

Purposeful Reading: The Extended 3-2-1 Process

By Geraldine Van Gyn, PhD

During the last three years, I have extended the use of the 3-2-1 reports to include opportunities for group discussion and peer teaching. This extended process follows the submission of the 3-2-1 and has 7 steps.

1. In class, students are assigned to groups of five with a group leader and a recorder. Their first task is to come to a consensus on the three central issues/concepts/facts in the reading, which they post on a flip chart (usually 15-30 minutes).
2. Next the students share with their group two aspects of the reading they didn't understand. Once all problem areas are identified, members of the group are challenged to help clear up these areas for each other; providing a peer teaching opportunity (usually 15-30 minutes)
3. The group then reviews the question each student came up with to pose the author and must agree on the most interesting one that should be asked.
4. The instructor leads a review of the top three from each group and extends the debate, if necessary.
5. As a whole class, students begin to work through the problem areas with the instructor who has prepared a presentation based on the responses gathered from Requirement 2 of the 3-2-1s. When peer teaching has been successful in a group, the individual students who were helped by other group members, review the problem solution to enlighten anyone else who still unclear on this concept. (In these cases, I have experimented with 'bonus marks' to the group who has solved a problem identified by their group members and can help members of another group to understand it.)

6. The class continues to work Step 5 with the instructor until all problems have been adequately addressed.
7. After the class, the instructor posts each group's question to the author, for students' interest. (This step could be extended to a search by students for articles relevant to the questions.)

This particular process has proved as successful in a course with 80 students as it has in a class of 15. Obviously, the larger student numbers the more time is required for the in-class portion; typically in a class of 80 students, it takes two classes of 60 minutes to fully complete the activity. The time taken for this full purposeful reading activity is similar to, or slightly more than, that which I would assign in a more traditional lecture, punctuated by questions and discussion. The complexity and lengthen of the reading will also dictate the time needed in class.

The impact of the activity on learning, in my experience, far outweighs any concern about time required for the 3-2-1 processes. In one of my courses, I assigned 3-2-1 reports to the text chapters that I thought were the most difficult and which did not have any direct connection to the course lab activities. In total, seven reading reports were required in the course and that was manageable both for students and me and helped to make excellent use of class time.

Dr. Geraldine Van Gyn is a professor in the School of Exercise Science at the University of Victoria.

The article is a sidebar to *The Little Assignment with the Big Impact: Reading, Writing, Critical Reflection, and Meaningful Discussion*, available here: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/instructional-design/the-little-assignment-with-the-big-impact-reading-writing-critical-reflection-and-meaningful-discussion/>