

Idea # 2:**Teach students how to assess their reading.**

In a well-designed class, students typically engage in a great deal of reading. Hence, it is important that they learn to “figure out” the logic of what they are reading (the logically interconnected meanings). Good reading is a dialogue between the reader and the text. The writer has chosen words to convey his/her thoughts and experiences. The reader must translate from those words back into his/her own thoughts and experiences, and thereby capture the meaning of the author. This is a complex process. One effective way to teach students this process is by modeling it as follows:

Place the students into groups of three, each with a letter assigned (A, B, or C). You then read a paragraph or two out of the text aloud slowly, commenting on what you are reading as you are reading, explaining what is making immediate sense to you and what you need to figure out by further reading. After modeling in this manner for a couple of paragraphs, you ask A to take over and read aloud to B and C, explaining to them, sentence by sentence, what he/she is able to figure out and what he/she is not. After A is finished with two paragraphs, then B and C comment on what they do and do not understand (in the paragraphs that A read). Then you read aloud to the whole class the two paragraphs that A read, commenting as you go. Then B takes over and reads the next two paragraphs to A and C. Then A and C add their thoughts. Then you read aloud what B read. Then you go on to C who reads the next two paragraphs to A and B. And so on. As the students are reading in their groups of three, you are circulating around the room listening in and getting an idea of the level of proficiency of their critical reading. The more you use this process, the better students become at critical reading. When they become proficient at it, they begin to ask questions in their own minds as they read, clarifying as they read, questioning what they do not understand.

See also the thinker’s guide to *How to Read a Paragraph* (The Art of Close Reading).