Reading Expectations and Text Readiness in 100-Level Courses

By Dana Greci

ABSTRACT: An audit was completed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) based on the curriculum audit model developed by Armstrong, Stahl, and Kantner (2015). The audit examined text readiness and text expectations in UAF developmental reading courses and 100-level general-education and career-technical education courses, how well these text expectations align, and what the culture of reading looks like at UAF. Course observations, faculty interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys were collected. Although preparedness for reading tasks, comprehension, and critical thinking were seen as important by both faculty and students, motivation and self confidence arose as even more compelling contributors to students' reading success. The outcomes of the current study indicate that many UAF students would benefit from increased reading support. The intention of the curriculum audit model is to assist solution-oriented investigations that can help faculty see how college reading programming needs to be adjusted (Armstrong, Stahl, & Kantner, 2015). In this regard, the model is a great success.

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In the past, the task of preparing students for the reading expectations they face in college has met only moderate success (Armstrong et al., 2015). Thus, literacy professionals and postsecondary educators in the field of developmental education have been working hard to strengthen student preparation for success in college reading. It is important that developmental reading curriculum aligns with curriculum in 100-level courses so that students coming out of developmental courses are ready to meet general education and career-technical education reading expectations. A curriculum audit model developed by Armstrong, Stahl, and Kantner (2015) guides developmental education faculty to determine how well developmental reading programs align with college-level coursework at their institutions. This type of audit allows for a multifaceted approach, a thick description of the literacy demands students actually encounter, and a portrayal of the institutional culture of reading informed by course curriculum at a specific university.

The current study asked the following questions posed by the audit developed by Armstrong et al. (2015):

1. What constitutes college-level text-readiness at [University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)]?
2. What are the text expectations, including text types, tasks, and goals in developmental reading courses, in general education courses, and in career-technical education courses?
3. How do these text expectations align?
4. What is the culture of reading at [UAF]? (p. 3)

Literature Review

Armstrong et al. (2015) cited several studies of the perspectives of professors and students that preceded their development of the curriculum audit model. Orlando, Caverly, Swetnam, and Flippo (1989) used questionnaires and follow-up interviews to study the amount and purpose of required reading and its relationship to course examinations in two freshman courses (in psychology and history). They found that the amount of required reading in the two courses was "substantial" (p. 46), and students were confused about the purposes of reading. They suggested that, with further assessment, professors could develop examinations that more closely reflected their purposes for having students read and communication strategies that more clearly direct students in their reading. In a related study Burrell, Tao, Simpson, and Mendez-Berrueta (1997) developed the Academic Literacy Questionnaire and gave it to 440 professors. Researchers found that professors expected students to be able to think critically and be self-motivated, independent learners who know how to monitor their own comprehension. In a similar study, Chase, Gibson, and Carson (1994) examined reading demands across four freshman courses, also using surveys, interviews, and course visits. They too looked at the amount and purpose of reading and its relationship to examinations. Faculty identified the importance of retrieving and synthesizing information from multiple sources and making critical judgments about that information. Students, on the other hand, found this difficult and felt that they had not had opportunities to do it before.

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Additionally, students had difficulty keeping up with reading assignments and the volume of material to be learned.

Armstrong et al. (2015) used their audit model to examine reading expectations at Southside Community College (SCC), a metropolitan college in the Midwest. They found that 100-level faculty expect students to be able to read independently and have an understanding of disciplinary literacy practices. Mostly workbook practice exercises and novels were used at the developmental level whereas more expository texts were used at the 100-level. The goal for text usage at the developmental level was providing practice with identifying main ideas, developing vocabulary, and reviewing strategy for use of texts; at the 100-level text was used a support or supplement. There was wide variation in the extent to which instruction was text-based or text-supported. According to Armstrong et al. (2015), no consistent definition of college reading readiness existed.

Methods

During the 2017-18 academic year, a portion of the curriculum audit model was used to investigate the reading demands in multiple 100-level courses at UAF. Such courses serve as a gateway for students to their college education beyond developmental courses. The purpose of the curriculum audit was to provide information to high school faculty and college faculty and administrators in and beyond Alaska, for curricular development.

Setting and Participant Demographics

The study was conducted at UAF, a public university, with two urban campuses, five rural campuses, and an eLearning program. At the time of this study, 7,656 undergraduates were enrolled. First-year students had an average GPA of 3.3. The first-year student population was 57% Caucasian and 27% Alaska Native/American Indian. About 40% of first-year students lived on campus. The six most popular majors of incoming first-year students were general studies, biological sciences, pre-nursing, mechanical engineering, business administration, and computer science.

Procedure

The curriculum audit model used for this study centered on classroom observations, surveys, and focus groups, looking at instructors' and students' expectations, perceptions, habits and practices. The design enables researchers to gather information both from a large number of faculty and students and in-depth information from smaller groups (Armstrong et al., 2015, p. 4) The goal of this method is not to determine how widespread any specific reading expectations are, but rather to identify and describe institutional expectations and behaviors.

The goal of the sampling was to examine a wide variety of reading expectations. Because my sample had high variance, I used systematic sampling (with some random aspects) designed to create a socially significant sample rather than a representative sample (Gobo, 2004). I aimed to include each category or type of reading expectation in the sample. My aim was social representativeness (Gobo, 2004, p. 422): to show what types of activities exist and to help high school and college educators and administrators understand some of their essential aspects.

