

The Scholarly Conversation: Reading & Applying Scholarly Research

Lesson Plan

Amy Hall & Sarah Leeman, National Louis University

Course Level & Discipline: 1st semester undergraduates (can be modified for additional subjects or levels)

Objectives :

- Describe the purpose and findings of a scholarly research study
- Use evidence from a scholarly source to support a thesis

ACRL Information Literacy Framework:

- Scholarship as Conversation (Knowledge Practices 1 & 5, Disposition 3)
- Information has Value (Knowledge Practice 1, Dispositions 1 & 3)

Activity #1: How to Read a Scholarly Article (25 minutes)

1. Open this section of the class by telling students that because scholarly articles are so specialized, and written for a field of experts, reading them can require a specific set of skills.
2. Play the *How to read a scholarly article* video (see suggested materials)
3. Open an example scholarly article. Highlight the major sections found in most scholarly articles, including abstract, introduction/literature review, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.
4. Discuss strategies for reading scholarly literature (e.g. starting with the abstract and then moving straight to the conclusion). Share your own reading strategies and invite students to share their own.
5. GROUP ACTIVITY: Now, students will have a chance to practice these strategies. Break class into small groups. Each group is provided a different scholarly article and answers a set of questions that requires them to identify and understand major purposes and findings of the study. Groups share their findings with the class. Recommended articles and questions have been selected for subject matter that will be of interest to the class.

Activity #2: Using Evidence to Support a Thesis (25 minutes)

1. Begin by presenting two example sentences:
 - a. It's important for college students to get enough sleep.
 - b. It's important for college students to get enough sleep, because sleep deprivation produces effects similar to being drunk.

Ask students which one is more convincing. The answer is the second one, because it supports the claim with specific evidence. This is evidence we would need to cite.

2. Show students the study this information came from and then create and write in the in-text citation on the board: (Williamson & Feyer, 2000).
3. Ask students to share their own personal examples of using evidence to support an argument. What do they do to convince someone they are right or wrong? Discuss how citing specific evidence in their academic work adds weight to their argument.
4. 4. GROUP ACTIVITY: Now, students will practice selecting and citing evidence to support a research question. Break class into small groups. Each group receives the same article. Each group must select two pieces of evidence- a quote and a paraphrase- to support a provided research question related to the topic of the same article. The group writes these statements, with in-text citations included, on their whiteboards. Students then share findings with the group, and discuss how well the evidence answers the research question.

Assessment :

- Students will answer questions about the purpose and findings of the first scholarly article, both verbally and in writing. The class and librarian will review and provide feedback.
- Students will select evidence from the second scholarly article and present to the class. The class and librarian will review and provide feedback.