

Lesson Plan

Transitions Lab for Adult Basic Education and
Pre-College (Health Sciences AA) Students

Overview: In this lesson, or series of lessons, learner move through the first three stages of close reading as outlined by the Critical Thinking Foundation's levels of close reading (Paul & Elder 2008) including:

- Clarify of the concept (third level of close reading)
- Paraphrase key sentences (first level of close reading)
- Paraphrase to state the main point or idea (second level of close reading)
 - Scaffolding can include identifying “big ideas” and distinguishing big/main ideas from topics and from details
- Paraphrase to state key information, or evidence, that supports the main idea (third level of close reading)
- Exemplify the main idea by developing examples from life (second level of close reading)
- Identify the author's fundamental purpose, they key question the author is trying to answer, important information she or he uses, and implications of the author's reasoning

This lesson assesses the above competencies via the Critical Thinking Foundation's standards of *clarity* and *accuracy*, and *relevance*.

This lesson will flow between different levels of critical reading via several interactive academic literacy activities in which learners construct knowledge individually and collaboratively, with classmates and the instructor.

Learning Experience 1: Clarify the Concept¹

Objective: Learners will be able to clarify a core concept (in their own minds, and verbally) of a core concept of the text.

Assessment: Informal feedback from classmates and instructor.

Description: Choose a concept from the text, e.g., Health Measures and Rankings. As a group, ask learners clarification questions about the concept such as:

1. What would a health measure or ranking system do? That is, what would you expect to read or hear about in a description of a ranking of Minnesota's health care?

¹ From Nosich, G. (2009). *Learning to thinking things through: A guide to critical thinking across the curriculum* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

2. What would a health measure or ranking system *not* do? What would you *not* expect to see in a description of a ranking of Minnesota’s health care?
3. Is there anything that a national ranking of health care would *have to* do?

Learning Experience 2: Identify and Paraphrase key sentences

Objective: Learners will be able to clearly and accurately paraphrase sentences, keeping original meaning, changing words that can be changed, and changing the structure of the sentence.

Assessment: Self- and peer-assessment with a rubric (attached); Informal in-class instructor feedback.

Materials: Paraphrase rubric

Paraphrase Rubric: Academic Integrity, Clarity & Accuracy			
Words that can be changed are changed with synonyms (including phrasing - academic integrity)			
Words that can be changed are not changed	Some significant words are not changed	Most of significant words are changed	All significant words are changed
Words are changed but the meaning is significantly changed along with them.	Words are changed but the meaning is somewhat changed along with them.	Meaning remains close to the same.	Meaning remains extremely to the same.
The sentence order or structure is different (including phrasing - academic integrity)			
The original word order and sentence structure remains	Most significant words of the original word order and sentence remain.	The word and sentence order is significantly different.	The sentence structure is completely original, even though the meaning of the original sentence remains.
All important ideas in the sentence are included (paraphrased)			
Most of the original meaning is lost	Significant original meaning is lost	Most of the original meaning remains.	All significant original meaning remains.
The sentence is grammatically correct with correct spelling and easy to understand (clarity)			
There are errors, distracting errors that may affect meaning or distract the reader.	There are distracting errors that may affect meaning or distract the reader.	There are few errors, but none that don't affect meaning.	A few minor errors that don't affect meaning or distract the reader.
Line-by-line editing required	Line-by-line editing required	Some errors in difficult reading.	Language is natural and easy to understand.
Language is difficult or impossible to understand.	Language is difficult or difficult to understand.	Language is mostly natural and easy to understand.	Language is mostly natural and easy to understand.

Step 1: Having already read the article, learners should individually skim it, underlining one or two “deep quotes” - sentences that they think may contain a “big idea” or connect to the core concept of the article.

Learners pair-share, then share out a couple of examples with the whole class. Instructor should elicit (and model eliciting) clarification as needed by asking, “*Could you explain that choice further? What tells you that sentence is significant to the text? What are your reasons for identifying that sentence?*”

Step 2: Once learners have identified “deep quotes” remind them that paraphrasing is the first level of critical thinking while reading, helps measure understanding, and is key to avoiding plagiarism. Elicit what makes a good paraphrase (making sure that you touch on all four criteria in the rubric attached – keeping the same meaning as the original sentence, changing words that can be changed, changing the order of the sentence).

