

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white shirt and blue headphones, is sitting at a desk. She is looking down at a tablet computer in her left hand, which she is holding with a white stylus. Her right hand is on the keyboard of a silver laptop. On the desk, there is a stack of books on the left and a blue mug on the right. The background is a bright, modern interior with a wooden shelving unit and a window showing greenery outside.

Reading /S Active Learning

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College Readiness

ACT College Readiness

40%

In 2024, only 40% of test-takers met the ACT's benchmark score of 22 for College Readiness in Reading (out of 36 possible points)

Average Score in 2023

20.1

Scores continue to decrease in recent years, possibly correlated with learning gaps due to COVID-19

Average Score in 2022

20.4

Data Across Genders

20.6

Women taking the ACT scored an average of 20.6 while the men scored 19.6

Two Models for Reading: Transmission and Transaction

The simplest way to think of these two approaches to reading is **PASSIVE** v. **ACTIVE**. Many readers naturally lean toward passive reading, but for our students to move toward more active reading—allowing for analysis, integration, application, evaluation, and disciplinary acclimation—we must encourage them to view reading as transactional.*

*original theory described in Louise Rosenblatt's "Towards a transactional theory of reading", in *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 1(1), 31-51. (1969)

The Transmission Model

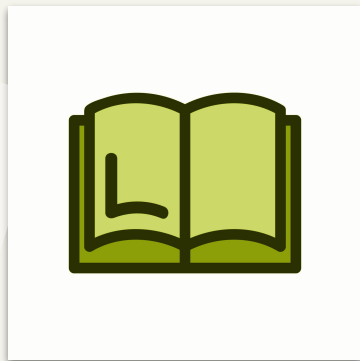
In the Transmission Model, the text is inviolate. It holds meaning, and the reader should not ask questions, challenge claims, look for bias, or otherwise interact with the text in a way that interferes with *finding* "what it means."

The reader's job in the Transmission Model is to be exposed to the pieces of the text and interpret whatever meaning is being held there. This can interrupt reading confidence if the reader has difficulty understanding the text.



The Transaction Model

In the Transaction Model, the text is only one piece of the ways the reader makes meaning. The text brings its own sources, biases, genre, etc.



The reader's job in the Transaction Model is to ask questions, annotate, check understanding, and integrate new information.



The reader and the text come together to make meaning in the *action* of reading rather than meaning being held in the static text.

They bring experiences, communities, schema, vocabulary, and disciplinary knowledge and then integrate what they have learned into their broader knowledge base.

Assignments for Active, Transactional Reading



Reading Jigsaw

1. Divide the class into 3-4 groups.
2. Have each group read or re-read a different section of the same article and become the "experts" on it: perhaps they answer questions, create questions, or summarize main points.
3. After the first group discussion, groups meet in mixed teams and each student "teaches" their section to other in the group.
4. You might end the assignment there, have them answer discussion questions, require short presentations, or develop their reflection skills with a journal assignment.

Think-Aloud

A think-aloud reading assignment involves reading out loud and stopping periodically to verbalize thought processes, making comprehension strategies (normally invisible) visible. It's like "eavesdropping" on someone's thinking while they read. This helps students learn to monitor their own understanding and develop effective reading strategies.

- 1) Model this strategy with your students first by choosing a short section of a course reading to work through aloud with them. This works really well as a preview to share before students start their own reading. As you read, students take notes on what reading or meaning-making strategies you use and collaborate on a list when finished.
- 2) Have students practice in a low-stakes way: they could create short audio or video recordings to submit as a daily assignment.
- 3) Let students practice with one another in pairs or small groups. As one student reads, the other takes notes about strategies.
- 4) Have them reflect. What similarities or differences do they see? What did they learn about the reading that they may have missed on their own (if anything)?

CLASSROOM STRATEGY
READ ALOUD
THINK ALOUD

by Kathleen Jasper

Claim–Evidence–Question

This one is great for STEM classes! This strategy requires analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking about scientific reasoning, rather than just recalling facts. It requires analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking about scientific reasoning, rather than just recalling facts.

- 1) Assign a brief scientific article, experiment summary, or textbook excerpt.
- 2) After reading, have students complete a structured response in three parts:
 - a) **Claim:** Identify a central claim or conclusion in the reading.
 - b) **Evidence:** Summarize data, reasoning, or experiments the text uses to support the claim.
 - c) **Question:** Pose one thoughtful, open-ended question the reading raises—especially one related to limitations, assumptions, or next steps in research.
 - d) **Level Up:** For more advanced students, how could they replicate these findings?
- 3) Have them share! They could share individually or in groups, in class or through a homework submission. Bonus! This helps you check their understanding on major course concepts.

Reflection:

In what ways do you read actively, and how can you make those practices visible to your students?

Key Takeaways

- 1) While our more inexperienced students may consider reading passive, we know that deep, critical reading is an active learning strategy.
- 2) Reading as an active learning strategy challenges us all to build our personal and social connections to texts alongside building knowledge.
- 3) Show students how you read actively as an expert.