student growth in vocabulary and comprehension?

The data sources were carefully chosen to fit the needs of this study. Both data sources were selected for this study based on the value of information provided. For the reader to understand more about each data point, a description is provided starting with a brief construct of the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test, followed by an explanation of the student survey.

**Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test (NDART)**

The Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test is a tool used as a pre-/post-test in the intervention reading course to measure students’ comprehension and vocabulary growth
during the 2013 fall semester. Forms G and H of the NDART were administer during class time by professionally trained instructors.

**Student Survey (Appendix A)**

The student survey was made up of 27 questions with a combination of answer choices on a Likert scale of 1-10 (1- not important to 10- very important), multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and open-ended questions. The survey was designed to give insight to instructors and the researcher on what students self-identified as their academic and personal habits that might have impacted their success in this course. This particular survey reflected a previously existing survey but was modified to fit the needs of this population of students and this particular study. Questions that focused on the intervention reading course were included to determine students’ opinions about the course. Demographic questions were added for the researcher to have background and relevant information about the participants. The review of the literature guided decisions on the focus of the questions and the types of information needed to make decisions about the effectiveness of the course.

Questions were also added about how students spent their time outside of class and how that time might align with their success in the course. There were also two open-ended questions added at the end of the survey that requested additional information from the students related to what was most helpful in the course and how they would recommend improving the intervention reading course for future students. After reviewing and coding survey responses with respect to the research questions, three questions were particularly rich with information. These questions specifically gave
more than enough information to answer the research questions because they informed the researcher regarding students’ personal and academic habits.

For the reader to understand why students were given certain options on the survey, it is necessary to describe the course syllabus. Readers will find the entire course syllabus in Appendix B.

**Course Syllabus (Appendix B)**

The course syllabus was set-up as an informational document introducing the course to students. It includes many components to cover the basics of the course so that students were knowledgeable about the requirements of the course. The components of the syllabus were:

- Instructor/Course information,
- Course Calendar,
- Reading Philosophy,
- Course Description,
- Required Textbooks,
- Description on which students need the course,
- Outcomes/Objectives/Rationale,
- Course Requirements/Assignments,
- Late Work/Attendance/Plagiarism Policy,
- Grading Scale,
- Disability Accommodation Statement/Additional Services, and
- An Alignment chart of the Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS).
The course syllabus was a very important component to this course and was valuable to the success of the students as it includes all course requirements.

Data sources proved to be rich in providing information needed for this study. The following sections will highlight the data collected and concluded results.

**Research Question 1:** What do students self-identify as the most impactful components of an intervention reading course?

While the literature and research-based components of reading intervention were used to build the curriculum for this course, students had the best “view” of what worked and what did not work. It was important that this study viewed and valued students’ opinions on the intervention reading course. To answer research question one, there were two survey questions that were used – survey questions 19 and 25 (Appendix A).

Survey question 19 asked students to rate, using the given list, the importance to their growth in the intervention reading course. Using the Likert Scale of 1-10, students were given six options:

- quality of the instructor,
- core class/strategy instruction,
- research paper,
- presentation/speeches,
- book club, and
- out-of-class connections to other course.

The most impactful component of the intervention reading course was unanimous across all instructors with “Quality of Instructor” as the students’ first choice and “Core Class/Strategy Instruction” as their second choice. As shown in Table 1, all six
components were ranked from the most impactful to the least. Table 1 lists each of the course components and students’ ranking of those course components by instructor.

Table 1

*Most to least Impactful/Instruction Component*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. Awesome</th>
<th>Mrs. Excellent</th>
<th>Mr. Amazing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instructor</td>
<td>Quality of Instructor</td>
<td>Quality of Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(476/530) 90% of possible points</td>
<td>(171/190) 90% of possible points</td>
<td>(600/660) 91% of possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Class/Strategy Instruction</td>
<td>Core Class/Strategy Instruction</td>
<td>Core Class/Strategy Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(457/530) 86% of possible points</td>
<td>(158/190) 83% of possible points</td>
<td>(547/660) 83% of possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>Presentation/Speech</td>
<td>Book Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(381/530) 71.8% of possible points</td>
<td>(148/190) 78% of possible points</td>
<td>(496/660) 75% of possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-class connections</td>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(379/530) 71.5% of possible points</td>
<td>(145/190) 76% of possible points</td>
<td>(494/660) 74.8% of possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Presentation/Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(378/530) 71.3% of possible points</td>
<td>(132/190) 69% of possible points</td>
<td>(433/660) 65.6% of possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation/Speech</td>
<td>Out-of-class connections</td>
<td>Out-of-class connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(357/530) 67% of possible points</td>
<td>(94/190) 49% of possible points</td>
<td>(396/660) 60% of possible points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shown in Table 1 is an ordinal list of the strategies taught as essential course components. The total possible points for each instructor of students who completed the survey are included for each strategy. This table represents a total of all 1–10 scores on the Likert scale out of the total possible points available for each instructor based on the number of students in each section. The percentage is also displayed which helps readers see which components were most and least impactful according to students’ responses.
The large variance among the three instructors’ numerical scores was a matter of the number of students in each class and not to be interpreted to mean one instructor’s students thought he/she was better than the other instructors. This table is a representation stating that overall, students agreed and identified “Quality of Instructor” to be the most impactful component of the course that contributed to their success.

