I. Reading

Strategies and Tips

Reading comprehension is your ability to understand and remember the material that you read; it is a skill that weakens if it is not used. For that reason, you need to learn the process involved in reading comprehension and consciously apply it.

Three major factors in reading success are:

1. motivation
2. concentration
3. effective reading strategies

Reading Comprehension

The purpose of this unit is to provide you with knowledge and skills to help you become more effective readers and note takers.
In this unit you will explore tips and strategies for improving your reading comprehension. Reading plays a major part in your life, whether it is reading the directions for installing a new DVD/Blu-Ray® player to your TV, reading menus when you are eating in your favorite restaurant, or reading the eGuides and textbooks for your courses.

**Situations Where You Need to Read**

During your college career and beyond, you will be faced with situations requiring you to read for comprehension and content such as books, articles, journals, documents, and website information.

You might be asked to analyze and interpret the information in these reading materials and reflect upon them in written form.

**Three major factors in reading success:**

1) **Motivation**

You know that you will be more likely to remember information that interests you, and motivation can be directly connected to that; however, you will not always be able to read information that is interesting unless you help to make it so. You can turn on, or up, your level of motivation. Motivation can be found in just wanting to learn, to get a good grade on a test or project, or to complete the course and keep moving toward your career goals. Part of motivation comes from information that makes sense to the reader.

This is an important component of comprehension (the second level of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy – Unit 4). There are times when you have to go backwards in order to go forward. You need to return to the first level of learning (Knowledge) and seek clarification of the subject. How can you understand something you cannot recall or remember? Once you feel comfortable with the information, you can push forward to comprehension (explaining it) and application (using it). It is not until you can accomplish those steps that you can move into the logical part of critical thinking (analysis). It is easy to see how motivation can break down when the reader cannot move up the taxonomy of critical thinking.

2) **Concentration**

Concentration is another major component of learning information (reading comprehension). Everyone has experienced situations where they read the same paragraph multiple times. You really have to focus on what you are doing. You have to intentionally concentrate. Factors that may affect your concentration can be your location, the time of day, your attitude, and your stress, along with so many other variables. Your job is to be aware of your task and concentrate on accomplishing it in the most efficient and successful way.
3) Effective Reading Strategies

You have many tools to help you concentrate and enhance your motivation to get meaning from what you are reading. Effective reading strategies are found at the top of the critical thinking pyramid. They are creative ways to take you from the bottom to the top of the six levels of critical thinking.

Consider all the information you learned about yourself in the first four units of your course. Your reading strategies should reflect your learning styles and always help to improve your reading characteristics. Seek to improve your LASSI components as you choose your strategies. When you personalize your styles you energize your motivation and concentration.

There are two types of strategies — reading and note taking. Watch for the similarities and differences (analysis level) as you are introduced to the different examples. Try as many as you can to see if you find more effective and efficient strategies than those you currently use.

Strategies and Tips for Reading Comprehension

Highlight what you think is most important:
If you want to fully understand what you are reading, reading it once is not enough. Highlight the main ideas and review them after you have read the entire piece.

Broaden your background:
Read newspapers, magazines, books, and professional journals. Become interested in current events, particularly those happening within your career field. This will help you build a stronger mental framework for ideas and concepts.

Create motivation and interest:
Discuss ideas with your friends, family, coworkers, and classmates. The stronger your interest in the subject, the greater your comprehension will be.

Strengthen your vocabulary:
Building your vocabulary is a long process, not an event that happens overnight. However, the more you know about the language, the more you will understand. Keep a dictionary handy and look up words that are not familiar, and consider keeping a log of professional vocabulary words so you do not have to look these up a second time.

Have a reading method:
A reading method can greatly enhance your understanding when the material you are trying to understand seems difficult.
What is a Reading Method?

A method is a structured way to organize your time and the material in your head (and perhaps in notes) as you complete a reading assignment.