Since reading expectations might differ according to the degree being sought, I began by looking at 100-level courses from three categories: (a) Occupational Endorsements, Certificates, and Associates Degrees; (b) Baccalaureate Degrees; and (c) General Education requirements. It turned out there was considerable overlap among these categories (i.e., many courses served double functions).

According to the University of Alaska Fairbanks Office of Planning, Analysis and Institutional Research (2015), 48% (n = 561) of the degrees conferred in 2015 were Bachelors degrees, and 52% (n = 615) were Occupational Endorsements, Certificates, or Associates degrees. To mimic this variance, I sampled similar percentages of courses in these two categories. I decided to sample randomly within each category, putting out my request to observe classes to 85 faculty members who taught 100-level classes and visiting the classes of all those who responded. But as the sampling progressed, I also ensured ratios of Career-Technical to General Education classes were represented.

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It quickly became clear that face-to-face, distance, and hybrid classes needed to be included, and also classes offered from a wide variety of campuses. So for some classes I interviewed or observed multiple sections in order to include hybrid, distance, rural, Community and Technical College (CTC), and Fairbanks offerings in the sample. In sum, 34 class observations or faculty interviews, 6 hours of focus groups involving 15 participants, and 89 surveys were collected from faculty and students.

Classroom observations. The classroom observation piece of Armstrong et al.'s (2015) curriculum audit model was developed to help educators look at the literacy environment in the classroom and faculty's expectations of their students concerning homework and in-class text usage. In this study, the following questions were drawn from their model for classroom observations:

1. Are course texts being referenced?
2. Is the content of course texts being explained?
3. Is the text incorporated during typical course sessions?
4. Is a copy of the text visible, displayed for students and directly referenced during class?
5. Is text organization or structure mentioned, explained, or supported by a strategy for navigating?
6. Are class discussions and homework text based or text driven?
7. Are multiple texts or multimodal texts incorporated into the course readings?
8. Who initiated these text-based activities (instructor or students)? How frequently do they occur?
9. What other observations can be made of text-based activities beyond those listed?

Thirty-four classes were observed: 20 in Fairbanks, 8 at CTC, and 6 rural or distance courses. Of the classes observed, 15 were general education courses; 11 were baccalaureate degree program requirements; and 10 were endorsement, certificate, or associate program requirements. There was overlap among the degree categories because in many cases general education courses also serve as program requirements. Five of the courses observed were developmental education courses with a curricular focus on reading. The general education courses included three communication, one arts, one humanities, five social science, two mathematics, and three natural sciences courses. For some of these courses, more than one section was visited (see Appendix). Where it was not possible to observe courses directly (as in distance and rural courses), interviews addressing the same questions were completed with the faculty who taught the courses.

Focus groups. Focus groups allow the researcher to ask for additional information in the later part of the data collection process, either to fill in missing information or to saturate the categories arising during the initial analysis. Participants may help the researcher to resolve ambiguities or provide additional context for understanding the findings (Morse, 2007). Focus groups are not used to confirm earlier findings but are still part of the data collection process.

Several focus groups were conducted: one on lower campus, one on West Ridge, one at the CTC, and a few via one-on-one interviews. Participation

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by audio conference was available for all groups. The same guiding discussion questions, drawn from Armstrong et al.'s (2015) model, were used for all focus group data collection: 1. What reading abilities do you think your students need upon entering your 100-level courses? 2. What are your perceptions of students' reading skills, habits, practices and attitudes? 3. What are their strengths and weaknesses related to academic literacy?

Five hours of faculty focus groups were completed. Eleven 100-level and developmental education faculty participated. Faculty from the Fairbanks, CTC, Kuskokwim, and Interior Aleutians campuses were present, as were faculty of face-to-face, distance, and hybrid courses. Faculty were present from Business Administration, Biology, Developmental English, Developmental Math, Developmental Studies, Early Childhood Education, Justice, Mathematics, Petroleum Engineering, and Writing. A lively 1-hour student focus group was also completed. All focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The following questions, based on Armstrong et al.'s (2015) audit design were posed in student focus groups:

1. Do you have a lot required reading? Would you describe it as too little, just right, or too much?
2. How hard or easy is the reading in general? How hard or easy are the homework, quizzes, etc. you are asked to do in response to the reading?
3. How prepared did you feel (based on high school or developmental courses) for your college faculty' expectations of you with respect to reading?
4. What are your biggest challenges with college reading?
5. What strengths help you most to do well with college reading?

Surveys. Nine faculty surveys and 80 student surveys were collected. Based on the Armstrong et al.'s (2015) faculty survey format, the faculty survey asked the following questions: 1. What reading abilities do you expect your students to have upon entering your 100-level courses? 2. What are your perceptions of students' reading skills, habits, practices and attitudes about reading? 3. What are their strengths and weaknesses related to academic literacy?

Student surveys were collected from students who chose to participate in the researcher's survey collection in the Moore-Bartlett-Skarland building, where three big dorms connect at a single lobby. Based on Armstrong et al.'s (2015) student survey design (p. 6), the survey asked students to pick a target course and answer the following questions:

1. How much reading is required in this course? How frequent are reading assignments? How long are they? What types of readings are assigned?
2. How readable are those texts? Is the vocabulary difficult? Are the concepts hard to understand? Do you have to remember a lot of information very quickly?
3. Does the instructor teach you about the readings' organization and structure? Does the instructor teach specific strategies to help you navigate them?
4. What types of tasks do you have to do in response to your required course readings (both homework and in-course work)?
5. How does actual college reading compare with your initial expectations about what college reading would be like?

