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# DEVELOPING TEXTBOOK THINKING

**FIFTH EDITION**

SHERRIE L. NIST  
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# DEVELOPING TEXTBOOK THINKING

Strategies for Success in College

*FIFTH EDITION*

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# **DEVELOPING TEXTBOOK THINKING**



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# Preface

In this fifth edition of *Developing Textbook Thinking (DTT)*, we have maintained our basic philosophy that to be successful in college, students need a variety of learning and study strategies. We also believe, perhaps more strongly than we did fifteen years ago when the first edition of *DTT* came out, that students need to modify these strategies as a way of “owning” them. As with previous editions, we view *DTT* as a vehicle for showing students how to apply and modify their reading skills to learn more effectively. To this end, *DTT* teaches students a progression of strategies that build on one another. Underlying everything taught in this book is the idea that what students do before and after reading is every bit as important as the reading itself. Not only does the overall study system encompass this three-pronged approach, but most of the strategies also progress in stages that build upon one another as well. Moreover, continuing in this fifth edition is the emphasis placed on modification, reflection, rehearsal, and monitoring. Strategies are formatted to enable students to test themselves on important information, thus improving metacognitive abilities.

Most of the changes to *DTT, Fifth Edition* have been minor. The changes that were made, however, reflect the views and suggestions of students who used the previous edition and reviewers who work with college students in a variety of settings. In addition, changes that were made reflect current classroom practice and the latest theory development in student learning. The text continues to be based on solid research and theory transformed into a practical and systematic learning system.

Part I, “Understanding College Reading and Studying Demands,” remains fairly intact. We have added a section at the end of each chapter called “Plugging In.” This section provides students with a variety of activities that can help hone their skills in using the web and in using the computer as a learning tool. These activities are in some way related to the strategies and ideas that are discussed in the chapter. Also new are some of the readings at the end of each chapter. Readings that reviewers thought students found uninteresting or boring were deleted. The sections called “A Scenario to Write About and Discuss” were retained in Part I. Both students and reviewers believed that this type of application exercise helped students better understand study strategies by trying them out in the scenario dilemmas.

Part II, “Developing the BCA’s of College Reading and Study Strategies” has been changed very little. We have maintained the **BCA** moniker, stressing the importance of engaging in activities **Before** reading, staying **Connected** during reading, and engaging in activities **After** reading as a way to maximize understanding. As with Part I, when appropriate, we have included references

as to how students can incorporate technology into their academic learning. For example, in Chapter 10, “After You Read: Studying,” we discuss ways that students can make concept maps and flowcharts on the computer as ways of better organizing information.

Two changes have been made in the appendix. We deleted the chapters on weather forecasting and diversity that were in the fourth edition and replaced them with two new selections. Weather forecasting has been replaced with a chapter from a chemistry text titled “Matter and Energy, Atoms and Molecules.” Reviewers felt that students needed to interact to a greater degree with information from the sciences, and chemistry is a discipline that many students struggle with. The second addition is a chapter titled “Evaluating Sources.” This chapter was taken from a computer literacy text and offers students tips for using and evaluating Internet sources. We believe that this chapter is very timely and exemplifies the type of reading-for-application that students face in many courses. The remainder of the chapters in the appendix were included in the fourth edition of *DTT*. We believe that the selection of appendix chapters in this fifth edition provides students and instructors a wide variety of texts to which they can apply and modify strategies.

## Acknowledgments

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Although we have been through the revision process with *Developing Textbook Thinking* four times now, we never cease to be amazed at the number of dedicated individuals that it takes to bring a book such as this to fruition. Certainly we wish to acknowledge those who took the time and effort to review the previous edition and provide us with constructive criticism and excellent feedback. We are always grateful for their comments because most have used *DTT* with their students and can verbalize clearly what worked and what didn’t. So for their helpful reviews of the fifth edition, our thanks go out to Denise Davis, St. Louis Community College–Florissant Valley; Maxine Goldberg, Madison Area Technical College; Margaret L. Janz, Jacksonville University; Marilyn A. Leahy, Virginia Commonwealth University; Beverly A. McCabe, John A. Logan College; and Diane J. Murphy-Martin, Snow College.

Of course, we continue to receive the best feedback from our own students. They will make comments such, “I didn’t understand what you meant by this” or “Why did you include that?” or “Wouldn’t it be easier if you just said. . . .” Because the goal of *DTT* is to help students become critical readers and thinkers and active learners, we appreciate and wholeheartedly listen to what students think should be in this book.