The first step would be to have a Pre-Reading Strategy: you need to first determine your purpose for reading. Are you reading for pleasure? If so, you probably do not need a “method” because the information you gather while reading for pleasure is only used for entertainment.

Are you reading to gain knowledge to help you complete an assignment? If so, having a method will help you structure the information of your reading so that you can apply it appropriately to your assignments. Is the reading an assignment leading to a project, a response to a Discussion topic, a test, or preparation for writing a paper? Your answer will help you determine what kind of information you need to find before you even begin reading and will help you establish your goals for the Assignment.

SRI: SRI is a good example of an effective reading method. It involves the following 3 steps: Scan, Read, and Interpret.

Scan — How is the information structured? Look for items that may be highlighted with color or that appear in different type. Look for main headings, check out graphics and illustrations, and get a general sense of what is in the Reading. Think of questions you would like to have answered when you begin reading the material. Scanning helps you focus your attention on the things that you need to gain from your Reading. You can also then decide how you want to approach your Reading. Do you need to chunk your Reading into small bits and read each part at different times, or do you have the time to read your Assignment all at once?

Read — Start at the beginning and read. Look for main ideas and the details that support them. Look for keywords and ask yourself who, what, when, where, why, and how. Do not just read words; be a reading detective. Find an appropriate reading speed (not too fast and not too slow). Of course, find a relatively comfortable place with good lighting and few distractions in which to read.

Consider taking notes — you will read more about note taking in this unit.

The way in which you approach reading can determine how successful you are in remembering what you read. Having a method in which you know your purpose, scan the material, and keep your concentration, gives you an active role in while reading. You will find that you learn the information better when you have a method that works for you.

Interpret — Once you have actively read the Assignment, take another look at it. (This part can be considered “post-reading strategies”). Did you learn what you set out to learn? Check main headings, the keywords, and the other items you scanned before you started the Reading — does it all now fit into place? If something did not make sense, go back and read that part again. Repeat back to
yourself what you learned. Can you summarize it? Could you teach it to someone else? How does it fit with what you already know? Think about how you might use this information in the future. Does it change your perspective or present information that is different than what you had known before? Answering these questions will get you thinking critically, which is the goal of reading.

In your steps of critical thinking you come upon the fourth level, which is called analysis or can be expanded to Analysis/Research. This, as you have learned, is where you will acquire the information required to justify your actions (your creative moves). This is the level where the validity of your research can give you a validity all of your own. Justification (Evaluation — the 5th level of critical thinking) cannot be based on opinion. Opinion must be based on fact in order to substantiate the claims you make. Your research is a vital part of that process. So, the question becomes what else you can use besides SRI, perhaps you want more.

More Reading Methods

SQ3R: SQ3R is a very popular reading method that can be used with all types of reading materials. It involves the following 5 basic steps: Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review. You will start out by (S) surveying the Reading material by noting the general organization and structure of the reading, identifying headings and sub-headings and pinpointing key ideas and important terms. You will next focus on creating a few (Q) questions that will help to guide your reading. Your questions should be related to what you know you need to gain from the Reading. Think in terms of what you must do with the information once you are done reading. Will you be writing a paper, preparing to discuss it with classmates, or completing an exam? You will then (R) read the material, keeping your questions in mind and possibly highlighting and taking notes as well. Next, you will (R) recite by verbally summarizing the information or talking with others about what you have read and discussing possible answers to your pre-reading questions. Finally, you will (R) review your notes and make sure that you have fully addressed all of your questions.

PORPE: PORPE can be a bit complex, but once you understand the basics it can be a highly effective reading method, especially when it comes to lengthy or complex reading assignments. It involves the following 5 steps: Predict, Organize, Rehearse, Practice, and Evaluate. You will start out by first reading the material and then you will (P) predict what you need to know about the Reading or retain for future reference. You will then (O) organize your thoughts into some written form, possibly an outline, chart or mind map. Next, you will (R) rehearse by verbally summarizing the information or talking with others about what you have read and discussing possible answers to your predictions. Finally, you will (P) practice by answering your prediction questions in written form and you will take time to (E) evaluate your own responses.

