

Fourth Edition

BRIDGING THE GAP

COLLEGE READING

Brenda D.
Smith



FOURTH EDITION

BRIDGING THE GAP

COLLEGE READING

Brenda D. Smith

Georgia State University

 HarperCollins College Publishers

To my Mother and Father

Sponsoring Editor: Mark Paluch
Developmental Editor: Susan Moss
Project Coordination: Hockett Editorial Service
Cover Design: Marsha Cohen, Parallelogram
Cover Photo: Skyway Bridge in St. Petersburg, Florida,
by Eric Schweikardt/The Image Bank
Photo Researcher: Karen Koblik
Production/Manufacturing: Michael Weinstein/Paula Keller
Compositor: Graphic Sciences Corporation
Printer and Binder: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company
Cover Printer: The Lehigh Press, Inc.

For permission to use copyrighted material, grateful acknowledgment is made to the copyright holders on pp. 447-450, which are hereby made part of this copyright page.

BRIDGING THE GAP: COLLEGE READING, Fourth Edition

Copyright © 1993 by HarperCollins College Publishers

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information address HarperCollins College Publishers, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, NY 10022.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Smith, Brenda D., 1944-

Bridging the gap : college reading Brenda D. Smith. — 4th ed.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-673-46691-4 (student edition)

ISBN 0-673-46692-2 (teacher edition)

1. Reading (Higher education) 2. Study, Method of. I. Title.

LB2395.3.S64 1992

428.4'3—dc20

92-22263

CIP

95 9 8 7 6

PREFACE

“Build knowledge networks, build knowledge networks, build knowledge networks,” is the phrase I repeated to myself as I worked on the fourth edition of *Bridging the Gap*. My aim in this text is for students to recognize the importance of knowledge networks, for teachers to be assisted in explaining the process, and for this book to offer the opportunity for quality and meaningful practice.

Learning is like the creation of many webs poised to expand with the introduction of new material. Business courses, for example, stress the importance of networking with people to create opportunities for advancement. College students can realize these same benefits from networking new ideas with old knowledge for their own intellectual advancement.

The intent of the fourth edition is to draw heavily on the strengths of the learner by offering activities directed toward academic materials that personally *involve* the reader. Through intellectual and emotional interactions, and, hopefully, many stimulating class discussions, students can build knowledge networks that will prove to be “old friends” throughout the freshman course curriculum.

The cultural diversity in our classrooms is reflected in our new readings in this edition. I hope that the readings inspire thoughtful class discussions, growth, and a respect for cultural differences.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

The fourth edition continues the tradition of previous editions by using actual college textbook material for teaching and practice. Designed for an upper-level course in college reading, each chapter introduces a new skill, provides short practice exercises to teach the skill, and then offers practice through longer selections that are arranged according to graduated readability levels. For vocabulary development, words are presented in context after most of the longer selections, as well as in short “Word Bridge” sections within selected chapters.

Presentation of skills in the text moves from the general to the specific. Initial chapters discuss concentration, study strategies, and organization, while later chapters teach rate flexibility, inference, point of view, critical thinking, and graphic illustrations. The reading and study skills discussions in the first portion of the book stress the need to construct the main idea of a passage and select significant supporting details. Exercises encourage “engaged thinking” before reading, while reading, and after reading. Four different methods of organizing textbook information for later study are explained.

The new critical thinking chapter is a culmination and application of main idea, inference, and point-of-view skills. The chapter on test-taking is designed to help students gain insights into text construction and the testing situation. The book concludes with an opportunity to apply all the skills to an actual chapter from a college textbook.

