A Reproducible on Text Mark-Up

By Jenee Ramos and the English CRI Team

The first essential question the English team chose to tackle this year is: *What are all the different ways we can access what a student really understands about what he or she read? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each method?* Last year’s work allowed us to try a number of different ways to check student understanding of their reading based on our own best practices and ideas we discovered in the research. We did some hard thinking about how best to measure student growth and how to begin to attribute growth to specific practices.

This fall we wanted to define our wonderings more specifically around our essential question. Julia Rocco started us off in a data analysis protocol where we studied short story mark-ups from students in her tenth grade class. The mark-up instructions required students to read the unfamiliar piece of text and make notations on it of their questions, thoughts, observations of key words and vocabulary, etc. During the protocol, our team thought together about what students’ notes revealed of their misunderstandings and sharp insights. Julia revised her original mark-up sheet to the one you will find for your own purposes here. Thanks for sharing this evolution in *your* thinking, Julia!

**Making Your Thinking Visible**

*As you read this cycle, you will take notes directly on the text. The purpose of this is to “make your thinking visible.” It will allow me to see how you’re doing on the readings, and, more importantly, it will allow you to remember what you were thinking when you return to the reading later. It’s a useful strategy for college too.*

Here’s what to do as you read:

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| **MARK WHAT IS IMPORTANT:** | |
| **Underline or highlight** phrases and sentences that you think are related to the writer’s main idea or purpose | |
| Write a **star \*** in the margins next to what is especially important | |
| **WRITE IN THE MARGINS:** | |
| **Ask questions:** What are you confused by? What are you wondering about? | “where does this take place?  “why would the writer include this?”  “why is she being so rude?” |
| **Make observations** about what the writer is doing | “lots of details”  “repetition”  “flashback” |
| **Make inferences** | About character: “she seems uncomfortable” About the writer’s ideas: “shows government in a bad light” |
| **Briefly summarize** important parts | “she’s changing”  “war brings out complex emotions” |
| **Share personal reactions** | “that’s so weird!”  “great writing”  “reminds me of my parents” |