Table 2 is an overall total representation of the data from Table 1, including an overall ordinal ranking of the course components in which the students chose as the most impactful components in the course, which again is “Quality of Instructor” followed by “Core Class/Strategy Instruction.”

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Total points/Possible points</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Instructor</td>
<td>1247/1380</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Class/Strategy Instruction</td>
<td>1162/1380</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Club</td>
<td>1022/1380</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>1004/1380</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations/Speeches</td>
<td>938/1380</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-class-connections</td>
<td>869/1380</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To completely answer research question one, Question 25 was considered. Question 25 was an open-ended question that asked students to identify the overall most helpful component in the intervention reading course. Because this was an open ended question, there were a variety of responses given which were coded for data analysis.

After coding took place, there were 23 different answers that students suggested helped them most in this course. “Strategies” came in first place with a significant difference from the second most helpful component which was the “course readings” for Mr.
Awesome’s course and “vocabulary” for Mrs. Excellent and Mr. Amazing’s courses. Fifty-nine percent of the students reported that “strategies they learned and used” in the intervention reading course was the most helpful. By instructor, “strategies” was also the top choice that students chose as most beneficial to them in this course: Mr. Awesome, 42%; Mrs. Excellent, 39%; and Mr. Amazing, 57%.

**Research Question 2:** Which strategies, taught in an intervention reading course, do students self-identify as the most helpful?

Academic interventions can be taught and used in many different ways and settings. Incorporating literacy strategies was vital to the intervention reading course as a means of helping students improve their reading comprehension. There were seven reading strategies that were taught and used in this course. The self-reported student survey was used to answer research question two. Specifically, survey question 24 which asked students which of these reading/study strategies taught in the intervention reading course they found most helpful. A Likert scale from 1-10 (1 representing the least important and 10 representing the most important) was used to rate each of the seven strategies and results are represented below. According to students’ responses to question 24, their top three most helpful strategies were “Summarizing,” “You be the Professor”, and “Mind Mapping.” This information is summarized below in Table 3.

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies used in the Intervention Reading Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Awesome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>418/530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78.8% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind-Mapping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 3, the seven reading strategies used in the intervention reading course where a scale score out of the total possible points per instructor totaled by student responses from the 1-10 Likert scale. The percentages display a clearer picture of the overall percentage of what students suggested as the most impactful strategies were.

Overall, “Summarizing” was the most helpful strategy taught in the course, as evidenced below in table format.

Table 4
Strategies ranked overall most important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing</td>
<td>1161/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84.1% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You be the professor</td>
<td>1011/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.2% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mind Mapping</td>
<td>1002/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>72.6% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visualizing</td>
<td>972/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.4% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell Note Taking</td>
<td>924/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.9% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQ3R</td>
<td>868/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.9% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Coding</td>
<td>835/1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.5% possible points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ordinal rank of strategies that students thought were the most helpful to least helpful overall were “Summarizing” as the most helpful but not too far in front of “You be the professor.” Using the above results will inform instructors on which strategies are the most useful to students and which ones they may need to remove or make less time for. It is important for the reader to know about the strategies because they were essential to what was taught in the course. The following will give a brief overview of each of the core strategies in the reading course:

**Summarizing**

Summarizing was a strategy that aided in what was learned by recall or paraphrasing. Summarizing dealt with reading a text and succinctly describing what was read. During this strategy, instructors asked the students to read the text and then complete the “Getting the Gist” activity. Students started with an index card and wrote down everything they remembered from the text. Then only using what they wrote on the index card, they were asked to summarize and pick out the important parts and write it on
a post-it note. For the third time, students were then asked to summarize, only using the post-it note and write it on an even smaller post-it note. This helped students to be able to narrow down information within a given text. Friend (2000) conducted a study teaching students to think about the passage and relate the ideas to one another to construct a summary rather then select a sentence from the passage. Friend also gives four defining features for a summary written for content area reading: 1) it is short, 2) it tells what is most important to the author, 3) it is written “in their own words”, and 4) it states the information “they need to study”.