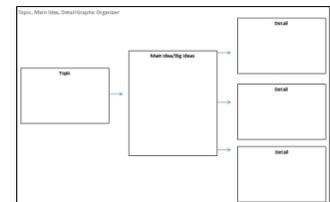
Once everyone is clear, in pairs, ask learners to come up with a paraphrase for their sentence. Provide evaluative feedback to the whole group of one or two group’s sentences using the rubric. Elicit evaluations from learners before providing your own.

Learning Experience 3: Distinguish Main Ideas from Topics and Details

Objectives: Distinguish main ideas from topics and from details.

Assessment: In-class instructor feedback.

Materials: Topic/Main Idea/Details Graphic organizer



Introduction: Review the concept of topics vs. main ideas vs. details. Elicit definitions or examples from students. In giving examples, use concrete metaphors to illustrate the

relationship between main ideas and details, such as a table (in which the main idea is a table and the details are the legs supporting it).

Step 1: Have learners work individually to write or paraphrase sentences from the text into one of three categories of a **graphic organizer (attached)**: Topic, Main Idea or Detail.

If your learners struggle to pull appropriate examples from the text, have sentences or paraphrased sentences from the text pre-selected and cut into sentence strips, so that learners can focus only on distinguishing them.

Step 2: Learners compare answers with a partner, discussing and negotiating different answers to come up with the correct answer.

Step 3: Go over the answers as a group, eliciting and modeling clarification and accuracy as needed.

Learning Experience 4: Academic Conversation to explicate the text (Version 1)²

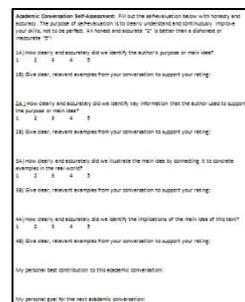
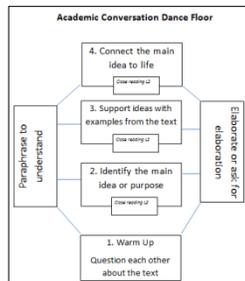
Objectives: 1) Verbally state the main idea or purpose of an article, the key information that supports it, and further clarify/illustrate main idea by connecting it to life.³

Assessment: Self-Assessment; Informal instructor feedback.

Materials: Academic Conversation Handout, Dance Floors (attached)

Warm-up: Learners should have already read the article and should skim it over again so it's fresh in their minds.

Step 1: Review the structure of academic conversations by directing learners to their **Academic Conversation handouts** (attached), reminding them that they are “walking” through each step of the conversation – warm-up, main idea questions, key information questions, and questions to connect the main idea to the real world. Remind them that to increase clarity and depth, they can and should paraphrase each other and ask for elaboration throughout the conversation. Also, while the steps of the conversation are linear, they may find themselves



² This activity structure is adapted from Zwiers, J. & Crawford, C. (2011). *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

³ Stating the main idea of a text and connecting it to life are 2nd level reading tasks, and stating purpose and key information are 3rd level in Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2008). *The thinker's guide to how to read a paragraph: The art of close reading*. Dillon Beach, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking Press.

moving back and forth, as in a dance – especially between the main idea and the key information that support it.

Review posing questions in academic conversations by eliciting, *What questions will help bring out the author's purpose or main idea of this reading? What questions will help identify what information the author uses to support that idea? What questions will help us think of how to illustrate and further clarify a main idea by relating it to life?*

Step 2: Model academic conversations by starting off the conversation with a warm up question, e.g., *“Did you find any interesting or puzzling parts?”* When a learner responds, prompt another learner to paraphrase or ask for elaboration (for further clarification). Prompt another learner to ask a question to help identify the main idea or author's purpose.

Remind learners that identifying the main idea or author's purpose is key – the rest of the conversation, and the eventual summary, will be “off” if the main idea or purpose is off.

