

RESC 098 TECHNOLOGY EQUALS PROGRESS?

Reading Difficult Texts

In general, there are different types of reading. These vary according to the ultimate purpose. There is reading for

- gist,
- main ideas,
- detail, and
- inference/application.

While the first two examples focus on delivering facts and information, the latter are instances where *deep reading* is necessary. The goal in this type of reading is to focus on the meaning of the text and to make connections with your own personal, current knowledge and understanding.

Deep reading requires:

- substantial time,
- a slower reading pace,
- re-reading passages,
- mentally suspending confusing paragraphs with the hope that things will be clarified later,
- writing summary/gist notes in the margins, and
- taking time to interact with the text (i.e., asking questions of the author [in margins], disagreeing, giving counter-examples, making links to other experiences).

Developing your annotation techniques and style is essential to effective reading (not just in college).

“What It Says”/“What It Does” Technique:

(Taken from John C. Bean’s “Engaging Ideas,” chapter 9.)

A helpful way to introduce college students to structural functions in a text is to show them how to write “what it says” and “what it does” statements for each paragraph. A “what it says” statement is a summary of the paragraph’s content—the paragraph’s stated or implied topic sentence. A “what it does” statement describes the paragraph’s purpose or function within the essay: for example, “Provides evidence for the author’s first main reason,” “Summarizes an opposing view,” “Provides statistical data to support a point,” or “Uses an analogy to clarify the idea in the previous paragraph.” Here are examples for the paragraph you are now reading:

Says: Students can learn about structure by writing “what it says” and “what it does” statements.

Does: Provides a strategy for helping students become better readers.