NEW FEATURES

Significant changes in the fourth edition include the following:

- Thirteen new reading selections from history, anthropology, political science, literature, business, and science.
- The addition of a variety of selections that reflect the cultural diversity of student readers.
- A new chapter on critical thinking that teaches students to identify issues and systematically assess supporting arguments and evidence.
- In the Textbook Application chapter, a new chapter-length selection entitled “Racial and Ethnic Minorities,” which explores the history of ethnic groups in America. Taken from a freshman sociology textbook, this longer selection provides the opportunity to practice the transfer of skills while still including study questions and strategy suggestions. Both multiple-choice and essay questions are provided.
- Nineteen new “Connecting and Reflecting” articles after reading selections. This new feature is designed to stimulate thinking, reinforce learning, and encourage exploration and interaction.
- An expanded discussion in Chapter 1 of concentration and attention from the perspective of a cognitive psychologist.
- A revised main idea chapter based on current research, that includes patterns of organization.
- In selected chapters, manageable “Word Bridge” sections addressing vocabulary development.
- New practice readings on inference and point of view in Chapters 6 and 7, with more opportunities for written student responses.
- Increased opportunities for students to link knowledge and expand networks through reading selections and learning activities that overlap.

CONTINUING FEATURES

Other features of the book include the following:

- Actual textbook selections are used for practice exercises.
- Chapters contain selections having different levels of readability for greater individualization.
- Each selection has both explicit and inferential questions.
- Selections include essay questions for writing practice.
- Vocabulary is presented in context, and exercises on prefixes, suffixes, and roots are included.
- Although skills build and overlap, each chapter can be taught as a separate unit to fit individual class or student needs.
- Pages are perforated so that Students can tear out and hand in assignments.

The Instructor's Manual which accompanies this book, available from the publisher, contains the answers to all exercises as well as suggestions for additional practice. An interactive computer software program and a test packet are also available from the publisher. The test packet includes quizzes and reading selections for additional practice. The computer software provides the student with opportunities to apply specific strategies and receive immediate feedback from the program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to my editorial friends at HarperCollins: Senior English Editor Jane Kinney, Sponsoring Editor Mark Paluch, and Developmental Editor Susan Moss. Jane is a long-time working partner and valued colleague who creates new ideas, seeks support, and delivers. Mark has carefully followed this book through production and energetically supported my work. Susan coordinated the review process and worked with me in making decisions on a chapter-by-chapter, page-by-page basis. This edition reflects Susan's attention to detail and enthusiasm for meeting the needs of teachers and students.

I was extremely privileged to have many learned professors of college reading review the manuscript for this edition. I have been educated by the reviewers' insightful comments and cannot thank them enough for their time and suggestions. Not only did they generate valuable advice, but their suggestions helped me solidify my own thoughts. Our profession is immeasurably strengthened by the following teachers and thinkers:

Bob Akin, Houston Community College System
 Ellen H. Bell, Manatee Community College
 Paul Beran, North Harris County College
 Doralee E. Brooks, Community College of Allegheny County

Barbara Culhane, Nassau Community College
Karen Haas, Manatee Community College
Valerie Joy Huczko, Ocean County College
Margaret A. Hyde, Evergreen Valley College
Joyce Kammeraad, North Harris County College
Elizabeth Lindgren-Young, Skyline Community College
Joal M. Mayer, Southwestern College
Linda Moore, Skagit Valley College
Michael T. Moore, Georgia Southern University
Judith Olson-Fallon, Case Western Reserve University
Pamela R. Rupert, University of Akron
Karen Samson, Chicago State University
Douglas H. Schewe, Madison Area Technical College
Diane J. Starke, El Paso Community College
Sue P. Stultz, Brevard Community College
Dorothy K. Wamsley, Bethany College

Brenda D. Smith

CONTENTS

Preface ix

Chapter 1 Concentration 1

What Is Concentration?	2
What Is Cognitive Psychology?	2
How Does the Brain Screen Messages?	3
Is Divided Attention Effective?	4
Can Tasks Become Automatic?	4
Poor Concentration: Causes and Cures	5
Summary	14

Selection 1 Critical Period Hypothesis 15

"They acted as if they thought he was their mother and that they were humans, not geese."