We would also like to acknowledge all of the people at Houghton Mifflin who had a hand in this edition: Patricia Coryell, Mary Jo Southern, Kellie Cardone, Danielle Richardson, Fred Burns, Lisa Jelly Smith, Priscilla Bailey, and Annamarie Rice.

Finally, as always, we owe special gratitude to our respective families for their love and encouragement. We need to say that when we worked on the first edition of *Developing Textbook Thinking* our lives were very different than they are now. Our children were young (and so were we!). Fifteen years later, our children are grown, but they continue to be an inspiration to us, as are our spouses. So to Kama and Steve and to David, Amy, and Jeanne, thanks for the continued support. You're the best!

S. L. N.  
W. D.



# *To the Student*

High school students often think that the most difficult thing about college is getting in. We feel, on the contrary, that the most difficult aspect of college is staying in. Many of you probably know fellow students who were accepted into college but for a variety of reasons were unable to continue. Some students are unsuccessful in college because they do not possess the study strategies needed to make good grades, others because they lack motivation. Students who know a variety of study strategies and are self-motivated are much more likely to be successful. In fact, research bears this out; those who use proper study strategies tend to outperform those who use incorrect or inadequate strategies. Also, highly motivated students outperform those with low motivation across all ability levels.

The purpose of the fifth edition of *Developing Textbook Thinking (DTT)* is to expose you to strategies that, if properly applied, will increase your understanding of course material and subsequently your performance on exams. *DTT* not only outlines a complete study method but also gives you practice in applying this method to complete text chapters from a variety of disciplines. By using complete chapters, you can learn to think like a biologist or a historian. Thus this book can supply the strategies and techniques, and your instructor can supply the guidance for improving your study skills. However, you must provide the motivation to learn, apply, and modify these strategies.

As you proceed through this book, you will find that studying and learning are hard work. Few people can read something once, do nothing else with the information, and score high on classroom examinations. Learning and remembering take determination and hard work, but if you use the strategies in this text, you will be able to study more efficiently and effectively. This book presents a variety of methods so that you can try each of them, discover which ones work best for you, and make them part of your regular reading and studying habits.

*Developing Textbook Thinking*, Fifth Edition, is divided into two parts. Part I, “Understanding College Reading and Studying Demands,” presents three diagnostic tests to make you more aware of your strengths and weaknesses in the areas of reading and studying; suggests ways you can develop and maintain motivation; introduces basic time-management strategies; gives you some hints for getting started; presents how to take lecture notes; discusses how to improve your vocabulary; explores how texts from the humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences differ; and presents techniques for developing reading-rate flexibility.

Part II, “Developing the **BCA**’s of College Reading and Studying Strategies,” focuses on an approach called the **BCA**’s of studying—what you do **B**efore you read, staying **C**onconnected during reading, what you do **A**fter you read,

and what you do After you study. You can become an efficient and effective learner using this method because you are engaged in learning and monitoring activities before, during, and after reading. We believe that this type of active interaction is necessary in order for maximum learning to occur. We have included the **PLAE** (Preplan, List, Activate, and Evaluate) procedure to help you become more goal directed in your test preparation. Finally, this portion of *DTT* gives you helpful hints for preparing for both objective and essay exams.

Application Exercises follow each chapter and sample reading in *DTT*. There are two types of Application Exercises: exercises that focus on the strategies and content from *DTT* and exercises that can be applied to your own textbooks. Both types of exercises will give you practice with the techniques presented. You will also be able to apply the strategies discussed in this text to the sample chapters in the appendix. In addition, most chapters contain at least one scenario, concerning a college student, that you can think and write about at length. For this fifth edition, we have also added a section at the end of most chapters called "Plugging In." This section is designed to help you hone your skills in using the web and in using the computer as a learning tool.

As in previous editions, the changes that we have made in this fifth edition are a direct result of what we have heard from our own students and from college reading instructors from all over the United States. We initially discovered the need for such a text through working with our students, and over time we have revised it to add information that they have found useful. This edition contains changes made in response to both praise and criticism of the previous editions, and in light of recent research in the area of college reading and self-regulated learning. We believe all of these considerations make this an even better book. We are particularly proud of the breadth of the new chapters included in the appendix; students provided considerable input concerning the interest level of these selections. We feel that they will give you a flavor for many of the courses that colleges and universities require.

