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Lesson Plan: Reading and Synthesizing Journal Articles

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Before class:

Students watch video about the parts of a research study and take notes on the function or purpose of each section.

Stern, N. (Producer). (2008). *How to read and understand a research study* [DVD]. United States: Triple Threat TV.

UNCLibraries [User name]. (2016, January 28). *Understanding research articles* [Streaming video]. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/-SA J-BnuwI>

1. Research Study Form Function (5 minutes)

- a. Check your answers (project key)

2. How to Read a Journal Article (25 min)

[slide 1] Also called scholarly articles. What process do scholarly journal article go through that is different than other types of articles?

[slide 2-3] Review Peer Review Process

[slide 4] Scholarly journal articles are written by scholars for other scholars. In college, you are working to become scholars but when you are starting out, these articles can be difficult to read. I'm going to give you some strategies that will help you get started readings and making sense of scholarly journal articles.

[slide 5] Start with the abstract. Read it several times if necessary until you have a general idea of what the article is about.

[slide 6] Next read the introduction. In the introduction you what to figure out what the author's research question or hypothesis is. This is usually the last paragraph of the introduction.

[slide 7] Skip the methods and results sections and read the discussion. The discussion summarizes the key findings in more everyday language. From the discussion, figure out what is the answer to the research question.

[slide 8] Go back to the methods. In this section figure out who were the participants and what they were asked to do.

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[slide 9] Finally, skim the results. This is the most challenging section to understand because it will give you lots of detailed statistics—often in charts and graphs—don't worry if you don't fully understand this section. Focus on the words.

[slide 10] Now it is your turn to try to apply these strategies. I'm going to hand out 2 scholarly journal articles that address the problem of classroom incivility.

Activity: Split the class into 2 groups. Each group is going to get a scholarly journal article to read. Work individually to read your journal article using the strategies we just discussed and complete this table. The table will help you pull out the most important information from the article.

3. Synthesizing sources (20 min)

From this table, you would have a good start at summarizing your source. But I want you to practice synthesizing sources, combining ideas from different source to support an argument. Here's an example of a summary and a synthesis. Take a moment to read them on your own.

Notice that summary tells us what one article is about (like the abstract) while the synthesis combines multiple sources to support the argument that "there needs to be a dialogue between professors and students to define properly classroom incivility." (like the literature review or end of the discussion)

Activity: Pair up students who read different articles. Use the tables to look for similarities/differences between the articles. Together write a short paragraph synthesizing sources.

May need to finish synthesis paragraph for homework