Step 3: Learner-led Academic Conversations. Groups of three or four learners use handouts, and optionally, physical dance floors (attached) to move through the steps of their academic conversations. Individual learners can be assigned responsibility for ensuring sufficient conversation, clarity and accuracy on a given step.

During the academic conversations, the instructor circulates and as needed, prompts learners to ask and respond to questions to increase *clarity, accuracy* and *relevance*.

Step 4: Informal Pair Evaluation: Next, have learners pair with a learner who was in a different conversation group. Have them compare the purpose/main idea, key information, and connection of the idea to life, and implications of the main idea that their groups came up with. Ask them to consider which answers are the *clearest* and most *accurate*.

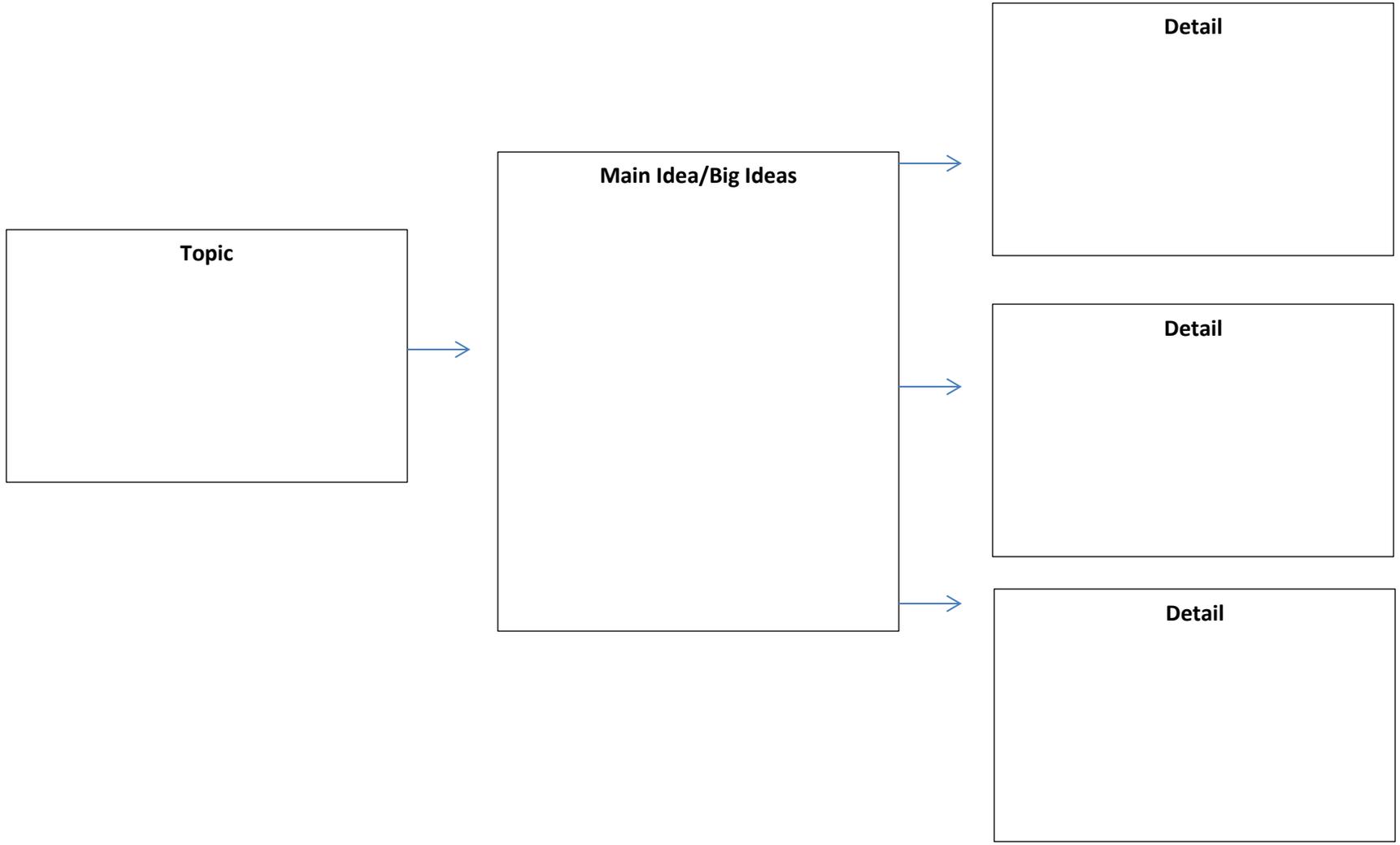
Step 5: Informal Group Evaluation: As a whole group, elicit main ideas, supporting key information, and illustrations of the main idea to real life. Elicit and offer evaluations on the *clarity* and *accuracy* of each, as well as the *relevance* of the connection to real life.