We encourage you to keep an open mind as you work through *Developing Textbook Thinking*, Fifth Edition. Try out the new strategies and see which ones work best for you. Discover which techniques make you a more efficient and effective learner. Discuss your studying problems and the scenarios with your instructor and your classmates. Through your reading journal, keep track of your reading and studying progress. Remember, the strategies you learn from this text will help you not only today but also as you progress through your entire college program and beyond. We want to help every student become a life-long learner.

S. L. N.  
W. D.

# **DEVELOPING TEXTBOOK THINKING**

# Contents

**Preface** xv

**To the Student** xix

## **Part I Understanding College Reading and Studying Demands** I

### **Chapter 1 What You Have to Do** 3

Assessing Your Strengths and Weaknesses 4

Standardized Assessments 5

Informal Assessments 6

Assessment 1: Locating Your Reading Problems 7

Answers and Discussion 8

Assessment 2: Study-Strategies Inventory 9

Answers and Discussion 10

Assessment 3, Part I: College Study Demands 10

Answers and Discussion 12

Assessment 3, Part II: A Scenario to Write About and Discuss 14

Scenario 14

Discussion 14

The Reading Journal: Becoming More Aware 14

Self-Awareness Journal 15

Response Journal 17

Summary Journal 18

Share Your Entries 18

Key Ideas 19

*Application Exercises (DTT)* 20

*Application Exercises (Your Texts)* 20

*Plugging In* 21

Selection from a Magazine: “Blood and Money” 21

Selection from a Magazine: “Prisoner of Pain” 22

### **Chapter 2 Getting Started: The BCA’s of Successful Study** 25

Introduction—The BCA’s 26

Before You Read, Listen, Take Notes, and Study 26

Developing Self-Discipline	27
Learning Flexibility	27
Understanding the Task	27
Finding the Place	28
Utilizing Resources	29
Forming Study Groups	30
Getting Assistance	31
Using Your Course Syllabus	33
Following Effective Strategies	33
Before You Read	33
Stay Connected As You Read, Listen, Take Notes, and Study	34
After You Read, Listen, Take Notes, and Study	35
Preparing for Examinations	36
The Basic Strategies	37
The <b>BCA</b> 's for Textbook Reading	37
The <b>BCA</b> 's for Lecture Notetaking	38
Key Ideas	40
A Scenario to Write About and Discuss	40
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	40
<i>Application Exercises (Your Courses)</i>	41
<i>Plugging In</i>	41
Selection from a Magazine: "I Hate School"	42

### **Chapter 3 Finding the Motivation 45**

Student Attitude and Responsibility	46
Immediate Gratification Versus Delayed Gratification	47
If Necessary, Wipe Out the Past	47
Developing the Big M	48
Maintaining a Positive Attitude	49
Selecting Courses: What's in It for You?	50
Fighting Boredom	51
Key Ideas	52
Two Scenarios to Write About and Discuss	52
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	53
<i>Application Exercises (Your Courses)</i>	54
<i>Plugging In</i>	54
Selection from a Magazine: "First Born, Later Born, Rebel or Reactionary?"	54
Selection from a Magazine: "For \$6,000, You Get a Pencil with the Answers Included"	59

## **Chapter 4 Finding the Time 62**

- Self-Discipline 63
- Setting Goals 64
- Schedules 66
  - Term Schedules 67
  - Weekly Schedules 69
- Key Ideas 71
- A Scenario to Write About and Discuss 72
  - Application Exercises (DTT and Your Courses)* 73
- Critical Thinking 73
  - Plugging In* 74

## **Chapter 5 Taking Notes from Lectures 76**

- The Split-Page Method 76
- Types of Lectures 77
  - Large Lecture (50–500 people) 77
  - Small Lecture (10–50 people) 77
  - Discussion Groups 77
  - Laboratories 78
  - Internet Assignments 78
- Before the Lecture 79
- Staying Connected: Listening to Lectures 80
- Staying Connected: Taking Notes During the Lecture 82
- After the Lecture 83
- Key Ideas 84
- A Scenario to Write About and Discuss 85
  - Application Exercises (DTT or Your Courses)* 86
  - Plugging In* 86

## **Chapter 6 Vocabulary Development 88**

- Understanding New Words and New Definitions 89
- Using Context 91
  - Context Clues 91
    - Synonyms 92
    - Antonyms and Contrasts 92
    - Examples and Illustrations 93
    - Opinion and Tone 94
  - Discovering Meaning Through Context 95