Connecting and Reflecting: What Newborn Infants Can and Can't Do	23
---	----

Selection 2 Memory Retrieval 25

"You do not approach each new experience as if it were entirely novel, unrelated to anything you know."

Connecting and Reflecting: Schemata and Expert Memorizers	35
Word Bridge: Remembering New Words	38

Chapter 2 Reading and Study Strategies 41

Why Use a Study System?	42
What Is a Study System?	42
Stage 1: Previewing	43
Stage 2: Integrating Knowledge While Reading	47
Stage 3: Recalling for Self-Testing	55
Summary	59

Selection 1 Overlearning 59

"The law of overlearning explains why cramming for an examination, though it may result in a passing grade, is not a satisfactory way to learn a college course."

Connecting and Reflecting: Memory Transfer
by Cannibalism and Injection 68

Selection 2 Cowboys and the Cattle Industry 70

"Even in the days of the long drive, the world of the cowboy bore scant resemblance to the legends that came to permeate American popular culture."

Connecting and Reflecting: The Wild West in American Culture 78

Selection 3 Unity in Diversity 80

"All societies must perform the same essential functions if they are to survive."

Connecting and Reflecting: Ethnocentrism in the Classroom 80

Word Bridge: Context Clues 89

Chapter 3 Main Idea 99

What Is the Point? 100

Importance of Prior Knowledge in Main Idea 100

Main Idea Strategies 101

What Is a Topic? 101

Main Idea Statements 103

Stated and Unstated Main Ideas 106

What Do Details Do? 112

Patterns of Organization 119

Getting the Main Idea of Longer Selections 125

Summary Writing: A Main Idea Skill 126

Summary 129

Selection 1 Monkey Love 129

"What the baby monkeys obviously needed was an artificial or surrogate mother—something they could cling to as tightly as they typically clung to their own mother's chest."

Connecting and Reflecting: The Father's Role
in Infant Development 138

Selection 2 Shays' Rebellion and the Constitution 140

"They were as patient as poor men with their backs to the wall could be."

Connecting and Reflecting: Amending the Constitution 149

Selection 3 An Ethnographic View of Betsileo Culture 151

"Some beef is dedicated to the ancestors but eaten by the living."

Connecting and Reflecting: The Yanomamo 160

Word Bridge: Structure 161

Chapter 4 Organizing Textbook Information 165

The Demands of College Study	166
Building Knowledge Networks	166
Methods of Organizing Textbook Information	168
Annotating	169
Notetaking	173
Outlining	177
Mapping	183
Summary	184

Selection 1 Pregnancy and Birth 185

"A baby weighing several pounds and composed of trillions of cells will be delivered about 266 days later."

Connecting and Reflecting: Teenage Pregnancy 191

Selection 2 Women in History 192

"Tens of thousands of women ran farms and businesses while the men were gone."

Connecting and Reflecting: Why Young Women
Are More Conservative 198

Selection 3 Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking 200

"Creative thinking leads to the birth of new ideas, while critical thinking tests ideas for flaws and defects."

Connecting and Reflecting: How Mental Set
Affects Problem Solving 207

Word Bridge: Dictionary 208

Chapter 5 Rate Flexibility 213

Why Is Rate Important?	214
What Is Your Reading Rate?	214
How Fast Should You Read?	217
Techniques for Faster Reading	219
Skimming	229
Scanning	230
Summary	231

Selection 1 A Chinese Reporter on Cape Cod 231

"No matter if you like it or not, you stay with your job."

Selection 2 The Right to Fail 235

"Who is to say, then, if there is any right path to the top, or even to say what the top consists of?"

Word Bridge: Glossary 239

Chapter 6 Inference 240

What Is an Inference?	241
Connotation of Words	242
Figurative Language	245
Implied Meaning	248
Prior Knowledge and Implied Meaning	251
Drawing Conclusions	254
Summary	258

Selection 1 The Piece of String 258

"Hauchecorne was seized with a sort of shame to be seen thus by his enemy, picking a bit of string out of the dirt."