Understanding the connections between reading and writing can motivate students to read to understand a topic.

6. How effective were your high school and/or developmental education courses in preparing you for the reading expectations in your college courses?

Data Analysis

The analytic phase of my research, which took place from November 2017 through February 2018, was a time to step back from active engagement with the participants to find the common themes they were using to construct meaning. Richard A. Krueger's (2002) system for analyzing focus-group results was used to map out all of the data, not just focus-group results.

First, all the data were labeled for collection method (classroom observation, interview, focus group, or survey); educational level (100-level or developmental education level); type of offering (Fairbanks/CTC face-to-face, distance, hybrid, or rural face-to-face); discipline (communication, arts/humanities, social science, mathematics, or science/engineering); and type of degree requirement (general education, baccalaureate major, or endorsement/certificate/associate major).

The analytical approach was based on Glaser and Strauss' (1967) constant comparative method of developing grounded theory, an approach still widely in use for approaching qualitative analysis (Kelle, 2007). Their method allows for systematic emergence of classificatory themes from the data of social research:

> This constant comparison of the incidents ... starts to generate theoretical properties of the category. The analyst starts thinking in terms of the full range of types or continua of the category, its dimensions, the conditions under which it is pronounced or minimized, its major consequences, its relation to other categories, and its other properties. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 106)

Coding is the first step toward rigorous interpretation of the data. "Coding is not just labeling, it is linking: 'It leads you from the data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea'" (Richards & Morse as cited in Saldana, 2009, p. 8). Multiple coding cycles are often completed in the process of generating categories, subcategories, and themes. First, a "closed coding" was completed, in which the data was organized according to the 23 questions asked of faculty and/or students while data was collected. This coding formed the basis of the results section of this paper. Second, an "open coding" was completed, in which findings were organized according to the themes that emerged from the data. These categories and their properties were revised as new ones presented themselves, with an eye toward parsimony and scope. The themes emerging from the open coding formed the basis for discussion of the wider implications of the study. Points of view that were corroborated by multiple participants were emphasized, as were individual points of view that had major consequences. The researcher served as a voice of the participants and aimed for description rather than interpretation.

The words "many" and "some" used in this report communicate patterns of social representativeness, not statistical frequencies. Social representativeness refers to the types of activities that exist and their essential aspects (Gobo, 2004). Weight is given to topics based on extensiveness (how many people said something), specificity (responses that are specific and based on experiences), and intensity or depth of feeling (communicated by the voice tone, speed, and emphasis on certain words; Krueger, 2002; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Modifiers such as "some," "many," "most," and "all" can be used to refer to patterns of social representativeness. In the following section, the word "many" is used when large numbers of faculty or students mentioned a topic or when faculty used the word "many" in the focus groups. The word "some" is used when several faculty or students mentioned a topic, or when faculty used the word "some" in the focus groups. Topics are weighted when faculty or students spoke with intensity about them.

Results

UAF students are expected to have a number of college, entry-level reading skills that will enable them to be successful in their courses. The faculty who participated in this study made it clear that many UAF students are meeting the reading expectations in 100-level courses at UAF. Faculty encounter students who read a lot and read well and also others who struggle. The current study's findings, reported here, came out of the closed-coding analysis.

Text Readiness

Faculty perceptions.. Students at the 100 level are required to be familiar with and comprehend a huge variety of types of text: textbooks, websites, scholarly journals, legal documents, complex equations, speeches, musical pieces, dance, and art, to name just a few. In addition to expository prose, students need to know how to read photographs, tables, charts, and timelines.

Many students are not completing the readings before course. Others don't read instructions. Faculty said that large numbers of students are unable to read at their grade level. Large numbers come to courses unprepared to understand the principles and concepts. (This is especially true of mathematical preparation in science and engineering courses.) The vocabulary comprehension expected in national curriculum is over the students' heads. They do not have the background knowledge they need to help them understand what they are reading.

Some students are still not monitoring their comprehension. They don't equate reading with comprehension. Many students have difficulty with abstract thinking; they have a hard time focusing on questions that are argumentative or interpretive instead of factual or hypothetical. All of the faculty surveyed mentioned the need for students to understand the information in the readings in a broader context, with many saying it is the number one ability they want their students to have. Sometimes this means looking up the definition of a word and understanding it in the context of a paragraph; other times it means linking the reading to other topics or other course reading and situating that reading within a larger context. The ability to do abstract imaging is also deemed important by faculty, as is the ability to synthesize complex data and understand their implications.

Students are not annotating, taking notes, and summarizing the readings as much as they should. Accurate summarizing is still a challenge for many students. "They'll read the words, but they don't do all those other steps that we consider to be active reading." (This may include previewing, reading, rereading, reviewing, annotating, note taking, and summarizing.)

Faculty say that students "have got to learn to annotate and take notes from what they're reading." Many faculty members spoke of students' need to summarize the readings, too. But accurate summarizing is still a challenge for many students in 100-level courses. Faculty who teach 100-level courses said that although they would like students to have these skills already—for comprehension, retention, and critical thinking—they still spend time working with students on these skills and reestablishing those expectations, sometimes making graded assignments out of them. Faculty said that many students don't know how to skim. They tell students to skim some readings (for example to familiarize themselves with a text that is to be used as a resource tool), and the students respond that they do not know how to skim.

