



Academic Literacy in the English Classroom: Helping Underprepared and Working Class Students Succeed in College

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What do high school English teachers need to teach to get their students ready for college? And how do college instructors help underprepared students succeed once they're there?

These are two pertinent questions for which Carolyn Boiarsky and the contributors to this volume have some answers. Boiarsky put together this book to pre-empt the problems teachers face in class, particularly with first-generation college students and others from working class and immigrant families. First, she discusses the content and socialization issues involved in "academic literacy" and exactly what that phrase means. Then, she and other educators describe activities and strategies that teachers can use to help students acquire the skills they need to read and write at the college level.

These strategies involve:

- information transfer and learning to learn
- the craft and the art of writing academic prose - from developing a "felt sense" of writing to achieving "flow"
- promoting active readership - encouraging exploration of texts through note taking, notecard making, and mapping
- engaging with literature - reading as transaction/the process of constructing meaning
- learning the language and rhetorical conventions of the academy, with particular attention to vernacular dialect speakers and English language learners.

What the academy demands is the ability to read often technical jargon-laden textbooks, to write research papers using appropriate field-specific language and conventions, and to discuss topics in the form appropriate to that field. The strategies offered in this book will help teachers prepare students to accomplish these tasks, whether American-born native speakers, ESL students, or children of the working, middle, or professional class.

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