**AoW#5** Credit given to Kelly Gallagher and Vale middle School for providing this article

***Counselor: Some UNC student-athletes read at 3rd, 4th grade level (1290L)***

Due Date:

**Instructions: COMPLETE ALL QUESTIONS AND MARGIN NOTES using the CLOSE reading strategies practiced in class. This requires reading of the article three times.**

**Step 1: Skim** the article using these symbols as you read:

**(+)** agree, **(-)** disagree, **(\*)** important, **(!)** surprising, **(?)** wondering

**Step 2: Number** the paragraphs. **Read** the article **carefully** and **make notes in the margin**.

Notes should include:

* Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
* Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
* Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
* Observations about how the **writer’s strategies** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and choices affect the article.

**Step 3:** A **final quick read** noting anything you may have missed during the first two reads.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment. Answer the questions carefully in **complete sentences** unless otherwise instructed.

**Student \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class Period\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

***Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:***

### Counselor: Some UNC student-athletes read at 3rd, 4th grade level

The University of North Carolina is not just an athletic powerhouse with dedicated fans; it's also a top-tier academic institution. But one academic counselor there who spent years tutoring student athletes, says too many of them can't even read.

"I mean, we may as well just go over to Glenwood Elementary up the street and just let all the 4th graders in here, the third-graders in here," said UNC academic counselor Mary Willingham. "If they can't read and there are no remedial classes, what's the option?" Willingham asked. "To cheat, or to find some professor, some course where there are professors or there is little or no work expected of the student."

Willingham said there are athletes at UNC who are reading at a third- and fourth-grade level. She said there is no way for them to succeed in a college classroom; the only place they can succeed is on the football field. Willingham is one of the few people CNN could find who's looking at the reading levels of athletes in revenue-generating sports football and basketball.

"They're leaving here, our profit-sport athletes, without an education. They're significantly behind the level of reading and writing that's required," Willingham said. With the permission of the university, she combed through eight years' worth of test scores, and found that up to 25 percent of athletes in revenue sports don't have the skills to take classes at a community college, let alone a competitive university like UNC.

Looking at 183 football and basketball players between 2004 and 2012, Willingham found that 8 percent were reading below a fourth-grade level and 60 percent were between a fourth-grade and eighth-grade reading level. The NCAA told CNN that in 2012, 30 revenue-sport athletes were made eligible despite very low SAT or ACT scores -- a number it said is a small percentage of the 5,700 basketball and football players admitted that year.

CNN chose a sampling 37 public universities across the country where open records laws apply, and asked for entrance exam scores for football and basketball players during the past six years. CNN received data back from 21 Division I universities, including top-25 rankedfootball schoolslike Texas A&M, Georgia, Oklahoma State, Ohio State and Clemson.

Most schools had between 7 and 18 percent of football and basketball players scoring so low on the reading or writing portion of their exams that experts said they would only be reading at an elementary level. But many of the universities had different explanations for low test scores.

Texas said some athletes don't try very hard, aiming only to become NCAA eligible. Washington pointed out that low scores can indicate learning disabilities. And Louisville said entrance exams are just one factor considered when admitting a student athlete.

Not every school CNN asked would give information. In fact, about half refused or said they'd send the data after football season. Neither Florida State nor Auburn provided data.

CNN spoke to a dozen professors and advisors at multiple universities who echo what Willingham found. In many schools, CNN found examples of athletes struggling to keep up in the classroom because they simply can't read at a college level. CNN began looking at data from UNC after it was discovered that many student athletes were enrolled in classes that required little or no work. And even though the NCAA said it found no athletic scandal, a professor was recently indicted for academic fraud.

The school said it put in place 120 reforms and insists that its athletic program is now clean. UNC Athletic Director Bubba Cunningham said he's confident in the reforms put in place. "I think our track record over time, that we admit students who can do the work. Now, we also are highly competitive, and our students have to compete Monday through Friday as well as they do on Saturday," Cunningham said.

Willingham said she's skeptical the changes have made a difference. "We say that we made 120 changes. You can make all the changes you want, but if you are still not meeting students where they're at as an educator and bringing them along, then those changes are all for nothing."

Some advisors said that it's not unheard of for a student with poor reading skills to be brought up to the level where they can succeed in college, but many also point out that this requires a big investment. These students aren't just hitting the books, trying to catch up. They essentially have full-time jobs on the field and they travel.

***Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:***

**Comprehension questions – answers may be in phrases.**

1. *Name two universities that chose not to participate in the study or did not provide data.*

1. *What is UNC?*

1. *Define* **skeptical** *as used in the text.*

1. *What two potentially negative options does the UNC counselor mentioned suggest student athletes may choose if they are unable to read at a college level?*

1. *Define* **indicted** *as used in the text.*

*8.RI.1,4*

***2.* Answer each question in one or more complete sentences.**

*According to the final paragraph, what is a student-athlete’s job comprised of?*

*Explain the meaning of a revenue-generating sport at the college level.*

*After analyzing the text, what two groups of university officials seem to agree with this study?*

*8.RI.4,6*

**3.** *Read over paragraph 5. There seems to be two distinct discrepancies in this paragraph – one is a statement from the UNC counselor, the other from the NCAA. What is the discrepancy, and what possible explanation would there be for this?*

*8.RI.8*

**4.** *In your opinion, what are some possible reasons schools would choose not to provide the data mentioned in this article? (See paragraph 9.)*