Step 6: Self-Evaluation: Individually, have learners fill out a self-assessment of their academic conversation, sharing a copy with you. Offer targeted feedback where self-evaluations are unclear or inaccurate.

Paraphrase Rubric: Academic Integrity, Clarity & Accuracy

Words that can be changed are changed with synonyms (Avoiding Plagiarism – Academic Integrity)			
Many significant words are not changed	Some significant words are not changed	Nearly all significant words are changed	All significant words are changed
Words are changed but the meaning is significantly changed along with them	Words are changed but the meaning is somewhat changed along with them	Meaning remains close to the same	Meaning remains extremely to the same
The sentence order or structure is different (Avoiding Plagiarism – Academic Integrity)			
The original word order and sentence structure remains	Most significant aspects of the original word and sentence remain	The word and sentence order is significantly different	The sentence structure is completely original, even though the meaning of the original sentence remains.
All important ideas in the sentence are included (Accuracy)			
Most of the original meaning is lost	Significant original meaning is lost	Most of the original meaning remains	All significant original meaning remains
The sentence is grammatically correct with correct spelling, and easy to understand (Clarity)			
Many obvious, distracting errors	Obvious, distracting errors that may affect meaning or distract the reader	Obvious, but minor errors that don't affect meaning	A few minor errors that don't affect meaning or distract the reader
Line-by-line editing required	Errors on basic spelling, usage & punctuation	Some errors in difficult spelling	Language is natural and easy to understand
Language is difficult or not possible to understand	Language is awkward or difficult to understand	Language is mostly natural and easy to understand	

Topic, Main Idea, Detail Graphic Organizer



Academic Conversations

to prepare for Summarizing a Text

Warm up with questions (“Dance” step 1)

- Why is that part important to the text?
- Did you find any interesting or puzzling parts?
- Why do you think the author wrote this?
- How did the author describe...

Sculpt a main idea or purpose (“Dance” step 2)

- Can someone give a quick summary of this section?
- What are the most important points?
- I think the purpose/main idea of this section could be that...
- I think the author is trying to teach us...
- I think that the author wants us to think about...
- What was the author’s purpose in writing this section?

Support ideas with examples (“Dance” step 3)

- Can you give me an example from the text?
- Can you show me where it says that?
- What part of the text do you base that on?
- Can you show me what in the text makes you say that?

Connect the main idea to life (“Dance” step 4)

- What is a real-world example?
- How does this relate to other classes we’re taking?
Other books?
- How does this relate to life?
- When have you encountered a situation like this/seen something like this?
- What would illustrate that?

