

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Tackling a Scientific Text Video Transcript

Tracy Tran:

Usually when they read, especially if they're reading a chapter from a textbook or an article, they read in groups. But first, they read individually, and it's really important for them to dig through text that's difficult. Maybe some of them will go through it and read it and understand everything, and that's fine. And some of them will struggle with it, and it's okay for them to struggle. But it's also for them to get their own ideas down before they share up with the group.

So I will set a timer for about five minutes. You might want to read this twice. Five minutes. I'm setting the timer now. So read through it.

While they're reading, they're supposed to identify, we call them clunks. They're words that you don't understand, or maybe an entire sentence you don't understand. And then after you're done reading that section, you share with your group. So there's a group facilitator and they share out their clunks, their summaries, their questions.

Student:

"We found significant morphological differences in relation to elevation."

Student:

I don't know how to say the "poly" word, but...

Tran:

With the tough vocabulary, they have different resources in the room that they use. Someone in the group will get a textbook or will search it online. They use each other as resources in the classroom as well. A lot of times someone will say, "I don't know this word," and someone is like, "Well, I do." And so a lot of times it's revealing the word to each other.

Can you read that for us?

Student:

How do you say the first word?

Tran:

Try to pronounce it out.

Student:

You gotta be kidding me.

Tran:

It's Latin, it's hard.

Student:

"*Polistes versicolor*, a wasp native to Ecuador, recently..."

Tran:

I tell them, sometimes I read things and I don't understand every word I read. You have to use the context and get some inkling of what it means, or maybe it's actually not that important that you know every word. So within the text, are there words that you don't understand, are they important? If they are, have you identified what they mean? Are you still summarizing and paraphrasing the text so that you really understand it? Are you thinking of questions about the text? So those are reading activities that we've been doing all year. I think they're really good at it. There are some terms they're using that I might not know. Maybe I don't know what gel electrophoresis is. My hope for them in terms of literacy is for them to not be intimidated by text or words they don't know.

Student:

Methodology means, how do you approach problem and it started by saying, "We gathered ecological, morphological, and genetics during the early phases of the invasion," and basically explains how they're going to go about the problem.

Tran:

And I want them to be able to come across texts, scientific texts, in the future and be able to read through it and understand it. Because sometimes it will be in the news, it will apply to their lives, and it's really important for them to understand how to tackle it. That's a good start.