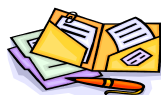


# The Writing Center

Trident Technical College

## 10 Tips for Annotating College Texts

1. Read with a pencil or pen and a highlighter ready.
2. Annotate what's most important, such as:
  - Main ideas
  - Definitions
  - Examples
  - Lists of reason or characteristics (number them to make it easier to find them in the text)
  - Cause and effect relationships, or similarities and differences (use arrows to show the connections)
  - Summary statements
  - Unfamiliar words
  - Signal words
3. Read and annotate one section at a time if the reading assignment is long.
4. Summarize the main ideas for each section immediately after you've read it, using as few words as possible. *A summary is a restatement in your own words of the main ideas* of a piece of writing. If you can't restate the information in your own words, you probably don't understand it.
6. Turn headings into questions. When you find the answer to your question, place parentheses around the answer.
7. Use a **?** to mark information you do not understand.
8. Mark important ideas with \* or *imp* in the margin.
9. Develop a personalized marking system that's meaningful to you, using symbols and abbreviations.
10. Write comments in the margins to help you connect the material with instructor comments and your own experience.



## 10 Tips for Annotating College Texts

# The Writing Center

Trident Technical College

## Sample Text for Annotation Practice

### **We Need to Improve the Success Rates**

By Kay McClenney, Center for Community College Student Engagement

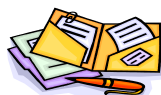
Absolutely, yes, community colleges are effective — and disturbingly, at the same time community colleges are not effective enough to meet the current and emerging needs of individual students and their families, communities and the nation.

Yes, community colleges have long been effective at providing access to postsecondary education for millions of Americans who otherwise would not have had that opportunity. Yet, while the colleges still value open access, there are access-limiting choices now being made by college leaders — eliminate summer school, cap admissions, cease serving students that need the lowest level of developmental education — that are prompted by severe budget cuts, by poor results, or by reconsidered priorities.

Yes, community colleges are a crucial American resource in responding to economic conditions and workforce needs. They re-train thousands of displaced workers for new careers; prepare the preponderant majority of the nation's first responders; and provide customized training for local and regional employers. But there is an evident skills gap in the U.S., where even as unemployment hovers around 8%, thousands of jobs are unfilled because of shortages of appropriately trained workers. Clearly, colleges must realign programs to close those gaps.

Yes, community colleges serve nearly half of all undergraduates in the U.S. But far too few of those students persist to achieve the educational outcomes that would change their lives and their families' lives for generations to come. By six years after college entry, only 46% of community college students have earned a certificate or associate degree, have transferred to a 4-year institution, or are still enrolled. Improving success rates is and must be a top priority for a growing number of these institutions.

Source: "Discuss: Are Community Colleges Working Effectively?" *Learning Matters*. 17 July 2012. Web. June 10 2013. URL: <http://learningmatters.tv/blog/web-series/discuss-are-community-colleges-working-effectively/10221/>



## 10 Tips for Annotating College Texts