

SQ4R Strategy – “The War on Drugs”

SURVEY Look at titles, pictures, captions, first and last paragraphs

What do I already know

- drug addiction and abuse
- related to
- crime punishable by law-in some countries - illegal, death penalty,

What do I predict I might learn

- What drugs will be discussed?
- Arguments for and against

QUESTIONS Write questions: What? When? Who? Why? How?

What has been proposed? What are the arguments for and against the proposal?
Which is better? Is there a best practice solution?

READ Answer questions raised, scan for specific information, make notes in the margins, underline key terms

What is the problem globally? How do other countries tackle the problem?
Can Mill's “Harm Principle” be used to argue against legalisation? Is the comparison to alcohol a valid one? Are they similar problems? Do they have the same damaging effects?

RECITE Restate main idea(s) and key concepts in your own words (notes/diagram/mind-map).

1. Drug problem in US – doubled in ten years

Reason: method to deal with it (punishment) does not work; education and treatment better

2. Call for decriminalisation and legalisation

For

- saves police time – focus on more serious crimes
- more money for treatment and education
- protects rights of drug users
- reduces temptation to commit crimes (eg, stealing, corruption)

Against

- drug use and addiction will increase
- more drug-related crimes
- harm to drug users and non-users

3. Root causes: racism, poverty, access to health care and housing

Better solution: create employment, narrow gap between rich and poor (in health and housing)

REVIEW Reread your notes. Review objectives for reading and questions posed earlier. Write a paragraph summary.

In the US, the number of drug users has doubled in ten years. It appears that punishing drug users has not worked. Many drug experts now believe that making drug use illegal only causes other social problems. Police corruption and other crime would increase. They argue that the money spent on fighting drugs would be better spent on fighting other crime and on prevention, including education and treatment. Drug use, they argue, is a question of individual rights. However, others argue that legalisation would actually increase crime and lead to increased drug use. Finally, others think that fighting the underlying factors of poverty and unemployment is a better long-term solution to the drug problem.

RELATE/REFLECT Make connections with what you already know about the topic and how you will use this new information.

I understand the arguments for and against the legalisation of drugs and the need to seek better solutions and getting to the root causes that lead people to take drugs. This article would be useful for my essay on drug use in NZ. I will do more research into drug laws in NZ compared to the US and other countries. I will also need to find more information and statistics about the validity of the connection between poverty and other social issues and the increase in drug use.