

Intentional Learning for College Success - Chapter 3 (Critical Reading) Transcript

Narrator: Critical reading is essential to being a successful student. Critical reading is not a passive act. It is taking action to read with intention. To be a critical reader you need to do more than read words. You need to dig deeper into the text and look for implied and inferred meanings. You need to connect the new information to information you have already absorbed. And you need to formulate questions about what you are reading and seek answers to those questions as you delve further into the text.

Kym (Sequence 27, Precision: 28, Technical Reasoning: 17, Confluence: 24): I read every word, and I usually re-read every sentence. I take notes using my Precision. I work slowly and carefully to make certain I understand what I am reading. If I don't know a word, I use my Precision to look it up. I also read a paragraph from beginning to end. Only if forced to because of time will I skim the last sentences of a page. I read the words on the graphics, but I don't spend time figuring out what they represent. My Technical Reasoning doesn't push me to do more with the figures on the page.

Narrator: What this student is missing is being able to step back and see the larger picture of what she is reading. She is doing the work of understanding the words and sentences, but she is missing the importance of digging below the surface message to the implied or inferred message. She needs to rely more on her Confluence to do this and she needs strategies to help her use her Technical Reasoning to harvest information and understanding from the text's graphics and figures.

Tommy (Sequence 19, Precision: 18, Technical Reasoning: 17, Confluence: 29): I start with those things on the page that interest me. It may be a call out, a boxed quote or an Infographic. Then if I find something I want to investigate further, I will skim through the words looking for nuggets worth absorbing. I rarely read every word on a page. What I do is enough to get the big picture. In fact, I may actually read only 10-20% of the actual text-words. I figure I can pick up the rest from the instructor, any class videos, or reading what others post. And, hey, I might

already know a lot about a topic. I am willing to take the risk that I can get the necessary information that way.

Narrator: This reader is not a critical reader. He cherry picks information based upon what catches his eye. He lets his Confluence drive his reading habits. The problem with this is that at the college level, critical thinking, the very heart of academic development, is based on critical reading. That means being informed about things you may not have a specific interest in, but putting forth the effort to read, think, and learn with intention regardless of the topic. This reader's approach does not do justice to that requirement. On the other hand, this reader does use a critical reading technique worth exploring and that is getting the big picture and connecting information to its overarching framework. This reader also uses his Confluence to infer from the text non-explicit connections to other knowledge bases as well as latches onto points implicit although not specifically found in the text. All in all, this reader needs to develop strategies to use all of his learning patterns to become a strong critical reader including a thorough reading of the text followed by a time for posing questions, recording notes and key terms, and doing comparisons with other information read from another source.

Lawrence (Sequence 26, Precision: 27, Technical Reasoning: 30, Confluence: 22): I don't read what I don't have to read. My Precision wants to know things, but reading is not the primary way I get my knowledge base. I get it, instead, by experiencing life. I will read things that are important to getting the job done, like directions, specifications, etc. But just to sit down and read words in order to complete an assignment? Well, that's just not for me. My first thought is, "Has someone made a movie about this?" The history channel, historic reenactments, those are the ways I prefer to get my information. So when someone talks to me about being a critical reader, all I think of is criticizing what I have to read not how I am supposed to read it. Like inference. I don't try to spend time figuring out what someone intended to say but didn't. Just say what you have to say. Don't play games and bury your meaning. All right, yes, I can make myself digest the written page, but it is not fun or the best use of my time unless I really like the topic and want to get into it. Otherwise, I probably won't do anything that could be called critical reading.

Narrator: Here is a reader who could become a proficient critical reader but whose learning pattern combination creates a strong-willed mindset. This keeps him from delving into the text and gaining a depth of understanding using his strong analytical skills based on his Technical Reasoning. He is a highly confident learner who has yet to understand that confidence does not equal competence. Only if he learns to use his Use First Patterns with intention, will he develop the critical reading skills he needs to enhance his academic performance.