

Reading Activities and Strategies

With small changes to your teaching, you can take advantage of the benefits that multilingual students bring to your class. Nearly half of Mason students are multilingual, and they have different levels of fluency. However, the strategies below are designed to help you support both multilingual and other students.

Faculty FAQ: How can I better assess ML/Int'l students' understanding of readings and class materials?

Instructors and students do not always view reading in the same way. While instructors consider reading viewed as a way to think about ideas, students view reading as a way to find out what to write in their papers¹. For international/multilingual students, reading might also present unique challenges related to vocabulary, reading speed, and density of texts. These strategies can get students and instructors on the same page while helping students strengthen their reading skills.

Provide a week's notice of upcoming readings*	Your students need more time to read because dense academic texts like book chapters or academic articles generally take longer to read and digest.
Preview the upcoming text in class with the students*	Your students can better understand the content if they know what to expect from the text (e.g. the level of complexity). Take a few minutes in class to preview a text with your students. Let them look at the title, subheadings, images etc.
Provide a concept-list, and/or reading questions*	Your students need to know how to glean the most important information from the text. A concept list helps students look up key words without wasting too much time. A reading-questions list helps students read with focus.
Require and collect students' questions or thoughts about the text**.	You can gauge your students' understanding of (and interest in) the text by asking for their questions or thoughts about a text ahead of the next class. You can have them submit those online or write in class and share with their peers in short small-group discussions.
Ask students to do something with the text.**	Your students need more ways to digest the content. Set up short activities that require them to work with the content. For example, in class (or online), students can share a quote that resonated with them from the text, write questions about their peers' quotes , or bring another text/artifact related to the reading. In so doing, students are can continue thinking about this text.
Assign reading & discussion leaders**	How will you hold your students accountable to read? If students know that they have to lead discussion on a given text, they are more likely to read it carefully. (See www.stearnscenter.gmu.edu for examples of discussion-leader activities you could adapt in your class).

*Strategies to use before assigning the reading.



**Strategies to use after reading.

¹ Jamieson, S. (2013) "Reading and engaging sources: What students' use of sources reveals about advanced reading skills." *Across the Disciplines*, 10 (4), 1-20.

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Other Recommendations and Teaching Resources

 <p>Apply Today</p>	<p>Doetsch-Kidder, S., Miller, L., Weinstein, A. (2018). "Structuring reading/writing assignments to improve critical thinking skills" [PowerPoint]. <i>Innovations in teaching and learning</i>, (10). Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.13021/G8itlcp.10.2018.2153</p> <p>GMU Writing Across the Curriculum (n.d.) "Discussing prompts." [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://wac.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Sample-Activities-1_Part2.pdf</p> <p>GMU Writing Across the Curriculum (n.d.) "Low-stakes writing." [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://wac.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Low-Stakes-Writing-1.pdf</p> <p>GMU Writing Across the Curriculum (n.d.) "From writing intensive to writing integrated" [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://wac.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Integrating-Writing.pdf</p> <p>GMU Writing Across the Curriculum. "Dealing with student error" [PDF File]. Retrieved from https://wac.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Dealing-with-Student-Error-1.pdf</p> <p>Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, GMU. (n.d). "Reframing Students' Roles in Collaborative Learning". Retrieved from https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/student-engagement-classroom-managment/collaborative-learning/</p> <p>Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, GMU. (n.d). "Grading: providing effective feedback to students". Retrieved from https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/course-and-curriculum-redesign/grading/</p>
 <p>Listen Today</p>	<p>Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, GMU. "Collaborative learning" Retrieved from https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/student-engagement-classroom-managment/collaborative-learning/</p> <p>Perez, A. & Stachowiak, B. (2016, September 22). "Bridging the culture gap." <i>Teacing in Higher Ed Podcast</i>. Retrieved from https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast/bridging-culture-gap/</p> <p>Haras, C. & Stachowiak, B. (2018, June 28). "Reflecting on our teaching." <i>Teaching in Higher Ed Podcast</i>. Podcast retrieved from https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast/reflecting-on-our-teaching/</p> <p>Teaching in higher ed. (n.d). Cultural competence. Retrieved from https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast-category/cultural-competence/</p>

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Read Today

Writing Across the Curriculum. Retrieved from <https://wac.gmu.edu/learning-modules-resources/>

“From writing intensive to writing integrated.” (n.d). *Writing across the curriculum*. Retrieved from <https://wac.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Integrating-Writing.pdf>

Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning (n.d). “Developing critical thinkers.”. Retrieved from <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/course-and-curriculum-redesign/developing-critical-thinkers/>

The Writing Center, GMU. “Writing center quick guides.” Retrieved from <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources/wc-quick-guides>

Do you have other resources to share? Send them to stearns@gmu.edu