

During exams students appear to struggle with determining what test questions are asking, and how to answer these question effectively. This phenomenon could be due to a deficit in their reading and critical thinking skills. These skills could be improved through in-class reading assignments.

To improve critical reading and thinking skills I plan to assign reading assignments where students are provided to two articles on biological topics and asked to answer questions of increasing difficulty. Assignment questions will be developed to enhance reading skills by requiring students to read each article carefully to identify key facts, and enhance thinking skills by requiring students to draw connections between each set of related articles. To ensure that students perform these assignments, time will be dedicated in class to read the articles and each assignment will be worth credit towards their final grade. A total of five assignments will be assigned during the academic term.

These assignments will provide the students with practice in reading materials more carefully and identifying what facts are needed to answer questions put to them. Student progress will be measured two ways. The first assessment of their progress will occur by comparing average student grades between article assignments. If this project improves critical reading and thinking skills then the grades on these assignments should increase during the term. The second assessment will come by comparing the grades on written portions of their exams before and after article assignments are given. Improvements in reading and thinking skills should also result in an improvement in written responses during exams.