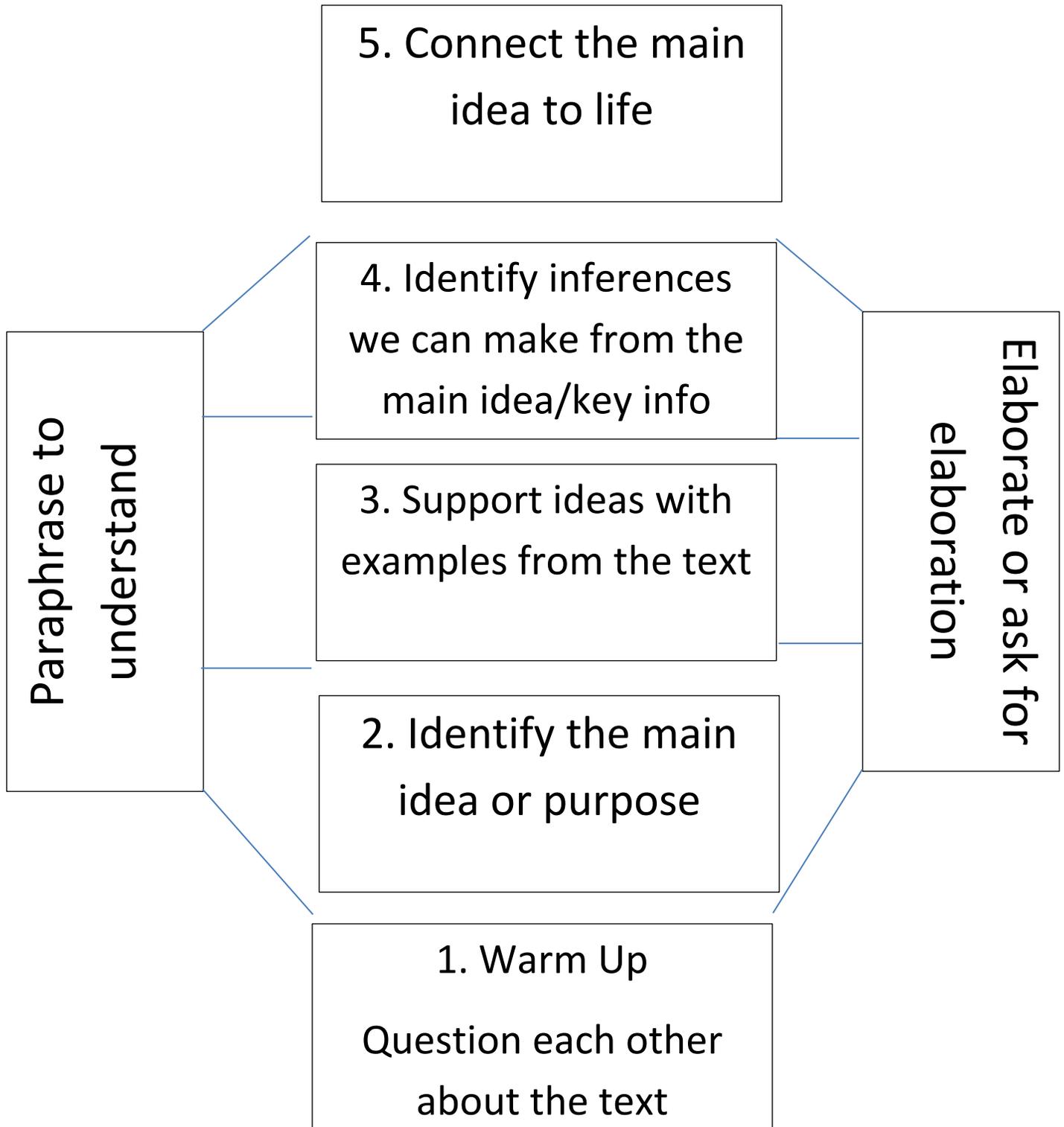
Paraphrase to Clarify

- So you’re saying that...
- Let me see if I understand you...
- Am I right in hearing you say that...
- In other words...
- What I am hearing is...
- Essentially, you think that...
- It sounds like you are saying that...

Elaborate & Clarify

- Can you elaborate on...
- What do you mean by...
- Can you tell me more about...
- What makes you think that...
- Can you clarify the part about...
- Can you be more specific?
- How so?
- Can you unpack that for me?
- I am a little confused about the part...

Academic Conversation Dance Floor



Academic Conversation Self-Assessment: Fill out the self-evaluation below with honesty and accuracy. The purpose of self-evaluation is to clearly understand and continuously improve your skills, not to be perfect. An honest and accurate “2” is better than a dishonest or inaccurate “5”!

1A) How clearly and accurately did we identify the author’s purpose or main idea?

1 2 3 4 5

1B) Give clear, relevant examples from your conversation to support your rating:

2A) How clearly and accurately did we identify key information that the author used to support the purpose or main idea?

