



Alpha Kappa Delta

AKD Workshop on Teaching and Learning Pre-Conference 2014

"Theme?"

Charlotte, North Carolina

Table 1: Textbook, Anthologies, or Journal Articles: Selecting Course Readings, Shirley A. Jackson, Southern Connecticut State University

While it may sound simple enough to select readings for a course, one should take into consideration factors that go far beyond the usual mode of selecting texts with chapters that are aligned to the number of weeks in the semester or quarter.

- 1) Consider what you would like to read if you were a student in the course. For instance, in teaching a course on women of the developing world this semester, I decided to focus on autobiographies. Thus, the first text was of a study while texts two through four are autobiographies.
- 2) One option is to have students read what YOU would like to read but have not yet gotten around to reading. This provides you with opportunities to keep up with current research and to find a variety of readings that you might find especially interesting for further discussion in class.
- 3) A little known fact: if you serve on a book award committee, you are far more likely to have to read texts that you might never have found otherwise. I strongly recommend serving on book award committees because they can alleviate the tedium of finding texts on certain topics. In some cases, the committee's array of books are so varied that you end up reading books that provide you with new course ideas or research areas.
- 4) Journal articles are often an underutilized source of reading materials. There are three main problems associated with not having students read journal articles. The first is that they are not used to reading them and thus, may find it difficult to utilize them effectively when they writing research papers. Second, students often fail to see the importance or implementation of certain style formats (i.e., ASA, Chicago Manual of Style), in action if they are not reading journal articles. Finally, students may stay away from doing actual research requiring journal articles simply because they do not know how to do a search on their topic; particularly when asked to use library databases. We often assume that students have this knowledge but they may not be using your campus library but GoogleDocs or simply surfing the internet for articles that may not be the best choice.
- 5) Incorporating a variety of reading materials that encompass things that you find compelling and that your students will likely find compelling is key. Thus, it is not helpful if you are assigning works that are not being read by your students because they are above or perhaps even below their course level.