

## **Reading: The Bridge to Everywhere**

**Tracy M. Hallstead and Glenda Pritchett**  
Quinnipiac University

Effective reading is essential for critical thinking. However, many students face significant barriers to achieving the level of reading comprehension that builds expertise in their disciplines. Drawing on a collaboration between professors and Learning Commons professionals, this paper addresses four key barriers to reading success in the disciplines: students' tendency to disregard the importance of reading assignments; students' focus on details at the expense of larger meanings; students' reliance on prior knowledge, which results in commonplace conclusions; and students' lack of persistence in finishing difficult texts. The paper also explores innovative strategies for students to construct new knowledge from their readings, including metacognitive practices to deepen understanding of texts (El Hindi, 2003); moderately difficult problem-solving as a scaffold for critical thinking (Bain, 2004; Willingham, 2009); and the use of story to frame readings in the disciplines (Willingham, 2009). In addition, the paper discusses how WAC principles can be used in writing assignments to ensure that students think critically. It encourages college educators to frame assignments more consciously with these questions in mind: How will the reading inform the writing the students will be asked to do? How can students best learn from this material?

DOI: [10.37514/DBH-J.2013.1.1.05](https://doi.org/10.37514/DBH-J.2013.1.1.05)