**You be the Professor**

“You be the Professor” was a reading strategy that was commonly used in the classroom across many discipline areas. During the intervention reading course, students were asked to create a 10 question quiz using information from a given text. Students were subsequently allowed to use their created quiz when taking the in-class quiz. If the questions they wrote happened to align with the questions the instructors created, they would have the answers in front of them to use on their quiz. The impact occurred when students put in enough effort to create the same type of question that the instructors were likely to use on a quiz. It is important to note that this strategy occurred later in the semester, by which time students had been exposed to multiple quizzes and had an idea of the types of questions the instructors tended to ask.

**Mind Mapping**

Mind mapping is used as a visual reading strategy where students can jot down all their ideas on paper in web type format and make connections, literally, by drawing a line to the ideas that are similar. In education, mind mapping is used as a creative way to
generate ideas about a key concept or word. Davies (2011) reports that mind maps comprise a network of connected and related concepts to create an association of ideas. This can also be used when students are trying to make connections between one or more concepts to find the similarities and differences.

**Visualizing**

Visualizing was used in combination with a worksheet called ‘Sketching the text’ which students used to draw pictures of major events, idea/concepts, or a person from what they read. After they completed their sketch, they were then asked to write a brief description explaining the drawing and how it represented the text. This helped students to visualize what they read which in turn helped them associate pictures with the worded text. De Koning and Schoot (2013) stated that visualizing the events described in a text is crucial for constructing a rich and coherent visuospatial mental representation of the text.

**Cornell Note Taking**

Cornell Note Taking was a form of taking notes in sections. Students can use this strategy by dividing their paper into three sections before taking notes: Cue column, Note-taking column, and Summary. Donohoo (2010) agreed that the Cornell note taking method asks students to divide their paper into these three sections. Learning how to take notes is important for students because it will be required of them throughout life and learning a unique and precise way will be very useful.

**Text Coding**

Text coding was taught as during reading strategy. There was an activity associated with this strategy that utilized post-it notes which were used for each
individual codes: Very important information (VIP), Confusing information (?), and Wow/Aha or interesting facts (!). As the students read, they were expected to use the post-it strips and code the text using the three codes mentioned above. When they were finished reading and coding, they were asked to go back to each code and (a) summarize the information in their own words (VIP), (b) write a question to express what confuses them or doesn’t make sense (?), and (c) summarize what/why they found this interesting (!). Once finished coding the text, the students were asked to transfer this information onto the Coding Text Worksheet, which could be used to review and study from. Text coding was used as a reading strategy that helped to break down students’ interests, questions, and surprised moments all while reading the text. Other codes could be added upon discretion of the instructor and population of students using the codes. The purpose of text coding was to be actively engaged in the text while reading.

**SQ3R Method**

SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Respond. It was used as a strategy to help recall and analyze what was read. This method was used to increase comprehension of reading text materials. This method prodded students to use this strategy before, during, and after they read. Students first surveyed or skimmed the text for bolded words or phrases and pictures and then create questions using the headings and subheading, their prior knowledge and what they found during the surveying. Following that, they read the text to answer the questions, recited or summarized what they had read. Feldt and Hensley (2009) felt the need to randomly analyze 12 psychology textbooks and their use of the SQ3R method for students who were taking an introductory psychology course. They found that students were more actively engaged when studying
using the SQ3R method than when not using this strategy. The authors gave several suggestions for the instructors who use these books embedding the SQ3R method, including actually showing students how to use this strategy and providing examples.

The SQ3R method, along with many other strategies and learning interventions were great tools and strategies that students could use to increase comprehension reading. As shown in Table 5, the seven reading strategies are represented and aligned to the Common Core Standards.

Table 5

*Strategies by Common Core Standards: Anchor Standards for College and Career Readiness, English/Language Arts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Ideas and Details</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Cornell Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SQ3R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</td>
<td>Summarizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</td>
<td>Visualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</td>
<td>QAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</td>
<td>Mind Mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the</td>
<td>QAR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These reading strategies were crucial to meet the academic needs of these students. It’s obvious that students would agree with this statement because the majority chose “strategies” as one of the main components that helped them most in this course.

The last question dealt more with the results of the NDART pre- and post-test scores.

**Research Question 3:** How do pre-post scores in the NDART inform us about student growth in vocabulary and comprehension?

Research question three was answered using the pre and post scores of the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test on comprehension and vocabulary. To determine whether or not students made academic gains from the beginning to the end of the semester, the instructors compared the pre-test scores to the post-test scores. If the difference was positive, then growth occurred. If the difference was zero or negative, growth did not occur. Students who grew by 0.1 or higher were considered successful students and students whose scores declined or showed no growth were considered unsuccessful. Once students were considered to have a positive or negative growth on the NDART comprehension and vocabulary subtests, an Excel chart was created and in
numerical order, students’ scores were entered. The following section includes the result
tables for comprehension and vocabulary which are displayed starting with the overall
scores of both followed by their overall positive growth and by instructor:

Table 6

Vocabulary and Comprehension Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Statistics</th>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Post-Test</th>
<th>Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>11.34</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>13.19</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows the overall average of the pre-test scores, post-test scores, and the
difference between the two for vocabulary and comprehension. For vocabulary, there
was a positive growth of .41 from pre- to the post-test which means that what students
learned in the intervention reading course was beneficial to their vocabulary skills by
almost half a grade level.