Faculty report that many students lack confidence in their reading abilities. Many students see college reading as something separate from them, a discourse they are not part of. Some identify themselves as "nonreaders." Some students have trouble paying attention to one thing for very long.

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Faculty spoke at length about how cell phones and computers are a source of persistent distractions both during class and while students are attempting to read and study. Even phone vibrations that students do not answer are a distraction. Halfway through class, at least four students in every course I observed were looking at their phones while the instructor was talking. One faculty member said, "Students are reading more with the Internet and their phones, but they are not doing the kind of thing we would call reading." Another described what happens cognitively when students get distracted from a task: "It's easy to forget the mental progress you just made. People say you're task switching from one thing to another, and that process where you left off is where you begin. But you have to *re-get* to that step you took from where you were before you took it and *then* go on again. So comprehension takes much longer when you have all these distractions."

Student perceptions. In general, students feel overloaded with respect to the amount of reading they are assigned. Many students characterized the reading load as "heavy," or "extensive." Readings were characterized as approximately 1 to 3 textbook chapters per week, each one 10 to 20 pages in length. The complete range reported was 7 to 30 pages per chapter.

Many students feel challenged by the pace they have to sustain as they attempt to read and retain difficult texts in addition to the demands of their jobs and other courses. Many say college reading is harder than they expected it to be. This difficulty relates to the (a) amount of reading, (b) pace at which they have to complete the reading, (c) difficulty with comprehension, and (d) faculty expectations about how much material students need to retain.

Many students feel unprepared or somewhat prepared (but not prepared) for college reading. When answering the question of whether they feel prepared, most students draw attention to the amount of reading and the length and complexity of the readings as areas where they had or had not received enough attention in high school, and the teaching of "strategies for analyzing and dissecting large reading passages" are very important preparation. Whether or not they feel prepared, most students said there was an increase in reading expectations upon entering college. The expectation that they will be able to "read to understand" and retain more information (including more details) from readings has also increased.

Students report that remembering to do the reading before class and retaining the information they read are big challenges. Many students find it demanding to have to read repeatedly to understand the text.

Students report losing motivation when assigned readings they do not enjoy and readings for which they do not have enough background knowledge. According to UAF faculty, a lot of factors potentially contribute to students' not trying or giving up. They lose motivation when they hit difficult material, they have to read things they don't enjoy reading, and they have to sustain a pace beyond their ability even when they do not have enough prior knowledge or context for the readings. They get bored, they want easier material, and they lack confidence in their reading skills. Many students see college reading as something separate from them, a discourse that they are not part of. Some students identify themselves as "nonreaders," which creates self-doubt about their own reading abilities. Others identify themselves as readers who specifically don't like academic reading. Many students have trouble paying attention to one thing for very long. Students find it very difficult to have to read things they have no desire to read; they don't like having to do it.

As one faculty member formulated the issue, "they need self-confidence to feel they can tackle a piece of writing and make sense of it. They need the wherewithal to look up vocabulary words, read something and if they don't understand it get the context as they go along."

Students say that when they find the concepts in the readings to be difficult, the difficulty is due to

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not knowing what to focus on in the information provided, not having the necessary contextual background, having difficulty paying attention, struggling with a reading disability, or learning English as a second language. Students say that they understand the concepts well so long as they reread 2 or 3 times, review the information, do practice problems, take notes on the reading, and/or have an interest in the subject.

Text Expectations in General and Career Technical Courses

Faculty expect students in 100-level courses to read at grade level and understand the principles and concepts presented in the texts. They want them to develop the habit of reading for meaningful periods of time and approach reading with determination and anticipation. They want students to keep going when they hit difficult material and feel confused, to have confidence in their reading skills. Students need to be able to keep up with the amount and pace of the readings, their length and complexity, and their faculty expectations about how much material they need to retain.

Students need to be able to pay attention to what they are reading and to be able to reread (2-3 readings of a paragraph or chapter). Again and again, faculty spoke of rereading as the most important skill a student needs. Faculty say that three readings of a paragraph, two to three readings of a chapter, or even "five different exposures to the material" are necessary to understand and retain the information in the readings.

Students need to annotate, take notes from, and summarize the readings. They need to be able to monitor their own comprehension at the same time. They need to come to classes prepared, develop critical questions, think abstractly, and contextualize readings. They need to see college reading as a relevant and meaningful discourse and be open-minded about new information.

Text Expectations in Developmental Courses

In WRTG 080, the first level at which students can enter the developmental reading and writing sequence at UAF, students need to have basic literacy skills, such as sounding out words, and making meaning out of sentences and passages. They need to know how to use a dictionary or be willing to learn how to use one. Fundamentally, they just need to be willing to learn and willing to work hard to learn. Finding ways to make reading relevant to students' lives, to help them see that reading is a tool to help them get to their larger goals, is the main purpose of the basic literacy course, along with helping students realize that there is no way around the time consuming, hard-work nature of reading. Once students hear a professor telling them that rereading and looking up vocabulary words is a sign of careful reading rather than a sign of failure, students "start to acknowledge that when they read text again, they actually do understand it better the second time through."