1 2 3 4 5

2B) Give clear, relevant examples from your conversation to support your rating:

3A) How clearly and accurately did we illustrate the main idea by connecting it to concrete examples in the real world?

1 2 3 4 5

3B) Give clear, relevant examples from your conversation to support your rating:

4A) How clearly and accurately did we identify the implications of the main idea of this text?

1 2 3 4 5

4B) Give clear, relevant examples from your conversation to support your rating:

My personal best contribution to this academic conversation:

My personal goal for the next academic conversation:

Ask warm-up
questions about the
text

Find the main idea
or purpose

Find key information
(evidence) in the text

Connect the main idea to life

(Illustrate the main idea to further clarify it)

Identify inferences we
can make from the
main idea/key info

Paraphrase to
Clarify

Elaborate or
ask for
elaboration

Summary & Analysis Outline and Frame

Directions: Use or adapt the outline and frame below to construct your own summary and analysis of the article, Report on Health Measures Ranks Minnesota Fifth. Note that you are using first, second and third levels of critical reading in this writing assignment. Pay attention to *clarity, accuracy and relevance* as you write.

In the article _____, the author addresses the **question(s)**, _____ . The **purpose** of the article is _____. In all, the authors (insert summarizing verb) _____. **(main idea)**. Important **information** that the author uses includes _____ [paraphrase].

To illustrate this main idea, we can turn to the following **example from the real world**. _____.

Based on the main idea, we can **infer** that _____ because _____.

Summary & Analysis Peer Feedback

Directions: Assess your partner's *clarity, accuracy* and *relevance* in her or his summary and analysis of the article, *Report on health Measures Ranks Minnesota Fifth*.

1. Is the author's **purpose** *clearly* and *accurately* stated? Describe how or how not.
2. Are the **key questions** the article attempts to address *clearly* and *accurately* stated?
Describe how or how not.
3. Is the **main idea** *clearly* and *accurately* stated? Describe how or how not.
4. Is the **key information that supports the main idea** *clearly* stated AND *accurately* paraphrased? Describe how or how not.
5. Is the **key information** *directly relevant* to the main idea? Describe how or how not.
6. Are the **implications** of the main idea *clearly* and *accurately* stated? Describe how or how not.
7. Are the **implications** *relevant* to the topic article? Describe how or how not.
8. Is the **concrete example from the real world** *clear* and *relevant* to the main idea, and therefore further illustrates/clarifies the main idea? Describe how or how not.

Summary Analysis Rubric	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Needs Work</i>	<i>Beginning</i>
Key Questions	The summary/analysis clearly and accurately states the most relevant key questions of the text.	The summary/analysis states some key questions of the text pretty clearly and accurately .	The summary/analysis includes at least one key question of the text with passable clarity and accuracy . Could be stronger, but gets the job done.	The summary/analysis attempts to states the most relevant key questions of the text, but not clearly or accurately .	The summary/analysis does not clearly and accurately states the most relevant key questions of the text. Key questions are mid-identified.	The summary/analysis does not attempt to state key questions of the text.
Instructor Comments:						
Author's Purpose	The summary/analysis clearly and accurately states the author's purpose.	The summary/analysis states the author's purpose pretty clearly and accurately .	The summary/analysis states the author's purpose with passable clarity and accuracy . Could be stronger, but gets the job done.	The summary/analysis attempts to states the author's purpose, but not clearly or accurately .	The summary/analysis does not clearly and accurately states the most relevant key questions of the text. Key questions are mid-identified.	The summary/analysis does not attempt to state key questions of the text.
Instructor Comments:						
Main Ideas	The summary clearly and accurately states only the main ideas from the text.	The summary pretty clearly and accurately states the main ideas from the text.	The summary states ideas very close to the main idea, with passable clarity and accuracy.	The summary does not clearly and accurately include all of the main ideas from the text. Either clarity or accuracy is compromised.	The summary does not clearly and accurately include all of the main ideas from the text. Both clarity and accuracy is compromised.	The summary includes only copied words from the text.
Instructor Comments:						
Key Information	The summary clearly and accurately states all or most key information relevant to the main idea.	The summary pretty clearly and accurately states most key information relevant to the main idea.	The summary states at least some key information that is pretty relevant to the main idea, with passable clarity and accuracy.	Key information is not clearly and accurately stated, or important key information is missing.	Key information is not relevant to the main idea, or important key information is missing.	The summary does not give key information to support the main idea.
Instructor Comments:						
Relating the main idea to life	The summary further clarifies the main idea by providing a clear, relevant connection to the real world.	The summary somewhat clarifies the main idea by providing a pretty clear, relevant connection to the real world.	The summary connects to the main idea by providing a passably clear, relevant connection to the real world.	Connection to the real world is not clear or relevant enough to the main idea to clarify it.	Connection to the real world is not clear or relevant.	No attempt is made to connect the main idea to life.
Instructor Comments:						