For comprehension, students’ overall gain was about two grade levels with a 1.78
increase. Because the course is heavily weighted with comprehension strategies and
components, there was a much bigger growth here than with vocabulary but overall,
growth was made in each.

The following table outlines the percentage of positive vocabulary growth and
average overall grade-level equivalent.

Table 7

Percentage of Positive Vocabulary Growth and Average Overall Grade-Level Equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1—5.5</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>3.6—4.0</td>
<td>1.69%</td>
<td>2.1—2.5</td>
<td>3.39%</td>
<td>0.6—1.0</td>
<td>10.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6—5.0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>3.1—3.5</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
<td>1.6—2.0</td>
<td>4.52%</td>
<td>0.1—0.5</td>
<td>15.25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 7, positive vocabulary growth was defined as a growth of at least 0.1 from pre- to post-test scores. Of the students that participated in the study, 49.70% showed a positive vocabulary growth. Of those, 78.43% showed a growth of no more than 2.0 grade levels or less. The average growth of those that improved was 1.32 grade levels. Vocabulary tends to develop more slowly than comprehension in pre- and post-tests of this nature so it was expected that comprehension growth would be greater.

In the following table, the growth in comprehension and overall grade-level equivalent is depicted.

Table 8

Percentage Positive Comprehension Growth and Average Overall Grade-Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equivalent</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.6 — 9.0</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.1 — 8.5</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.6 — 8.0</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.1 — 7.5</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.6 — 7.0</td>
<td>1.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total % Gain</td>
<td></td>
<td>62.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Positive growth was defined a grade increase of 0.1 and higher and students who had a growth of 0.0 or lower were considered to have shown no growth. Of the students that participated in the study, 62.12% showed a positive comprehension growth. The average scores for students who showed a positive growth of 0.1 or higher had a 2.75
grade level increase, meaning students who showed a positive growth raised their comprehension scores nearly three grade levels.

Table 9, as follows, details vocabulary grade-level equivalency growth as seen in each instructor’s class.

Table 9

*Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Vocabulary Growth by Instructor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mr. Awesome Vocab</th>
<th>Mr. Amazing Vocab</th>
<th>Mrs. Excellent Vocab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Test</td>
<td>11.77</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>10.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Test</td>
<td>12.14</td>
<td>11.31</td>
<td>11.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall by instructor, growth was made from pre- to post-test in vocabulary. Mr. Awesome and Mr. Amazing’s average scores showed a slight growth overall while Mrs. Excellent scores grew on average of about one grade level in vocabulary.

Table 10 showcases the comprehension grade-level equivalency growth as seen in each instructor’s class.

Table 10

*Overall Grade-Level Equivalent Comprehension Growth by Instructor*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mr. Awesome Comp</th>
<th>Mr. Amazing Comp</th>
<th>Mrs. Excellent Comp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Test</td>
<td>10.78</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>11.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Test</td>
<td>13.75</td>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 10, with comprehension, much more growth was made and was more significant than in vocabulary. Mr. Awesome’s overall comprehension growth was substantially higher than Mr. Amazing’s and Mrs. Excellent’s scores, almost tripling
their growth scores. Based upon these averages, it was reasonable to conclude that the students do positively benefit from this course in regards to comprehension.

After completing data collection and analysis using the primary student survey and the NDART pre- and post-test scores, it is evident that students’ success in the intervention reading course is, in fact, due to reading strategies, which lead to a considerable growth in comprehension and a slight growth in vocabulary. Although there was overall success in the intervention reading course, there are still some implications and recommendations that can be made.

Chapter five describes the implications and recommendations for instructors when revamping the course and for further research on this study as well as a summary for the entire study.
Chapter 5: Implications/Recommendations

Implications

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the structure and components of a 100-level intervention reading course and the effects it had on its students. The intervention reading course was shown to have a positive effect on overall comprehension and vocabulary which was determined by the NDART from the beginning to the end of the semester. After data sources were collected, coding took place, and growth was delineated by all instructors’ courses, the results serve to:

- inform instructors on what successful students said was most helpful in the intervention reading course,
- inform future students on what students did to become successful in the intervention reading course, and
- inform future researchers on how an intervention reading course can be structured and utilized to build successful students.

However, there is still much more that can be recommended for the instructor, future students, and researchers.

