

Student's Name:

Institution of Learning:

Course Code:

Instructor's Name:

Date of Submission:

Final Self-Assessment of Reading Skills

My participation in this course has brought me to the point of reflecting on my journey in developing reading skills. I began developing an interest in reading when I was 9 years old, following my teacher's reading to the class of *Mr. Poppins' Penguins*. Although the book was too difficult for me, I chose to trudge through it anyway because I loved the story. After that, I read a book based on a favorite Disney movie. From there, I began perusing the school's library and read voraciously. Eventually, as I entered high school, my closest friend recommended books to me. I realized later that they were some of the great classics.

I increasingly developed reading skills as I entered college. Although my teachers made it clear that they did not want their students to use published notes on the literary selections, I found them helpful. I did not steal ideas from the notes, but I used them to read a synopsis of the book, background information on the author, and the context in which the book was written or published. I also looked at key terms, uses of symbols and motifs, themes, and suggested study questions. Then I read the selection. Having done my homework first helped me to understand the selection as I read it. The background information cued me into what to highlight and what

questions to ask, as well as to understand uses of symbols and themes, and to form my own opinion about what the writer's purpose was and whether he or she was successful, and why.

My reading skills transferred over nicely to other kinds of reading such as reading for information. As I read, I learned to summarize in my own words the main idea of each section. I learned to pay attention to specialty vocabulary. I also took the time to look up words I was uncertain of or had not previously encountered. If I was required to find specific information, I made an outline and filled it in as I read. If I chose to quote something, I enclosed it within quotation marks and noted the source and page number from which it came. I also learned to pay attention to illustrations and to glean information from them. In addition, if I found my background lacking in being able to understand a concept, I researched it on the Internet. In my Internet searches, I paid attention to the kind of site I was accessing. I also made certain to read several sources on the same topic to be sure that the information I was finding was correct and accurate. Sometimes I researched a topic just to find a source that explained the concept in a manner that made it easier for me to understand.

Of course, I have learned to scan my reading material, as well. That includes paying attention to headings and sub-headings, anything bold or italicized, and key terms and phrases. I have learned to look at author's notes, foot notes, and to follow links or hypertext if the material is on the Internet. In addition to summarizing main points, I look for the overall purpose or thesis of the piece and try to fashion a thesis statement. Additionally, I think about how what I am reading relates to my prior knowledge. What have I seen in the news or on a popular television show that connects with the theme or main idea? What personal experiences have I or someone close to me had that relates to what I am reading? By internalizing what I am reading, I develop a deeper, longer-lasting understanding of what I am reading and the purpose in reading it.

In conclusion, I have benefitted from taking this course. It allowed me to reflect on the skills that I had before entering the course and then to consider the skills I still lacked or needed to further hone. I believe that I am an even more effective reader now than before. I am conscious of what I do and why. For example, I know that different purposes in reading call for different strategies. I feel equipped to hand any kind of reading assignment now for any stated purpose.

Works Cited

Steinberg, L. *The Benefits of Reading*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 2002. Print