In WRTG 090, the second level of developmental reading courses offered, faculty help students develop their fluency as readers. Faculty want students to be able to read 5-10 pages of 100-level reading with in-course support and to meet the challenge of figuring out a few unfamiliar words by looking at context. This course, like WRTG 080, focuses on reading comprehension. Students learn strategies for navigating texts, use active reading techniques (preview, read, reread and review), and build academic vocabulary. Faculty work with students to identify the author's purpose, audience, and point of view; the thesis, main ideas and supporting details; and the transitions and patterns of organization. They get direct instruction in annotation, note taking, and summarizing. They learn how to draw accurate inferences and ask critical questions of the readings. Students are expected to learn how to make connections between texts and every day life; discuss important words, phrases and passages; draw accurate inferences; and ask critical questions about texts.

Faculty spoke of rereading as the most important skill a student needs.

In WRTG 110, the 100-level developmental course that directly precedes WRTG 111x (the English course required for graduation), faculty expect students to be able to understand longer, more challenging academic vocabulary and to complete the reading assignments before coming to class. Technical readings are introduced, as are readings as long as 15 to 20 pages. Faculty use readings they would use in 111x, but with more support structures, looking beyond literal meaning more consistently to interpretive and applied meanings. Students have to read technical articles, understand them, and synthesize them with their own ideas. They read across disciplines.

Alignment of Developmental and 100-Level Courses

One hundred-level faculty do less monitoring of students' progress and participation than developmental faculty do. Additionally, though 100-level and developmental courses are similar in their attention to explaining content, developmental faculty pay more attention to helping students locate important details and summarize main ideas. Less than half of 100-level courses require students to have their textbooks open during class, whereas all developmental courses do. Faculty of 100-level courses are more likely to use the text as support for classroom activities than developmental faculty, who use it for text-based instruction. Only half of the faculty who teach 100-level courses support students by teaching strategies for navigating text whereas all developmental reading and writing faculty do. Students in 100-level courses are required to be familiar with and comprehend a wider variety of types of text than are students at the developmental level, who may be less fluent in some of the required text types.

The Culture of Reading

Reading plays a substantial role in 100-level courses at UAF, yet faculty who teach 100-level courses report that they have limited time to assist students with development of their reading skills due to the large amount of content that needs to be covered. Many faculty members, especially those in the sciences and engineering, cannot assess their students' reading skills, for instance when conceptual assessment is dependent on writing and test-taking skills.

Faculty said it was impossible to generalize about what keeps students from being successful because the student population is so varied. Reading skills, habits, attitudes, and practices vary from student to student in "a really wide range," and faculty teach "to several distinct populations."

During the open coding analysis, six major themes emerged. Some themes corresponded with the questions asked in the class observations, focus groups, and surveys; others arose because faculty or students spoke of them with regularity and passion.

The reading load. Students named four areas where they feel overloaded and underprepared: (a) the amount of reading they are assigned, (b) the pace they have to sustain, (c) the length and complexity of the readings, and (d) teachers' expectations about how much material they need to retain.

Preparation. Many students reported feeling "unprepared" or "somewhat prepared" for college reading. They said there was an increase in reading expectations from high school. Teachers said that large numbers of students are unable to read at their grade level and come to classes unprepared to understand the principles and concepts. (Often mathematics holds them back.) This undermines their progress in their degree programs.

Comprehension. Faculty reported that some students are still not monitoring whether they understand what they are reading. Students stated that remembering what they read is a big problem. Teachers noted that students need to annotate, take notes from, and summarize the readings. However, students aren't doing this as much as they should, and accurate summarizing is still a challenge for many students in 100-level classes.

Critical thinking. All of the teachers mentioned the ability to understand the information in the readings in a broader context, with many saying it is the number one thing they want their students to be able to do. This includes the ability to develop their own critical questions. Many students have difficulty with abstract thinking.

The habit of reading. Although preparedness for reading tasks and critical thinking were seen as important by both teachers and students, reading persistence was viewed as an even more compelling contributor to students' reading success. Teachers want students to develop the habit of reading for meaningful periods of time. They want students to approach reading with determination and anticipation. Again and again, teachers supported rereading (2 to 3 readings of a chapter) as the most important skill a student needs. In contrast, many students find it challenging to remember to do the reading and get it done before class. They see "having to reread again and again" to understand the reading as an obstacle.

Motivation. Faculty noted that students are reluctant to even start reading texts they think will be difficult, and they lose motivation to keep going when they hit difficult material. Students said they lose motivation due to the requirement of having to read things they don't enjoy reading, the pace they have to sustain, and the lack of context/prior knowledge about what they are reading. Students further stated that they get bored, want easier material (such as videos), and "freak out" when they hit difficult material and don't know what to do. Faculty also commented on other aspects of student motivation. Many students lack confidence in their reading skills. Others have trouble paying attention to one thing for very long. Cell phones and email are sources of major distractions. Many students see college reading as something separate from them, a discourse that they are not part of. Some students identify themselves as "nonreaders"; others identify themselves as readers who don't like academic reading. Factors that increase motivation mentioned were open-mindedness about new ideas, willingness to keep going even when they feel confused, curiosity, self-confidence in their reading abilities, and readings that are relevant to their lives.

Discussion

Many of the findings of this study are similar to those of curriculum audits described in the literature review. Comparisons to previous curriculum audits as well as unique findings to this study are discussed following.