The intervention reading course was designed to place an emphasis on developing higher-level reading skills and strategic approaches to deep comprehension and analysis of academic texts (Syllabus, Appendix B). During the course, students were engaged in and were required to complete many course assignments and were required to read significant amounts of text. Upon asking students which component of the intervention reading course was the most impactful by survey, the majority chose the “Quality of Instructor.” It seems to be very important to students to have good instructors in the
classroom setting. According to the number of students who ranked the types of course components, the “Core Strategies” received the second highest ranking.

A crucial component of the intervention reading course was, in fact, the reading/study strategies. There were eight reading strategies taught in the course but only seven were discussed and used because one instructor did not include it in his/her curriculum; those seven are as follows:

- Summarizing;
- You be the professor;
- Mind Mapping;
- Text Coding;
- SQ3R Method;
- Cornell Note Taking; and
- Visualizing.

Students were given activities and tasks to complete during the learning process using each strategy. They were also highly encouraged to use these strategies in their other courses. Students choose “Summarizing” as the most helpful strategy in the course.

Another critical component of the course was the Nelson-Denny Adult Reading Test (NDART). Students were given both a comprehension and vocabulary subtest at the beginning of the semester to track their comprehension and vocabulary skill levels before taking the intervention reading course. After a semester of learning reading strategies and applying those strategies to in- and out-of-class course work, students were given the NDART again to see if the intervention reading course had a positive or negative effect on their comprehension and vocabulary skills. As a result, the intervention reading
course did, in fact, have a positive effect on students who took the course. There was an overall positive increase from the pre-test to the post-test for all instructors’ courses. Instructors who taught this course should be applauded for the time and effort they put into teaching these students because of the growth shown through the NDART.

**Recommendations for Instructors**

Duplication of this study should be done on other support and intervention programs after a modification on the structure of the study is in place. There are many recommendations that can be made for reshaping the course to best fit the needs of the student population. Based on this study, students were asked what was most helpful in the intervention reading course in a closed and open-ended question form and from both, “reading strategies” was one of the top choices each time. Instructors should spend more time working and integrating these strategies into the course.

To see if this course had an impact outside of the classroom, instructors should track students’ progress in their other courses then longitudinally to examine if there is a connection that leads to success, retention, and eventually graduation. Now that instructors know more about how to help more students become successful in the course, they can continue to reinforce and enhance what they have been doing.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

There are many facets of this study that could be interesting for further review to future researchers. As this is a specifically structured course for this population of students, researchers should look at other support programs and any effects they have on their students. Because this course is one semester long, the results could look different from other programs that are not structured in that way. Comparing programs, such as
learning centers or academic progress programs to intervention courses could also shed light on other student support services. They could all be tailored to the needs of their target population of students. Conducting a study on the differences in structure and how they affect their students could help build better services for students. Additionally, these students need to be tracked through their college careers to determine if any gains from this course make a difference in their grade point averages, retention, and/or graduation.

**Limitations**

Since this study focused on a narrowly defined population of students (those who scored 18 or 19 on the reading portion of the ACT) the results may not be generalized to other populations of students. More information is needed regarding other strategies that might fit within the constructs of this course as well.

**Conclusion**

Many students may graduate from high school and enter college underprepared for the rigors of college reading and coursework. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of the intervention reading course on underprepared students’ comprehension and vocabulary skills through course reading strategies and assignments, measured by the NDART. Overall, the intervention reading course did, in fact, have an impact on students’ NDART scores from the beginning to the end of the semester. Reading courses like this should be offered at post-secondary institutions as a guide to the overall success of college students with the intention of retention and graduation.
APPENDIX A: STUDENT SURVEY

1. Please enter your **NAME**:
   _______________________________________________________

2. Please enter your **EMAIL** address:
   _______________________________________________________

3. Reading Course Instructor's Name: _______________________________________________________

4. Please enter your **MAJOR**:
   _______________________________________________________

5. I am a (year in college): -
   _______________________________________________________

6. ACT score: _________ (overall)
   _______________________________________________________

7. Current GPA: _________
   _______________________________________________________

8. I am taking _________ hours this semester. (Enter number: 12, 15, etc.)
   _______________________________________________________

9. I have _________ **REQUIRED** textbooks TOTAL this semester.

10. What other programs do you participate in? (SSS, Cornerstone, BEP, STEPS, etc.)
    _______________________________________________________

11. What other help services have you used that are offered? (Writing Center, College Reading Success, Pass Sessions, etc.)
In the following questions, TEXT refers to ANY PRINT - could be textbook, journals, webpages, novels, etc.

12. In an average week, I have an estimated ________ pages assigned to read in all classes combined.

13. I actually read about ________ of the assigned pages per week.

14. Select the response that BEST fits you:

☐ _____ I always read all the assigned texts in all of my courses.

☐ _____ I sometimes read the assigned texts in my courses.

☐ _____ I do not read the assigned texts in my courses.

