



Relationship Between Frequency of Reading Sessions, Duration of Textbook Reading, and Effective Reading Habits

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Abstract: This study identified the pattern and duration of student textbook reading sessions and the relationship between reading pattern, duration, and use of effective reading strategies as identified in the literature. Frequent readers reported the most effective reading habits. Time spent reading was correlated with several reading behaviors.

• Background

- College textbooks often cost hundred's of dollars each semester.
- Less than 30% of students read prior to class and less than 70% of students read prior to exams (Clump et al., 2004).
- Many college students are ineffective readers (Beishuizen et al., 1994; Pressley et al., 1997).
- The current generation of college students is much less likely to read than previous generations (NEA, 2005).
- These separate lines of evidence point to the need to develop ways to get students to read the assigned texts and to read texts effectively.
- Before we can develop methods for improving student reading habits, we need more information about the reading habits of today's college students.

• Purpose

- To identify:
 - 1) reading pattern behavior
 - 2) duration of student reading sessions
 - 3) the relationship between reading pattern, duration, and effective reading strategies as identified in the literature (Beishuizen et al., 1994; Clump et al., 2004; Pressley et al., 1997).

• Participants

- 293 students
 - 108 first year students, 25 sophomores, 82 juniors, and 57 seniors
 - Male: female ratio was 1:1.55, which matches the sex ratio of the campus
- 14 randomly selected classes at a small private liberal arts university
 - 5 classes were designed for the general education program
 - 6 courses fulfilled general education requirements, but were designed for specific majors
 - 3 courses were for majors, only

• Materials

- The survey included questions about amount of time reading and when the student reads the course text and 15 Likert-type items that targeted effective reading habits identified by Beishuizen et al. (1994), Clump et al. (2004), and Pressley et al. (1997).

• Results: Differences in Reading Habits based on *Frequency* of Reading

- 21% of students did not read anything from their text
- 50% of students read only before exams
- 29% of students read frequently (i.e., at least every week).
- One way ANOVAs followed by LSD post hoc tests revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) between all three groups for each of the reading habit items, except the item addressing difficulty of the readings.
- Frequent readers reported the most effective reading habits, followed by students that read only before exams.

• Results: Relationships with Time Spent Reading (*Duration*)

($p < .05$; r values in parentheses)

- Readings help achieve course goals (.407)
- Readings help achieve student's learning goals (.420)
- Readings are difficult (.142), Interest in readings (.140)
- Readings make student think about issues (.373)
- Student connects readings to other classes (.211)
- Student self-assesses own understanding (.385)
- Student anticipates author (.124)
- Student looks for information relevant to learning goals (.313)
- Student jumps through text to find specific information (.286)
- Student varies reading to match text difficulty (.300)
- Student explains readings to others (.259)
- Use of text's learning devices (.291)
- Likelihood that the student will change reading habits due to taking the survey (.142)

• Results Raise Questions about Student Reading Behavior

- Do students that read more (both frequency and duration) have better reading habits from the start, or have those reading habits developed during the college years?
- Do students that read less (both frequency and duration) know how to read effectively, or might they not be interested in reading because they prefer other modes of learning?
- Will teaching students more effective reading habits, increase the frequency and duration of their reading behavior?
- Will forcing students to read more improve reading habits and college success?

References

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