

Practical advice for enhancing your teaching and learning

Reading

resources

© Eileen Thompson, Deborah Ingram,
Amanda Kendle and Maria Northcote

April 2001



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Inside ...

<u>How do you start?</u>	3
<u>Where can reading resources be found?</u>	4
<u>Why use reading resources?</u>	5
<u>What is a good reading?</u>	6
<u>How can you integrate reading resources into your course?</u>	8
<u>What are some learning activities based on reading resources?</u>	9
<u>What should you consider when choosing a textbook?</u>	10

How do you start?

When assembling reading resources, it is recommended that you:

- **Gather** all your resources for the course such as your lecture notes, course outline, learning outcomes, tutorial activities, assignment details and any relevant references.
- **Select** some key resources, including the textbook(s), before you start preparing or revising your teaching materials.
- **Specify** to the students the sections of each reading resource that you require them to consult, for example, significant passages or selected chapters.
- **Be culturally aware** in your choice of readings. Remember that students may come from diverse backgrounds.
- **Use a variety** of resources, including both hard copy and electronic documents.

Where can reading resources be found?

Effective courses incorporate a range of readings that can be selected from a variety of sources:

- academic journals
- textbooks
- internet sites
- newspapers
- book extracts
- magazines
- previous students' work (with written permission)
- government publications
- interview transcripts
- technical manuals
- novels, poetry and other creative writing
- conference proceedings

Your librarian may help you locate suitable material.

All resources must comply with copyright regulations.

Why use reading resources?

Some educationally sound reasons supporting the inclusion of reading resources in your course are:

- To provide some of the **core content**.
Reading resources that closely reflect the learning outcomes may even reduce the amount of content you need to include in lecture notes. Remember to outline the knowledge that students need to gain from the reading.
- To present different **points of view**.
Reading resources that look at the same topic from different angles encourage students to compare and analyse different ideas.
- To **provoke thought and reflection**.
When integrated into lectures, tutorials and online activities, reading resources help reinforce, expand and consolidate course content.
- As a **basis for assessment**.
A large variety of assessment tasks can be based on reading resources, for example, sets of frequently asked questions (FAQs), case studies, and writing essays, articles or reviews.

What is a good reading?

Student feedback indicates that the most effective reading resources are those that are:

- **Recent**
Students value up-to-date reading resources that they may not have seen elsewhere.
- **Relevant**
Resource material should relate directly to the learning outcomes, activities and assessment.
- **Varied**
Try to select a variety of reading resources for each module or topic. This increases the course effectiveness by providing the students with multiple perspectives on the same issue.
- **Interesting**
Students are motivated by interesting readings that include stimulating ideas.
- **Well structured**
Choose resources that have clear layouts, for example, readings which have meaningful subheadings and supporting diagrams and charts.

- **Readable**
Choose good quality reproductions with clear, unmarked text that is easy to read.
- **Given with directions**
Suggesting how to study the resource material is helpful for many students, for example, you could give guidance on the most important or interesting parts.
- **Ordered correctly**
If you are going to compile a reader, arrange the reading resources in a logical way, to match the structure and sequence of the lectures and tutorials.
- **Within copyright limitations**
Familiarise yourself and comply with copyright regulations.
- **Correctly referenced**
Model consistent referencing by adhering to an appropriate referencing convention.

How can you integrate reading resources into your course?

You can integrate reading resources into your course by:

- matching specific learning outcomes to particular chapters or pages in the text or journal article.
- drawing students' attention to reading resources in class, printed course materials or course internet sites.
- giving guidance to students about how they should use the reading, for example, skim read, read in detail, etc.
- annotating the reading to indicate to students how this information relates to a section of the course.
- using readings as part of an assessment task.

What are some learning activities based on reading resources?

- **Snowballing references**
Choose a seminal reading for an important topic and distribute it to students. Ask them to locate two or three of the key references used in the reading, and describe their influence or contribution to it. Additional activities could include pooling student work to build a detailed picture of the literature behind the reading.
- **Concept mapping**
Ask students to draw a concept map or flowchart to represent how concepts in a reading connect to each other.
- **Evaluate the reading**
Provide students with a set of criteria to evaluate a reading. Criteria could include how well the purpose of the reading is achieved; the appropriateness of the methodology used; or the clarity of the main points made.
- **Contradictory points of view**
Select two readings presenting opposing points of view, and ask students to compare and contrast the ideas and logic behind them.

What should you consider when choosing a textbook?

- **The students' reading level and motivation**
How efficiently and effectively will the average and least able students in your class read?
- **The difficulty of the textbook**
How easy is the textbook to read? Will the conceptual level be easy or difficult for students? Does the writing style of the author make it easier or harder to read the material? Does the general setting out of the textbook make it easier or harder to read?
- **Your expectations and student workload**
How much time will students need to invest to read and understand a typical weekly reading in this textbook?

- **Use and cost of the textbook**
How much of the textbook will students be using as an integral part of the study material for this unit? Does the amount of use intended for the textbook in the unit justify its cost? Will the textbook also be useful for other units that students will study?
- **Textbook and edition availability**
Is the textbook currently available? Is the content up to date? Will the bookshop be able to stock it in time for the beginning of the semester?
- **Companion website**
Does the textbook have a companion website? If so, is the content appropriately contextualised? Does it support the learning outcomes of your course? Do students need to pay extra for access? Can students access it from a variety of locations, for example, the library, at home and in university computer labs?

For more information

Please contact:

Eileen Thompson

Instructional Designer/CATLyst, ECEL

Ph: 9380 1322

Email: eileen.thompson@uwa.edu.au

The following Copyright statement should be inserted in the front of all course materials.

"All material contained in this course reader has been copied in accordance with and pursuant to a statutory licence administered by Copyright Agency Limited (CAL), granted to the University of Western Australia pursuant to Part VB of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Copying of this reader by students, except for fair dealing purposes under the Copyright Act, is prohibited. For the purposes of this fair dealing exception, students should be aware that the rule allowing copying, for fair dealing purposes, of 10% of the work, or one chapter/article, applies to the original work from which the excerpt in this course reader was taken, and not to this course reader itself."

Booklets in this series are available at

<http://www.catl.uwa.edu.au/resources/advice.html>