15. These are the factors that guide my decision-making about what to READ and what not to read: (check all that apply)

☐ _____ If I am INTERESTED in the topic of study, I read the text.

☐ _____ If I know that there will be a quiz or I will in some way be held accountable for the reading, I read the text.

☐ _____ If I think the instructor is definitely going to REFER to the reading, I read the text.

☐ _____ I read the text right before a TEST, but not necessarily before the class where the text will be discussed.

☐ _____ I read the text at the beginning of the semester, but don't usually read much after that.

☐ _____ I don't even buy the textbooks until I see if the professor is actually going to use them in class.

☐ _____ I have bought textbooks and returned them within a couple of weeks after the first day of class because we didn't use them.

16. Which of these best describes your note-taking habits: (check all that apply)
☐ _____ I take notes in class.
☐ _____ I study my notes between class sessions.
☐ _____ I only study my notes right before an exam.
☐ _____ I take notes, but never look at them again.
☐ _____ I do not take notes.
☐ _____ I use highlighters or underline the text during lectures.
☐ _____ I never look at the book again after I have highlighted or underlined passages during a lecture.

17. To what extent do each of these challenge you: (in general considering all your courses and assigned readings):

Circle ONE:  1 = least       10 = most

☐ VOLUME of assigned reading - just too much to read - can't get it all read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

☐ COMPREHENSION of what I read - I DO read, but I do NOT remember what I am reading - I have trouble LEARNING from what I read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

☐ VOCABULARY is my biggest problem - so many new words - I can't understand what the text is trying to tell me because the words are so unfamiliar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

18. Right now I feel __________% sure that I will graduate from college. (number between 0 and 100)

19. Please RATE the following as to how important each was to your growth in this course. Circle ONE for each item.

1 = NOT IMPORTANT       10 = VERY IMPORTANT

A. Quality of your instructor
B. Core Class/Strategy Instruction

C. Research Paper

D. Presentations/Speeches

E. Book Club

F. Out-of-class connections to other courses

20. Which of these describes the rate at which you turn in assignments on time (all courses you are taking)?

_____ I turn in my assignments on time at least 25% of the time.

_____ I turn in my assignments on time at least 50% of the time.

_____ I turn in my assignments on time at least 75% of the time.

_____ I turn in my assignments on time 100% of the time.

21. How many classes have you missed in this course, this semester? ________

22. Rate each of the following in terms of how important you think it is to your own SUCCESS in college. Circle ONE for each item.

   1 = NOT IMPORTANT   10 = VERY IMPORTANT

A. Time Management

B. Responsibility
C. Being Motivated

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

D. Good Attitude

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

E. Other’s view of me

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

F. Financial Stability

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

G. A good education

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

23. How many hours a day do you spend: (your answers should equal 24 hours)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time with friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time on the Internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working at a job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling/driving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing video games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care/hygiene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. free time (hobby)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24 hours</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. What reading/study strategies did you find most helpful:

Circle ONE for each item.

1 = NOT IMPORTANT      10 = VERY IMPORTANT

A. Visualizing
<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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</table>

B. QAR

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C. Cornell Notes

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</table>

D. Text Coding/Annotation

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</thead>
</table>

E. Mind Mapping

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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<tr>
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</thead>
</table>

F. SQ3R

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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</table>

G. You be the Professor

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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<thead>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
</table>

H. Summarizing

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
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<thead>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25. Things we did in this course that helped me:

26. Things that I still need to work on:
27. This is how you could make this course better:
APPENDIX B: COURSE SYLLABUS

Analysis and Critical Reading LTCY 199

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Schedule, Type</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:20 a.m.-11:40 a.m.</td>
<td>Monday/Wednesday</td>
<td>TPH</td>
<td>Aug26-Dec13</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contact Information

Office: Phone: Email:
Office Hours: M/W: 9:00-10:00  T/R: 10:00-1:00  F: By appointment
12:00-1:30

COURSE CALENDAR: See Course Documents in Blackboard

Philosophy

Reading is inquiring about, constructing, and evaluating one's own understanding of texts and real world issues. It is a natural, strategic process of interaction between readers, their context and text. Strategic reading is a dynamic process that evolves through ongoing dialogue and experimentation.

Course Hours: 3 credit hours

Prerequisites: None

Course Description: Emphasis on development of high-level reading skills, and strategic approaches to deep comprehension and analysis of academic texts. Required for incoming freshmen who scored 18 or 19 on the reading portion of the ACT. Must be paired with approved heavy reading content course.

Texts:

Four textbooks are required - you MUST have the textbooks to be successful in this course. The required textbooks may be purchased in the bookstore or on-line through the listed publishing companies or ordered from on-line booksellers - Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc. The books are listed in the order that you will need them in the course. The Petty, MacDonald and Gladwell books will be needed to complete your assignments that are due the second week of classes. If you want to wait to purchase the McRaney book, your instructor will let you know when it will be required in class.


