ON READING NOTES

The work you do outside class contributes mightily to the inquiry-based, collaborative approach to learning that Evergreen values. Intellectually-rigorous work depends on two foundational practices: the first, *close reading*, is described in the handout, "On Reading and Writing Assignments." A critical step in being able to engage in a conversation about ideas with others is to be able to give a *fair-minded rendition of someone else's views*. As described in the section titled, "Close Reading,"

> *…you read to understand a writer's ideas carefully and deeply enough to follow a complex argument, to literally track the intellectual moves of that argument, to notice the practice of theorizing.*

Here is an example of reading notes based on the handout, "Student Self-Theories and Approaches to Learning." The format is adapted from the Cornell system of note-taking which uses two columns— the wider column is for summarizing key ideas (the focus is on the writer's voice); the narrower column is used for your additions to these notes (e.g. your comments/questions, classmates' comments, notes from faculty lectures, passages you find puzzling, references to other writers' views that support or contradict the argument presented, and so on). In this sample, we have used the left-hand column to offer some guidelines for note-taking.

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| *Notes to class*<br>*The Dweck handout is already a summary of several pages of text. Even so, these reading notes further summarize the essential ideas. The details of the study, especially in the sciences and social sciences, are carefully tracked to better understand the implications of Dweck's research findings.* | (Reference: Summary of research findings from Carol S. Dweck's *Self-theories: Their Role in Motivation, Personality, and Development*)<br><br>**Student Self-Theories and Approaches to Learning**<br>-people typically hold two theories about their own intelligence<br>    1. entity theory- intelligence as fixed, unchangeable trait; those who hold an entity theory typically feel smart by outperforming others, but high-performing peers prompt questioning of own intelligence<br>    2. incremental theory – intelligence can be increased through one's efforts; those who hold an incremental theory typically seek out opportunities to learn something new |
| *Examples of comments*<br>*Is this work known by student support services folks and teachers (i.e. I read in a column in last weekend's New York Times, written by a math teacher, that students needing help rarely attend extra sessions he offers.)?*<br><br>*Should this research be made known to students during Orientation Week and/or in higher education's "graveyard classes"?*<br><br>*What is Evergreen's experience?* | ***Can we influence students' self-theories?***<br>- *Dweck's study*: two groups of students randomly assigned two different *Psychology Today* articles: one argued for an entity theory, the other an incremental theory. After reading assigned article, all students took a nonverbal ability test and then received test results (well done; poor). Before taking second test, students could attend a tutorial designed to improve performance.<br>- *Findings*:<br>1. Those told that they did *well*: around 73.3% given incremental article took tutorial; 60% given entity article took tutorial<br>2. Those told they did *poorly*: 73.3% given incremental article took tutorial; 13.3% given entity article took tutorial<br><br>***Conclusions:***<br>- those who did well wanted the tutorial, even if they held an entity theory; of those who did poorly only those reading article arguing for an incremental theory wanted tutorial<br><br>* "when students have a fixed view of intelligence, those who most need remedial work are the ones who clearly avoid it" (p.25) |