Actively Learn

Close Reading

Close Reading involves reading short sections of a complex text multiple times, each time with a different purpose or lens, in order to critically analyze the text's structure, craft and meaning. With each reread, students build on their knowledge and uncover new information to deepen their understanding of the text. Prior to facilitating Close Reading with students, the teacher selects a text that offers complexity in language, form, or ideas that would require multiple readings for students to fully make meaning and critically analyze its themes and content.

Challenges

Students do not know what to focus on as they reread the text. Students have difficulty understanding the complex language, syntax, structure, or unfamiliar concepts in the text.

Students have difficulty maintaining focus and effort during Close Reading. Some students become frustrated while reading a complex text because it pushes them out of their comfort zone and they lack the skills for critical analysis.

Students are intimidated by close reading because they lack the background knowledge or vocabulary needed to find an entry point into the text to make meaning.

Solutions

Using Actively Learn, the teacher embeds questions where students would benefit most from pausing and rereading the text. These questions "chunk" the text, because students must submit a response before they can continue reading.

During the first read in Actively Learn, the teacher embeds notes and questions to help students build their surface level understanding of the text. The teacher provides feedback to support and encourage students as they move into reading the text for implicit meaning and deeper analysis.

Students use the dictionary, translation, text-to-speech features in Actively Learn to more confidently read and understand the text. In the second and third readings, the teacher adds notes to provide background knowledge and scaffolding. Students review notes from classmates to build deeper inquiry and meaning.

Thinking about using Actively Learn for Close Reading? Here are some tips:

- [Duplicate an assignment](#) and embed notes and questions to support each round of reading.
- Use [Close Reading Strategies](#) during multiple reads to help students interact in a meaningful and purposeful way as they grapple with a text. The following steps can be used for each reading:
    - **First Read** -- Read text aloud to students and ask students to define words they don't understand as they follow along silently. Embed surface level questions ([DOK Level 1](#)) or ask them aloud to ensure students understand the text at a basic level. Use notes to ask students what stands out as they read the text.
    - **Second Read** -- Next, ask students to read the text silently to themselves. Ask text-dependent questions (DOK Level 2) focusing on imagery, patterns, structure, or inference. Students can also paraphrase a small portion of the text and share their work with a partner.
    - **Third Read --** Students are now ready to tackle deeper analysis. Embed questions and notes (DOK Levels 3-4) that will push students to identify the author's purpose or draw conclusions.