Finding information in difficult articles can be challenging, especially when the language is technical and full of jargon. Long academic language, numbers, and statistical results can sometimes be hard to comprehend, but perseverance can lead to better understanding.
STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING INFORMATION LITERACY AND ACADEMIC LITERACY

Helping Undergraduate Students make the most of Scholarly Articles

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Integrating Information Literacy and Academic Literacy

Outline

• Background
• Teaching Strategies
• Survey of Senior Students

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Background: the Problem

- Undergraduate students are not using material from scholarly articles well
Background: a Paradox

- Undergraduate students are less adept at reading than we think they should be.

- Undergraduates have access to more higher-level scholarly articles than before.

*** Scholarly articles are not written for undergraduate audiences.
Integrating Information Literacy and Academic Literacy

Undergraduate student reading

BOOM!
(The Problem)

Amount of scholarly material
Teaching strategies:

- Choose the article carefully – relevance and brevity
- Outline the anatomy of discipline-specific articles
- Model strategies – ask questions, annotate, summarize
- Read and discuss the article
- Break down the academic mystique
Survey of senior students: Questions

- How were students using scholarly articles?
- What did they find most challenging?
- What strategies were they using to read articles?
- What (if anything) did they recall from the prior class?
Survey of senior students: Instrument

Pre-activity:
- Qualitative survey about reading
  - How they used articles
  - Changes in use over time
  - What they found difficult/easy
  - Strategies/Tips
- Knowledge Survey of confidence

Post-activity:
- Knowledge Survey of confidence
- Optional qualitative questions
Has your use of scholarly articles changed?
What prompted the changes?

- required
- practice
- expectations
- library class
- increased confidence
- tools
- value
- assignments
- experience
- interest
- understanding
What do you find difficult about reading scholarly articles?
Survey of senior students: Strategies

- High use – printing, highlighting, annotating
- Mid use – discussing
- Low use – summarizing.

BUT... ‘summarizing’ often noted in ‘Tips’ sections
What tips would you give new students?

- highlight
- annotate
- read more than once
- discuss
- read in sections
- summarize
- look up words
- skim
- print and ask questions
Knowledge Survey asked students how confident they were in answering questions about the article.

Students answered A, B, or C:
• A= I don't know the answer,
• B= I know more than 50% of the answer or could find it easily, or
• C= I know the answer

Questions a mix of ‘describe’ and ‘critique’
Scores for ‘describe’ questions higher than ‘critique’ questions

Some score correlation to strategies students used – e.g. annotators had higher percentage of ‘c’ responses

Most scores went up in the post-class survey

Students added that the discussions helped them understand the article
Survey of senior students: What we learned

How were students using scholarly articles?
➢ Students use articles when required, and to add authority to their work

What did they find most challenging?
➢ Jargon, article length and number/statistics

What strategies were they using to read articles?
➢ Range of strategies – printing, highlighting, reading more than once, discussing

What did they recall from the prior class?
➢ Reading strategies and info about article structure; also learning through experience/practice
Questions??????

Thank You!
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