Connecting and Reflecting: Bystander Apathy 268

Selection 2 Bilingual Education 269

"The belief, the calming assurance, that I belonged in public, had at last taken hold."

Connecting and Reflecting: The Misery of Silence 278

Chapter 7 Point of View 280

Are Textbooks Influenced by the Author's Point of View?	281
What Is the Author's Point of View?	281
What Is the Reader's Point of View?	283
What Is a Fact and What Is an Opinion?	287
What Is the Author's Purpose?	290
What Is the Author's Tone?	293
Political Cartoons	295
Summary	298

Selection 1 How Teachers Make Children Hate Reading 298

"I now began to see that books were among the most dangerous things in school."

Connecting and Reflecting: Excellent Teachers 304

Selection 2 Made to Order Babies 306

"Are we headed for a time when straight teeth, a flat stomach and a sense of humor are standards for admission into some families?"

Connecting and Reflecting: Advances in Genetics 311

Selection 3 Heroes for Civil Rights 313

"This is no panty raid. It is a dedicated universal effort, and it has cemented the Negro community."

Connecting and Reflecting: Is My "Post-Integration" Daughter
Black Enough? 318

Chapter 8 Critical Thinking 320

- What Is Critical Thinking? 321
- Characteristics of Critical Thinkers 322
- Courtroom Analogy 322
- Step 1: Identify the Issue 323
- Step 2: Find Support for the Argument 326
- Step 3: Evaluate the Argument 328
- Step 4: Make a Decision 333
- Creative and Critical Thinking 340
- Summary 341

Selection 1 Child of Crack 342

"Since kindergarten, Dooney has pulled himself out of bed almost every school morning without the help of adults or alarm clocks."

Connecting and Reflecting: Anna and Isabelle 348

Selection 2 Japan's Influence on American Life 351

"For Americans raised to regard learning as something that happens in school, there is a profoundly new way of looking at things."

Connecting and Reflecting: Managing Better 355

Selection 3 Why Save Tropical Forests 356

"Life supporting nutrients are stored not in soils but in the trees."

Connecting and Reflecting: Will Earth Survive Man? 359

Chapter 9 Graphic Illustrations 361

- What Graphics Do 362
- How to Read Graphic Material 362
- Summary 373

Selection 1 Alcohol and Nutrition 374

"If one drinks more rapidly, however, some of the alcohol bypasses the liver and flows for a while through the rest of the body and the brain."

Connecting and Reflecting: Drinking During Pregnancy 386

Chapter 10 Test Taking 389

- Tests in College 390
- Can Testwiseness Help? 390
- Strategies for Mental and Physical Awareness 391
- Strategies for Standardized Reading Tests 394
- Recognize Major Question Types 398
- Strategies for Multiple-Choice Items 402

Strategies for Content Area Exams	410
Locus of Control	417
Summary	417

Chapter 11 Textbook Application 418

Transfer Your Skills	419
Meet the Challenge	419
Organize Your Study	419

Chapter Selection Racial and Ethnic Minorities 420

"Americans tend to focus on their own current racial problem, without comparing it with how things were in the past or with similar problems in other societies."