Comparisons to Prior Curriculum Audits

One hundred level students in this study and others describe the amount of required reading to be substantial, and they are at least sometimes confused about the purposes of reading and its relationship to exams (Orlando et al., 1989). Faculty in this study and others expect students to be self-motivated, independent learners (Armstrong et al., 2015; Burrell et al., 1997) who are able to engage in critical thinking (Burrell et al., 1997; Chase et al., 1994). Faculty in this study and others expect students to be able to retrieve and synthesize information from multiple sources (Chase et al., 1994). Students find it difficult to synthesize information and make critical judgments and have difficulty keeping up with reading assignments and the volume of material to be learned (Chase et al., 1994).

The Armstrong et al. (2015) study was the first to use a curriculum audit model to examine the alignment between developmental education coursework and general education and career-technical coursework. Their finding that developmental faculty emphasize practice with main ideas, building vocabulary, and learning reading strategies was duplicated in the current study. However, their finding that developmental faculty primarily use workbook practice texts and novels whereas 100-level faculty use expository texts was not duplicated. Developmental faculty at UAF have been using college-level texts with a lot of scaffolding for many years.

Cell phones as distractions to students' reading process were spoken of at length at UAF.

The current study duplicated Armstrong et al.'s (2015) finding of a difference in the extent to which instruction is text-based (in developmental courses) versus text-supported (in 100-level courses). One of the questions in the audit model used at UAF asked whether classroom instruction is text-based or text-supported. Much evidence was found that 100-level faculty are much quicker to use text-driven activities, and students with the ability to read and comprehend the assigned texts before coming to class. Students who read and comprehend the assigned texts before coming to class do better under these circumstances. Armstrong et al. (2015) found that no consistent definition of college reading readiness existed at SCC. In contrast, though no formal definition has been created at UAF, much agreement, and almost no disagreement, was found among UAF faculty concerning the overall text expectations and readiness of their students. However, this was not a direct question asked in the audit, so it remains unknown what would have been found if this question was asked.

Another difference between the current study and audits reported in the literature was that in the Chase et al. (1994) study students reported having no opportunities before college to retrieve and synthesize information from multiple sources and make critical judgments about that information. Some UAF students, on the other hand, reported that "reading a lot in high school" and the teaching of "strategies for analyzing and dissecting large reading passages" in high school had been effective preparation. Many students said that developmental courses or Upward Bound (a program linking their high school and college experiences) had made "all the difference" in their preparedness; others said that taking college-level courses during high school had made the difference.

What was most different in the UAF study from the other curriculum audits was the degree to which motivation and self-confidence were discussed. Like faculty in the other studies, UAF faculty want students to develop the habit of reading for meaningful periods of time. They want students to approach reading with anticipation and determination. However, they spoke often and in no uncertain terms about why students are reluctant to begin reading texts they think will be difficult and how they lose motivation to keep going when they hit difficult material. They find that many students are lacking the self-confidence in their reading skills that is necessary in order to read independently. Over and over again, faculty emphasized the primary importance of rereading. However, many students see "having to reread again and again" to be an obstacle. Many students are reluctant to even start reading texts they presume will be difficult. Many students find it challenging to remember to complete the reading before class. Another difference between this and the prior audits is that cell phones as distractions to students' reading process were spoken of at length at UAF. UAF faculty are concerned about the negative impact cell phones have on students' reading.

Limitations

Due to limitations on time and funding, this audit did not include a textbook evaluation. In one year of sabbatical funding, one researcher could not completely replicate Armstrong et al.'s audit process. This limitation did not prevent the researcher from finding out student and faculty perceptions of reading expectations and skills; it just limited the scope of the study.

Implications for Practice and Future Research

College Reading

Faculty and researchers have been studying college reading for over a century. Their findings inform UAF faculty in understanding the issues at hand and choosing solutions.

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Preparedness. For example, in a survey of almost 700 students at Washington State University, "one of every two reported that their college work was more challenging than expected. Although 70% reported that they felt well-prepared for college by their high schools, finer questioning revealed that they recognized deficits" (Verrell & McCabe, 2015). Preparedness for college reading is an issue around the country.

According to Kerr and Frese (2017), only 20–30% of undergraduate students complete required readings. In addition to the unpreparedness and lack of motivation found in the current study, studies have found time constraints and an underestimation of reading importance to affect preparedness. Students avoid assignments because they cannot read well enough to understand the texts many faculty assign, and they think they can succeed merely by attending lectures and completing minimal reading.

Studies suggest that students underestimate the centrality of reading to the course as a whole, believing that reading is desirable but not necessary (Kerr & Frese, 2017). It is important to help students understand the value of reading (Flink, 2017).

Strategic and self-regulated learning and metacognition. Students may not have developed metacognitive knowledge about the strategies they need for reading and recalling information (Kerr & Frese, 2017). It is important to teach them to set reasonable expectations about the amount of effort needed to complete an academic task (Wolters, 1998). Self-regulated learners, on the other hand, monitor and control their progress and understand their study skills, habits, attitudes, and motivations (Verrell & McCabe, 2015). Self-regulated learners have cognitive and metacognitive strategies that they can use to accomplish academic tasks (Wolters, 1998). Effective teaching methods help students promote self-monitoring by setting goals (Winstead, 2004). Instruction that demonstrates reading strategies should be provided (Flink, 2017). Strategic and self-regulated learners take more responsibility for their own learning as they progress in college (Acee, 2009).