Who needs this course? People who need to read more, need to read more critically, and find themselves overwhelmed. People who want to make reading a regular part of their lives need this course. Regardless of how well you read, you are likely not reading at your potential. Manipulating increasingly complex text is how we grow the reading muscles we need for deep comprehension.

Is this a course only for students who need help with comprehension and vocabulary? No.

Regardless of how well you read, you are probably reading below your potential. Many students are still reading with the same skills they acquired in primary school. There are a variety of factors that affect reading speed, comprehension and concentration. The central focus of the course is strategic reading, with an emphasis on replacing poor, inefficient habits, with strong well-calculated ones.

Outcomes: Through this course, you will be able to

1. Demonstrate strategic reading processes both inductively and deductively.
2. Understand underlying grammars of discourse in the disciplines.
3. Consistently identify and apply understandings of question-answer relationships at the textually explicit, textually implicit, and script ally implicit levels
4. Demonstrate competency in interpretation of and critical thinking within academic texts.
5. Demonstrate deep and meaningful college-level academic vocabularies including strategic use of clustering, contextualization, linguistic mnemonics, and semantic systemization
6. Employ cognitive strategies to construct meaning at the critical, interpretive, and creative levels
7. Demonstrate metacognitive strategies as personal understanding of text is exhibited, created and monitored
8. Demonstrate enhanced fluency and automaticity

Rationale: Many students are underprepared to read ("comprehension" implied) at the university level even though they have adequate or even high ACT scores and/or high GPAs from high school. This course is designed to facilitate students in developing content area reading skills and strategies necessary to be successful in college coursework. Additionally, students receive instruction and practice in practical applications of study skills, time-management skills, goal setting, test preparation, and organizing to learn. This course encompasses the six traits of successful university students (Nelson, 1998; Yaworski, Weber, and Ibrahim, 2000):
1. Attend class
2. Are prepared for class
3. Perceive instructors as experts
4. Take responsibility for their own learning
5. Develop a repertoire of study skills/strategies
6. Adhere to an organized study routine

Summary of Course Requirements and Evaluation

In-Class Instructional Experiences/Assignments - 200 points (20% of final grade)

Daily attendance and participation is expected. Most classes will include in-class activities or assignments where your participation and task accomplishment will earn points. These are interactive, in-class experiences and cannot be made up. Many of these points will come from the successful completion of the Reading Guides and the use of those Reading Guides in class. The message is simple: miss class, miss your opportunity to earn the points. Some points will come from out-of-class assignments that are used within the next day's class, some will come from notes and reading assignments, and some will come from applying reading/learning strategies from in-class reading/experiences. The "heavy reading course" you will link to this course will be explained in your first class session.

Essentials of Comprehension - 75 points (7.5% of final grade)

Strategy understanding and practice will be an integral part of this class. Using the Essentials of Comprehension book, students will complete various reading guides and participate in a presentation of a strategy. Additional information will be in the Essentials folder in the content section in blackboard.

Brain Research Paper-125 points (12.5% of final grade)

Learning how your brain works to process new information, to retain information, and to use information for problem solving is essential to anyone who is a metacognitive learner. Metacognition is an important concept in cognitive theory. It consists of two basic processes occurring simultaneously: monitoring your progress as you learn, and making changes and adapting your strategies if you perceive you are not doing so well (Winn, W. & Snyder, P. 1998). It's about self-reflection, self-responsibility and initiative, as well as goal setting and time management (http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/metacognition/start.htm). Additional information about the Brain Research Paper, including an information sheet and rubrics can be found in the Brain Research Paper folder under Course Documents in Blackboard.

Personal Success Portfolio - 100 points (10% of final grade)
One of the main goals of Literacy 199 is for each student to learn to be metacognitive (think about thinking) about their learning. Specific guidelines for the final class project will be shared in class. The portfolio will have many elements, including, work completed in OTHER classes that shows you are using LTCY 199 strategies in other classes, and significant reflective passages written over each section. Other elements will be added at the instructor's discretion. Additional information about the Personal Success Portfolio, including a planning/formatting guide and rubric, can be found in the Personal Success Portfolio folder under content in Blackboard.

Quizzes - 100 points (10% of final grade)

Both regular and random quizzes will be given during the course of the semester. The content of these quizzes may be from vocabulary, class content, or assigned readings.

Professionalism - 50 points (5% of final grade)

Each student is expected to be present, prepared, participatory, and polite. You are expected to present yourself as a mature adult. If behaviors indicate otherwise, points will be deducted from your professionalism grade. So, words of advice: no cell phone usage, no sleeping, and in general, no being rude.