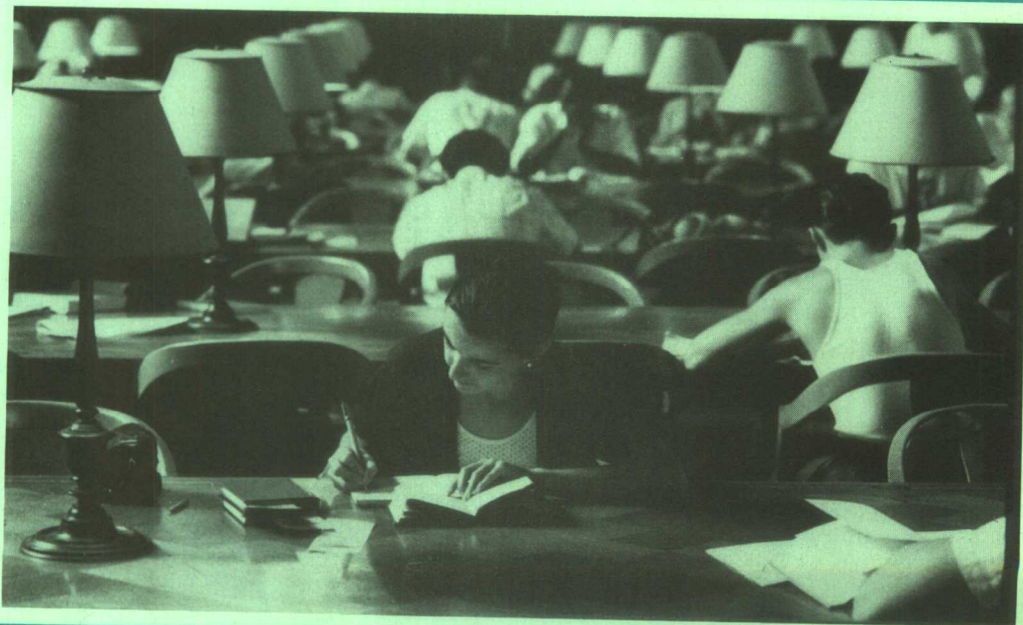
Glossary 444

Index 451

CHAPTER • 1

CONCENTRATION

- What is it?
- How can you improve it?
- How does the brain “pay attention”?
- Can you do two things at once?
- What are common distractors?
- What are the cures?



WHAT IS CONCENTRATION?

Answer the following questions honestly:

1. Do you believe the power of concentration is an innate gift that some are born with and others lack?
2. Do you believe that the ability to concentrate is hereditary, like having blue eyes or brown hair?
3. If your father's side of the family is fidgety and can't concentrate, does that mean that you will be the same?

The answer to all three questions is an obvious *no*. Concentration is a skill that is developed through self-discipline and practice—not a mystical power, a hereditary gift, or a defective gene. It is a **habit** that requires time and effort to develop and careful planning for consistent success.

Concentration is no more than **paying attention**—that is, focusing your full attention on the task at hand. Someone once said that the mark of a genius is the ability to concentrate completely on one thing at a time. This is easy if the task is fun and exciting, but it becomes more difficult when you are required to read something that is not very interesting to you. At this point your mind begins to wander, and the words on the page remain just words for the eyes to see rather than becoming meaningful thoughts and ideas to engage your imagination.

When you are “trying hard to concentrate,” what is your brain actually doing? To explain this mystery, cognitive psychologists hypothesize and conduct data-collecting experiments to test theories about our many mental processes. They then make inferences or educated guesses about how the brain operates.

WHAT IS COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY?

Cognitive psychology is the body of knowledge that describes how the mind works, or at least how experts think the mind works. Either fortunately or unfortunately, the activity of the brain in concentrating, reading, and remembering cannot be directly observed. These cognitive processes are invisible, just as thinking and problem solving are also invisible.

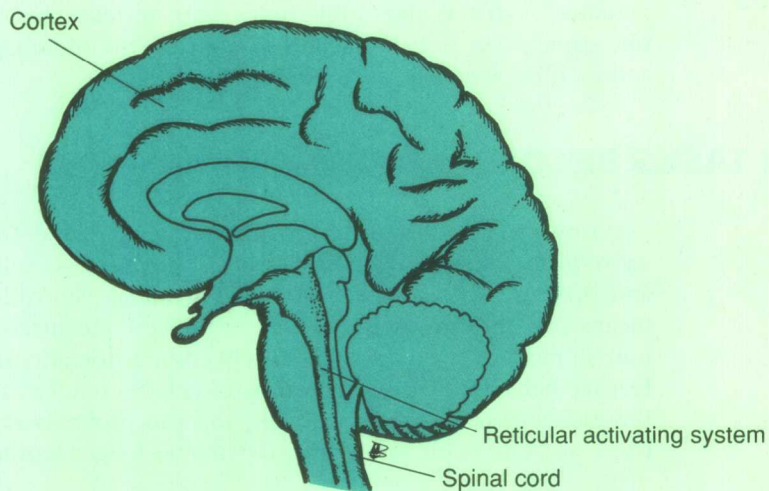
Since so little is actually known about thinking, the ideas of cognitive psychologists are frequently described as models or designs of something else we understand. For the last thirty years, for example, the computer has been a popular model for describing how the brain processes information. The human brain is more complex than a computer, but the analogy provides a comparison that can help us understand.

