

## Handout #2: A Strategic Attack on Your Textbook: Divide and Conquer

*"Readers are plentiful: thinkers are rare."* ~ Harriet Martineau

*"You must not read to swallow words, but to see what you can use."* ~ Henrik Ibsen

In politics and sociology, **divide and conquer** is a strategy of gaining and maintaining power by breaking up larger concentrations of power into chunks that individually have less power than the one implementing the strategy. Effective use of this technique allows those with little real power to control those who collectively have a lot of power. It is a folk truism that today's world population of 6 billion people is ruled by approximately 10 thousand people, who in turn are ruled by a committee of 300. The phrase which comes from the Latin "Divide et impera," translates to "Divide and rule."



Your textbook is not your enemy, but without a clear idea of how to utilize it, a reading assignment sometimes feels over-whelming and too much to handle. While no one strategy is going to be appropriate for everyone, this has proven to be an effective method for increased reading speed and comprehension.

- I. Know the Task**
  - a. What was assigned?
  - b. When is it due?
- II. Evaluate the Reading**
  - a. What is it about?
  - b. How long is it?
- III. Focus your Efforts**
  - a. Is there a summary/conclusion?
  - b. What are the terms and questions you should know?
- IV. Chunk and Read the Text**
  - a. How long can I focus?

#2.8 Learning Strategies Instruction:  
The Key for Students with Learning Disabilities

- b. How will I monitor myself?

The last step involves **Scaffolding and Reviewing** the notes (both mental and highlighted/underlined/scribbled) that were made during the reading. As you complete each “chunk” of time, look back at your notations.

**Do they still hold meaning?** Prior to beginning and ending each additional segment of reading time, again review your notes from the last. Only when you understand the previously taught material can you move forward to the new information.

This is called SCAFFOLDING and has been used in teaching since you learned to read, tie your shoes, and do laundry.

Reviewing the Process:

**V. Know the Task**

- a. What was assigned? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. When is it due? \_\_\_\_\_

**VI. Evaluate the Reading**

- c. What is it about? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- d. How long is it? \_\_\_\_\_

**VII. Focus your Efforts**

- c. Is there a summary/conclusion?
- d. What are the terms and questions you should know?

**VIII. Chunk and Read the Text**

- a. How long can I focus?
- b. How will I monitor myself?