

College Reading: English for Academic Success

Review by Karen Bergendorf

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COLLEGE READING: ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS SERIES. Series Editors: Patricia Byrd, Joy M. Reid, and Cynthia M. Schuemann, 2006, Houghton Mifflin Company, \$34.76 per volume.

The *College Reading* textbooks are part of Houghton Mifflin's English for Academic Success series, edited by Patricia Byrd, Joy M. Reid, and Cynthia M. Schuemann. They are part of the four-level language proficiency program that covers the three skills areas (reading, writing, and oral communication). Included in each level is a vocabulary textbook. As stated by the series editors, the main purpose of the reading strand is to "focus on the development of reading skills and general background knowledge necessary for college study. These books are dedicated to meeting the academic needs of ESL students by teaching them to handle reading demands and expectations of freshman-level classes" (p. viii). There are several key components that make this series a valuable teaching and learning tool.

Each book in the *College Reading* series is built around topics that are commonly taught in introductory college courses and a set of themes of high student interest. Students not only learn about the language, but also the content of the social sciences, hard sciences, education, business, and the humanities. In turn, each book contains six chapters that present the vocabulary and concepts they will encounter in future courses. The reading selections are taken from authentic academic texts with applicable vocabulary and skill building activities.

Each chapter begins with a list of academic reading and content objectives that students should master while studying that chapter. Teacher and student can focus on the central skills being taught, and an activity at the end of each chapter brings the student back to the checklist to analyze individual mastery.

The chapter organization and exercises are divided into sections marked *Reading Assignment 1, 2*, etc. The common features for each section include pre and post-reading activities. These include: "Getting Ready to Read" (schema-building activities), "Reading for a Purpose," "Demonstrating Comprehension," "Questions for Discussion,"

"Reading Journal," "Learning Vocabulary," "Focusing on (Subject Area)," and "Linking Concepts." The "Assessing Your Learning" feature at the end of each chapter requires students to reflect on their mastery of the chapter objectives and helps them review for the chapter test.

Because of the importance of academic vocabulary, a key feature of all *College Reading* books is that of vocabulary development. Reading selections are analyzed for their Flesch-Kincaid Grade Levels, and for the academic and high-frequency vocabulary items. All words from the Academic Word List are marked with blue dotted lines, and there is a footnoted glossary. There is a wide variety of vocabulary building activities suited for the interests and maturity of college level students. This vocabulary development component alone makes this series a valuable textbook for teachers and students.

In addition to the valuable vocabulary element, the *College Reading* books have an excellent teacher and student web resource. Each book contains a website for students and teachers with additional teaching and learning activities. Included in the instructor sites are manuals, teaching notes, and answer keys. Reproducible handouts and overheads for many chapters as well as assessment tools are available. Student sites provide interesting activities to practice reading, writing, listening, grammar, and vocabulary.

The clear organization and special features of authentic text, vocabulary focus, and supplementary website resources, makes *College Reading* makes an excellent reading textbook for college bound nonnative English-speaking students.

About the Reviewer

Karen Bergendorf has taught EFL/ESL in China and England and also taught as a lecturer in the English as an International Language program at Brigham Young University Hawaii. She has an MA in TESOL from Brigham Young University.