HOW DOES THE BRAIN SCREEN MESSAGES?

Cognitive psychologists use the word **attention** rather than concentration to describe a student's uninterrupted mental focus. Thinking and learning, they say, begin with attention. During every minute of the day the brain is bombarded with millions of sensory messages. How does the brain decide which messages to pay attention to and which to overlook? At this moment, are you thinking about the temperature of the room, outdoor noises, or what you are reading? Since all this information is available to you, how are you able to set priorities?

The brain relies on a dual command center to screen out one message and attend to another. According to a researcher at UCLA, receptor cells send millions of messages per minute to your brain.¹ Your reticular activating system (RAS), a network of cells at the top of the spinal cord that runs to the brain, tells the cortex in the brain not to bother with most of the sensory input. Your RAS knows that most sensory inputs do not need attention. For example, you are probably not aware at this moment of your back pressing against your chair or your clothes pulling on your body. Your RAS has decided not to clutter the brain with such irrelevant information unless there is an extreme problem, like your foot going to sleep because you are sitting on it.

The cortex can also make attention decisions. When you decide to concentrate your attention on a task, like reading your history assignment, your cortex



¹H. W. Magoun, *The Waking Brain*, 2nd ed. (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1963).

tells your RAS not to bother it with trivial information. While you focus on learning, your RAS follows orders and “holds” the messages as if you were on an important long-distance call. The cortex and the RAS cooperate in helping you block out distractions and concentrate on learning.

IS DIVIDED ATTENTION EFFECTIVE?

Students often ask if it is possible to do two things at once, such as watching television and doing homework. Most psychologists agree that you can only attend to one thing at a time. An early researcher used a “switch model” to describe his belief, saying that attention operates like the on-off switch of a light fixture in that only one channel is “on” at a time.² The “cocktail party effect” illustrates this model. At a party with many available conversations within your listening range, you would probably attend to only one person at a time. If your name were spoken in a nearby group, however, your attention would be diverted. You would probably “switch” your attention to the nearby group to seek more information on such a fascinating topic while only pretending to listen to the original conversation. According to Broadbent’s model, you would not be able to listen intently to both conversations at the same time.

Two later researchers conducted an experiment to test the effectiveness of divided attention.³ They asked subjects to watch two televised sports events with one superimposed over the other. When subjects were instructed to attend to only one of the games, they did an excellent job of screening out the other and answering questions accurately. When asked to attend to both games simultaneously, subjects made eight times more mistakes than when focusing on only one game. This research seems to confirm the old adage, “You can’t do two things at once and do them well.”

CAN TASKS BECOME AUTOMATIC?

How can you walk and chew gum at the same time? Does every simple activity require your undivided attention? Many tasks—walking, tying shoelaces, and driving a car, for example—begin under controlled processing, which means that they are deliberate and require concentrated mental effort. After much practice, however, such tasks become automatic. Driving a car is an overlearned behavior that researchers would say becomes an automatic process after thousands of hours of experience. You can probably drive, change radio stations, and talk at the same time. Driving no longer requires your full cognitive

²D. E. Broadbent, *Perception and Communication* (London: Pergamon Press, 1958).

³U. Neisser and R. Becklen, “Selective Looking: Attending to Visually Significant Events,” *Cognitive Psychology* 7 (1975): 480–494.