Some studies have found positive relationships between technology usage and self-directed learning. According to Lee, Kim, McDonough, Mendoza, and Kim (2017), the more students engage on their phone, the more likely they are to seek out information to better their understanding of the material. However, Lee et al. also find that excessive cell phone use during class leads students to disengage. Nonacademic cell phone uses have often been shown to be detrimental to the learning process (Lee et al.). Cell phones can serve as distractions and reduce attention during the lecture, thus negatively impacting learning if students are permitted to use them.

Motivation and self-confidence. A great amount of research in the field of college reading focuses on motivation, the issue most talked about in the current study. Students cite lack of motivation as a major reason they choose not to read for their courses (Kerr & Frese, 2017). Therefore, improving motivation and self-confidence is essential (Flink, 2017). Tools such as the SuccessNavigator and the Motivational Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Developments, 2016) are being used to measure motivation in students setting out in college.

According to Winstead (2004), motivation involves three basic principles: "(1) effective teaching methods (goal-oriented, mastery-based and academically focused), (2) teaching activities that promote social interaction, and (3) curricular materials that are within the learner's zone of proximal development and related to their world/prior knowledge" (p. 46). More time devoted to reading can aid in improving attitudes towards reading (Flink, 2017). Just in Time Teaching in which, shortly before class, students pose online questions about the reading, has also been successful (Kerr & Frese, 2017).

The more students engage on their phone, the more likely they are to seek out information to better their understanding of the material.

Albert Bandura defined self-efficacy as a person's belief in his or her own ability to be successful in specific situations. Self-efficacy came up repeatedly in the current study. The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education asserts that coursework should be adapted to increase self-esteem in students who have trouble believing in themselves (Chew, 2005). Cognitivists talk about how lowering the level of anxiety that students experience can affect their memory (Winstead, 2004). Faculty can develop students' confidence by coaching them (Whitworth, 1987), keeping expectations high (Beers, 2003), using pedagogy based on attribution theory (Louisville Writing Project, n.d.), teaching learned optimism (Grannick, 2009), recognizing the emotional difficulties of students with learning disabilities (Ldpride, n.d.), and developing students' resiliency (Louisville Writing Project, n.d.). Integrating basic library skills into developmental education and academic success courses has been shown to build student confidence (Roselle, 2008). Recommendations too numerous to elaborate here are available in *What Works* (Boylan, 2002), which includes instructional practices; program components; and organizational, administrative, and institutional practices, many of which are referenced in other sections of this paper.

Group learning. Lev Vygotsky demonstrated that social interaction plays a crucial role in development of cognition. Tinto demonstrated that student involvement leads to positive learning outcomes. Many studies of group learning have sprung from their work. For example, students are more likely to prepare for class when they feel a sense of connection with their peers and instructors (Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2010). They persist when they have positive interactions with faculty and other campus resources (Barbatis 2010). Further, student membership in one or more college communities is a critical factor in student development (Astin as cited in Boylan, 2002), and participation in learning communities has improved students' attitudes toward learning (Boylan, 2002) and their grades (Tinto & Boylan as cited in Boylan, 2002).

UAF faculty brought up social interaction only peripherally, but the use of learning communities has improved students' attitudes toward learning and their grades (Boylan, 2002). Interaction among peers reinforces memory acquisition (Winstead, 2004). However, although out-of-class involvement is essential, the current culture of higher education may discourage student involvement (Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2010). Institutions, including UAF, are working to make more aggressive efforts to involve students in communities.

In a study by Wilfred (2017), collaborative learning helped comprehension and stimulated critical thinking. Communities of inquiry, too, have shown success (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). Paired courses and other corequisite models provide other options for student interaction (Boylan, 2002). Teaching basic skills in a disciplinary context has been shown to increase the transfer of those skills in subsequent content areas (Zimmerer, Skidmore, Cornell, Sindel-Arrington, & Beilman, 2018). Cohorts support students to complete program requirements as well.

Mutiple methods. Because colleges are so often places of great diversity, a wide variety of instructional methods must be used (Barbatis, 2010; Boylan, 2002; Flink, 2017). Self-paced instruction, mastery learning, and supplemental instruction have been quite successful (Boylan, 2002.) in this regard. Developing more retention services, such as dual high school and college credit and testing students early for motivational factors, for some students between high school and college is essential (Chew, 2005). In many cases, college personnel should consider developing strategies that involve parents and family members (Barbatis, 2010).

According to Weinstein, variation in the amount of reading support based on students' needs is important:

> For students who need help in one or two areas, workshops in learning centers, supplemental instruction, student leaders, and tutors can often offer enough help, particularly if the educators receive some form of training. However, for students who are deficient in a number of areas, this type of intervention is often inadequate because there is not enough time to teach all of what is needed. Semester-long interventions are better at helping students who need more extensive interventions. (Weinstein as cited in Acee, 2009, p. 22)

Curriculum auditing can be beneficial in determining where interventions are needed.

Programming at UAF

The biggest gap this study has found in terms of alignment is that although developmental faculty spend more time teaching students strategies for working directly with the texts, faculty of 100-level courses tend to use the texts more as a supplement to activities that proceed from the texts. This shift may be a good place for developmental faculty to focus further research attention. Other areas in which the course expectations did not align may also be a good place to look for possible gaps. It must be determined how substantial the gaps actually are in terms of their effect on student success in the target classes.