Inferences	The summary/analysis clearly states inferences that can be made from the main idea and key information. Inferences are logical and highly relevant to the main idea and key information.	The summary/analysis clearly states inferences that can be made from the main idea and key information. Inferences are logical and reasonably relevant to the main idea and key information.	The summary/analysis states inferences that can be made from the main idea and key information. Inferences are passably clear and logical and reasonably relevant to the main idea and key information.	The summary/analysis states inferences that can be made from the main idea and key information. Inferences are not clear and logical or not relevant to the main idea and key information.	The summary/analysis does not reflect an understanding of inferences. Clarity, logic and relevance are lacking.	No attempt is made to state inferences from the main idea and key information.
Instructor Comments:						
Paraphrasing	Paraphrasing is used smoothly and accurately.	Paraphrasing is used accurately, with a bumpy spot or two.	Paraphrasing is used with accuracy, but doesn't sound completely smooth.	There are a few places where the paraphrased ideas are not accurate.	Repeated inaccuracies show a limited understanding of the text.	The summary has been copied from the text, OR The summary is so short that there is no opportunity for paraphrasing
Instructor Comments:						
Structure of text	The summary clearly reflects the structure of the text. If ideas are rearranged, they are done so to make the ideas more clear.	The summary reflects the structure of the text.	The summary shows an awareness of the structure of the text, but an idea or two may be out of order.	The summary includes main topics from the text in the order in which they appeared.	The ideas in the summary do not reflect the structure of the text.	The ideas in the summary are simply copied from the text.
Instructor Comments:						
Mechanics	A few minor errors that don't affect meaning	Obvious, but minor errors that don't affect meaning	Some errors in difficult spelling, or sophisticated conventions, but overall meaning is clear.	Significant errors in basic spelling, usage & punctuation	Obvious, distracting errors that may affect meaning	Many obvious, distracting errors Line-by-line editing required
Instructor Comments:						

Article for this assignment

Report on Health Measures Ranks Minnesota Fifth

from the "news" section of Minnesota Health Care News, February 2013, Volume 11, Number 2

Minnesota continues to be one of the top states in United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings, an annual report on health measurements for all 50 states.

Minnesota has traditionally been in the top five of the rankings, and ranked fifth this year after dropping to sixth last year. The report says Minnesota's strengths include low rates of premature death and deaths from cardiovascular disease, low prevalence of sedentary lifestyle and diabetes, and a high rate of high school graduation, which is linked to better health outcomes.

The UHF Foundation report says Minnesota's challenges include a higher incidence of infectious disease, low per capita public health funding, and a high prevalence of binge drinking.

In a press conference on Dec. 11, Reed Tuckson, MD, medical adviser, United Health Foundation, and executive vice president and chief of medical affairs, UnitedHealth Group, stressed that all states faced challenges in the area of health measurements.

"It's a good news story and a bad news story," he said. "The good news – we're living longer, life expectancy has significantly improved. The bad news – while we're living longer, we're living sicker from preventable illnesses."

Rising obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and smoking are examples of unhealthy factors that are contributing to poor health, Tuckson says, and health-care reform efforts by state and federal governments will not be effective without a change in lifestyle. "Government alone cannot do what is needed," Tuckson says, adding that the foundation would partner with states to identify progress being made in states and to promote best practices and prevention.