

## **Reading Aloud Activities for Students**

### **What Are We Doing Here?**

At the start of the semester ask students to find the definitional quote for an important term—art, science, medicine, culture, healing, engineering, law, poem etc. Instruct students to re-read their preferred definition until they are sure they fully understand its claims, its assumptions and its priorities. Students should bring a written copy to class and be prepared to give the source of the definitional quote “As Aristotle observed . . .” and to read the quote aloud.

### **Coach and Reader**

Assign students to work in pairs – one as coach and the other as reader and to prepare the assignment outside of classroom time. Have them prepare a short reading from an especially difficult, important or interesting excerpt of the assigned reading. Have the pairs present their reading in advance of the reading assignment. Imagine your class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A text that the whole class is assigned to have read for Thursday’s meeting should be “previewed” by Coaches and Readers on Tuesday. Throughout the semester the Coach and Reader change places.

### **Group Response to Draft Papers**

This exercise is designed for use after a student has completed a solid first draft of a paper assignment. Students are assigned to work in teams.

- 1) Before handing out copies of the draft, the author should read aloud the first sentence of the paper. The group should then tell the author (a) what the sentence leads them to imagine as the paper’s main point and (b) their predictions of other important points the author will make in support of the main point.
- 2) Then the author should hand out copies of the draft to each of the group member.
- 3) The author should read about 500 words of the paper aloud.
- 4) The reading is followed by 2-3 minutes of silence to allow the group to reflect on and digest the paper. Invite group members to gather their thoughts.

5) Group members should then in turn, voice their reactions to these questions:

- State the paper's main point in a single sentence. What is the paper's purpose?
- What are the major sub-points?
- What aspects of the paper did you like best?
- Were there any points at which at which you were confused about the subject or focus of the paper and its sections?
- Is there material you think the author should add?
- What would an opponent to this author's position say?

6) The author should follow these guidelines:

- **Do not argue with the readers, and do not explain what you meant.** You are gathering data and out audience response, so simply gather it. If a particular response doesn't seem useful, then feel free to ignore it in revising your paper. But for you to spend the group's time arguing and explaining defeats the purpose of the exercise – it can result in the group's becoming focused on understanding what you meant rather than on reacting to what you wrote.
- It is usually productive for you to remain silent, taking careful notes about what is being said. But you may also want to
  - Ask a responder to clarify or expand a statement, so you understand it thoroughly.
  - Ask responders to comment on an idea you have to improve some aspect of the paper they may have negatively critiqued.
  - Repeat back to the group what you think they're saying, just to make sure communication is accurate.