Research, by its nature, is a slow process, and at UAF developmental faculty have no time built in to contracts for research and little access to institutional data except for the most basic program review information. Though positive progress was made when the Developmental Education Department shifted in 2016 from offering a sequence of 3-credit writing courses to a sequence of 4-credit integrated reading and writing courses, UAF faculty have not yet begun studying the impacts from this change. To truly study the effects of this curricular change on students in 100-level courses, a wide range of 100-level courses should be studied as target classes, not just the 100-level writing course which has generally been used. In an arena of tight budgeting and competition for limited financial resources, such a study may be beyond current means given the constraints of faculty access to data and time.

The Developmental Education Department has been developing high school-to-college alignment in Fairbanks and the surrounding rural areas for decades in the form of Early College courses and dual-enrollment options. The department is currently looking at the possibility of offering 1-credit reading courses as required corequisites to students in 100-level courses. It can be difficult for students to undertake these courses unless (a) they are free or (b) they are required. At this time, administrative support for these options is not available, but the faculty continue to move forward with offering reading electives. The outcomes of the current study indicate that many UAF students would benefit from increased reading support. Questions about which students should take these classes and when and how they should be identified also need to be answered in time.

The Armstrong et al. (2015) study revealed that faculty at SCC expected students to have an understanding of disciplinary literary practices. It was not clear from the current study whether UAF faculty shared this expectation; this was another question that was not asked directly in the audit model used in this study. Developmental faculty at UAF have a reading course that develops students understanding of disciplinary literacy practices; however, it is not offered at this time since it was not approved by the administration as a required course in the developmental sequence. Faculty are still looking at working it into the existing integrated reading and writing courses, but to do some curriculum auditing first on whether UAF 100-level faculty expect such understanding in their incoming students makes sense.

The audit found that students who are testing into regular (nondevelopmental) coursework are also struggling in reading.

If the purpose of such audits is to determine whether developmental education reading expectations are aligned with those of general education and career-technical expectations, and if they are not, to change the developmental education courses, then the audit model (as this researcher understood it) left some gaps. UAF faculty have not researched how big the gaps in alignment actually are, nor whether changes are needed to contribute to student success in making these transitions. We have not examined how students doing developmental reading coursework are performing in their 100-level courses other than through grades and success data in WRTG 111x. Additionally, the audit found that students who are testing into regular (nondevelopmental) coursework are also struggling in reading. This makes thinking about solutions quite a big project.

The researcher experienced some confusion along the way about what was meant by "the culture of reading." This phrase was not defined by Armstrong et al. (2015) in their paper describing the curriculum audit model. Nor did they discuss questions one might ask to elucidate this idea. This is another area that someone might develop for future researchers. I used the open coding process to get at the idea of a culture of reading, along with the familiarity I had about UAF from being a Developmental Education professor for 15 years. Perhaps there is a reason for keeping the term broad, but I was unable to compare my findings on this matter to prior studies, not seeing it used anywhere else in the college reading literature. The only exception was Armstrong et al.'s (2015) audit study that found no consistent definition of text readiness at SCC. Although the current study did not find discrepancies in faculty's descriptions of text readiness, it also did not find an articulated mission statement concerning the teaching of reading at UAF. Such a mission statement would be useful and should be developed.

Even within the previously mentioned constraints, Armstrong et al.'s (2015) audit process is clearly a powerful tool. Data collection can be completed in one semester. A study that closely examines one university can be completed by one researcher with one year of sabbatical funding. This audit process has the potential to provide beneficial direction for both high school and college educators at the local and national levels. With increased funding, or two faculty members pooling their sabbatical resources, larger studies of this nature can be done. Though this study has not completely answered the question as to how well developmental and 100-level coursework at UAF are aligned, it has identified specific areas to look into. The current study demonstrated the importance of using a curriculum audit model such as this one. If the study had not been done, the need for more reading support at UAF would not have been documented, and the importance of supporting student self-confidence and motivation and of teaching students to be strategic, self-regulating readers would not have stood out so clearly.

Conclusion

Like students at public institutions of higher learning across the country, many UAF students raise families and work, many of them full-time, while going to college. Students' lives are complex, and the pace of their lives (including the pace of academic expectations) is very hurried. The need for development of stronger reading skills across the board takes place in this context. Administration needs to be willing to finance more solutions that focus on reading, and these solutions need to address the diversity of student learning needs. The intention of the curriculum audit model is to assist solution-oriented investigations that can help faculty see how college reading programming needs to be adjusted

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(Armstrong et al., 2015). In this regard, the model is a great success.

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Appendix

Courses Reviewed for the Audit

Applied Business 101
Business Administration 151
Biology 100x
Chemistry 103x
Communication & Journalism 101x
Communication & Journalism 131x
Communication & Journalism 141x
Construction Management 123
Developmental Math 105
Developmental Studies 105
Developmental Studies 111
Drafting Technology 170
Early Childhood Education 101
Fisheries 102
Geological Sciences 101x
History 100x
Justice 110x
Library Science 101x
Mathematics 113x
Mathematics 151x
Music 103x
Natural Resource Management 101x
Petroleum Engineering 101
Political Science/Economics 100x
Psychology 101x
Rural Development 110
Writing 090
Writing 110
Writing 111x