<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	98
<i>Application Exercise (Your Texts)</i>	100
Using the Dictionary	100
Characteristics of Strong Definitions	101
The Dictionary Entry	102
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	104
<i>Application Exercises (Your Texts)</i>	105
Using Structure	106
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	107
<i>Application Exercises (Your Texts)</i>	108
Generative Vocabulary Strategies	110
Vocabulary Cards	110
Concept Mapping	112
Additional Organizational Strategies	114
Key Ideas	115
A Scenario to Write About and Discuss	115
Vocabulary Exercises for an Article: “A Colony in the Sky”	115
Selection from a Magazine: “A Colony in the Sky”	116

## **Chapter 7   Flexibility and Efficiency in Studying   120**

Background Knowledge and Interest	122
Characteristics of Textbooks	122
New Terminology	124
Major Ideas and Emphases	124
Text Organization	125
Use of Typographical and Instructional Aids	125
Assumptions About Background Knowledge	126
Tests	126
A Scenario to Write About and Discuss	127
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	127
<i>Application Exercises (Your Courses)</i>	128
<i>Application Exercises for Textbook Characteristics</i>	128
Developing Reading-Rate Fluency and Flexibility	130
Reading Habits That Slow You Down	131
Are You an Auditory Reader?	131
Do You Regress During Reading?	133
Do You Move Your Eyes at One Speed?	134
Strategies to Increase Fluency	134

Increasing the Speed of Your Eye Movements	135
Key-Word Reading	136
Phrase Reading	137
Push Yourself to Read Faster	138
Flexibility	141
Key Ideas	142
A Scenario to Write About and Discuss	143
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	144
Selection from a Magazine: “The Date Who Rapes”	144
<i>Application Exercise for “The Date Who Rapes”</i>	147
Selection from a Newspaper: “Why Everyone Is So Short-Tempered”	149

## **PART II    Developing the BCA’s of College Reading and Study Strategies    155**

BCA’s: A Method for Efficient and Effective Study	157
Before Reading	157
Staying Connected During Reading	157
After Reading: Studying	157
After Studying: Reviewing	158

### **Chapter 8    Before You Read    160**

Learning Principles	161
Principle 1: Psych Yourself Up, or Create Interest	161
Principle 2: Use What You Already Know	161
Principle 3: Intend to Remember	162
Principle 4: Anticipate Test Questions	162
Before Reading	163
Activating Prior Knowledge	164
Previewing	164
Set Goals and Begin to Formulate Test Questions	166
Memory-Level Questions	168
Higher-Level or Critical-Thinking Questions	169
Selection from a Magazine: “Born Happy?”	170
Key Ideas	173
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	174
<i>Application Exercises (Your Texts)</i>	176
<i>Plugging In</i>	176
Selection from a Newspaper: “Measuring the Shape We’re In”	177
Selection from a Magazine (Annotated): “Born Happy?”	180



## **Chapter 9 Staying Connected During Reading 184**

Learning Principles	184
Principle 5: Be Selective and Isolate	185
Principle 6: Create Meaningful Organization	185
Being Selective	186
Text Marking	188
Annotation	189
Isolating Key Information	190
Using Your Annotations for Test Preparation	192
Highlighting and Underlining	193
Key Ideas	195
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	195
<i>Application Exercise (Your Text)</i>	196
<i>Plugging In</i>	196
Selection from a Chemistry Text (Annotated): “Matter and Energy, Atoms and Molecules”	196
Selection from a Psychology Text: “The Psychology of Memory”	198
Selection from a History Text (Annotated): “The New Frontier”	199
Selection from a Psychology Text (Annotated): “The Psychology of Memory”	201

## **Chapter 10 After You Read: Studying 203**

Learning Principles	204
Principle 7: Put Ideas in Your Own Words	204
Principle 8: Organize and Reduce the Information	206
Rehearsal Strategies	206
Primary Rehearsal Strategies	207
Mapping	207
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	210
<i>Application Exercise (Your Texts)</i>	211
Concept Cards	211
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	214
<i>Application Exercise (Your Texts)</i>	214
Question/Answer	214
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	216
<i>Application Exercise (Your Texts)</i>	217
Compare/Contrast Charting	217
<i>Application Exercises (DTT)</i>	220
<i>Application Exercise (Your Texts)</i>	220