Book Clubs - 350 points (35% of final grade)

Throughout the course of the semester, each student will READ the two additional books and participate in weekly meetings. Various assignments will be required each week, with a final project comprising the total requirements for this grade. Book club grades will be broken down into four categories: Entrance Tickets, "Heart" of the discussion, Exit Tickets, and Book Club speeches. Book club points (including the Entry/Exit tickets and the in-class discussion) are all points that can only be earned in class. If you are absent from class, you cannot make up these points.

Book Club Mini Research Paper/Presentation - 75 points each (The rubric for the paper/presentation, as well as additional information will be available on Blackboard early in the semester)

Late Work Policy

It is expected that ALL assignments will be submitted on their due dates. Late assignments will be accepted for up to one week (7 consecutive days) after the original due date to receive any credit. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% the first day and then 15% per day (up to 6 additional days) after that. After one week, no credit will be awarded.

All assignments must be submitted via the Assignments Section in BlackBoard and must be in the following formats:

- .doc (Microsoft WORD)
- .docx (Microsoft Word 2007)
• .rtf (rich text format) Other acceptable formats include PowerPoint, Publisher, and html

NOTE: All assignments will be graded for content and mechanics. Heads up: Do not submit papers in this course until they have been properly proofread, edited, corrected, proofread, and are free of grammatical errors. Did I mention that you need to proofread? Good.

Students requesting an incomplete for any reason must contact the instructor to ask for an incomplete, which may or may not be granted, depending on the instructor's judgment regarding the circumstances of the student's request. According to the catalog on Undergraduate Catalog p. 28/Graduate Catalog, p. 13, "A grade of 'X' (incomplete) is given only when a relatively small amount of work is not completed because of illness or other reason satisfactory to the instructor. "An 'X' received by a student will automatically become an "F' unless removed within twelve (12) weeks of the next full term (summer excluded). The grade of 'X' will continue to appear as the initial grade on the student's transcript, along with the revised grade.

Keep copies of all assignments. If an assignment is lost, the burden of proof that you completed the assignment rests with you. Computers crash. If your assignment is misplaced/lost it is an absolute fact that your computer with the only version of the assignment left on this planet will crash. BACK UP all your work on a flash drive, CD, portable hard drive or other storage device.

It is expected that you will read and reflect on required course readings. Do not expect to pass this course without doing the assigned reading.

Evaluation and Grade Assignment

Total = 1000 points

A = 900-1000 (90%-100%)
B = 800-899 (80%-89%)
C = 700-799 (70%-79%)
D = 600-699 (60%-69%)
F = 599 or fewer (59% or below)

Plagiarism Policy:

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the authors credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.

Disability Accommodations Statement:

"Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Potter Hall."
DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

There are a variety of services specifically designed to help you succeed and they are ABSOLUTELY FREE. Please do not wait until you are in too much trouble before you seek out help.

**State Anchor Standards for Reading in Content Areas:**

| RI.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. | Brain Book - Visualizing Strategy, Text Coding, Summarizing, Question-Answer Relationship
In-class discussions
Book club quizzes |
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<td>RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
<td>Brain Book - Mind Mapping Strategy, Cornell Notes</td>
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| RI.11-12.3 Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text. | Brain Book -SQ3R
Analysis of 8-10 reliable sources |
| RI.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist No. 10*). | Vocabulary self-awareness chart
Fraycr Model
In-class discussions |
<p>| RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging. | Determine usefulness and reliability of sources In-class discussions Strategy practice |</p>
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<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>RL.11-12.6</td>
<td>Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.</td>
<td>In-class discussions, Strategy practice</td>
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<td>RL.11-12.7</td>
<td>Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.</td>
<td>Integration of 8-10 reliable sources into one cohesive research paper, Integration of 3 reliable sources to produce a cohesive speech</td>
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<td>W.11-12.2</td>
<td>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</td>
<td>Brain research paper</td>
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<td>W.11-12.4</td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>Brain research paper</td>
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<td>W.11-12.6</td>
<td>Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.</td>
<td>Research of a topic, Use of databases and online resources</td>
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<td>W.11-12.8</td>
<td>Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.</td>
<td>Research of a topic, Use of databases and online resources, ERC presentation of APA</td>
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<td>SL.11-12.1</td>
<td>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</td>
<td>In-class discussions, Speech</td>
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<td>SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.</td>
<td>Speech</td>
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| SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. | Speech  
In-class discussions |
| SL.11-12.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. | Speech  
In-class discussions |
References


Bohr, L. (1994). College classes that attract and generate good readers. *Journal of


Davies, M. (2011). Concept mapping, mind mapping, and argument mapping: what are
the differences and do they matter? *Higher Education*, 62, 279-301.


Drake, R.G (2011). Why should faculty be involved in supplemental instruction?

*College Teaching*, 59(4), 135-141.