KWL: KWL is another extremely popular reading method that can be used with all types of reading materials. It involves the following 3 simple steps/questions: Know - What do you already know about the topic? Want - What do you want to know once you are finished reading? Learn - Summarize verbally or in writing what you have learned.
**5 W's + H:** 5W’s + H is simple to use and certainly easy to remember. It is a great method to use when you need to retain several specific facts and a comprehensive overview of your reading material. It involves the following 6 questions: Who? What? Where? Why? When? How? You can use these questions to guide your reading and note taking.

**Read Intelligently**

What does it mean to read intelligently? Basically, intelligent readers are people who approach reading with a plan in mind. They have a clear idea of what they need to gain from the Reading, how they will get what they need and what they must do if they run into obstacles. Take some time to carefully consider the following habits of intelligent readers and focus on creating your own good reading habits!

**Four Habits of Intelligent Readers:**

I. Know how deeply to study reading material. Read for what you need!

II. Know what you want to gain or know once you are finished reading.

III. When you do not understand what you are reading, return to the knowledge level to seek clarification. Get the facts straight first!

IV. Use active reading strategies such as the following to help yourself stay focused and engaged: highlighting, underlining, taking notes, and mind mapping.

**Note Taking Strategies and Tips**

Choosing a note-taking method that corresponds with your personal learning style can help you study more effectively. Visual learners benefit from seeing the important information by itself; auditory learners benefit from reading their notes aloud to themselves; and kinesthetic learners benefit from the activity of writing, highlighting, or typing their notes. Studying more efficiently means saving time and energy, which can also result in stress reduction.

Now, you will look at the following note-taking styles: **Cornell, Mapping, Charting, and Outlining.**

**Cornell System**

Cornell notes are easy to create and easy to use for studying. They can also be used for taking notes at meetings or organizing information at work.
The Cornell System includes dividing the page into three main sections by the drawing of an upside-down T. The resultant left column (of about 2.5” in width) is for “cues” or major topics. The right column (6”) is larger to accommodate details related to the cues. A section across the bottom of the page (approx. 2” in height) is meant for a short summary of the page, or perhaps to hold source information.

While taking notes from a textbook or article, it may be useful to write the details in the right column first and later decide what cues are appropriate for the left column. Studying from Cornell notes can be easy: You can cover the details and then quiz yourself using just the cues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Coordinate research, marketing strategies, sales, advertising, promotions, product development, pricing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Typically office work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tight schedules and deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some travel, meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience in related areas such as sales, purchasing, or public relations can be helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job outlook</td>
<td>Projected growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related occupations</td>
<td>Public relations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales Managers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market and Survey Researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mapping

Mapping is a visual representation of the information, showing relationships by the use of shapes, arrows, and lines. Taking notes in this style requires an understanding of these relationships before beginning to write, but the visual appeal may be helpful in memorizing certain kinds of information.

Computer network diagrams are examples of mapping.

Charting
View the Charting System

Some information, such as timelines and comparisons, can easily be placed into a chart. On the computer, this can be accomplished by using tables in Word or by using Excel.

Charts can help you memorize categorized information for tests.

Outlining

Outlining is a method that focuses on main points, sub-points, and supporting details. The information in the main heading is general, and the sub-headings are more specific. For example: the topic may be to tell what has influenced you as a person

I. Important people in my life
   A. Family Members
      i. Mother
      ii. Father
      iii. Grandmother
      iv. Brother
B. Favorite Teacher
II. Important experiences in my life

II. Challenge Activity

Building habits of success using strategies to better reading skills and note taking skills will serve you for life. Your challenge in Unit 4 to further enrich your learning is to visit the following sites, where you will find excellent information on note taking strategies:

*Mind Maps – A Powerful Approach to Note-Taking*
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newISS_01.htm

*Cornell – Effective & Efficient Note-Taking*

Apply these learning tools to your Reading and note taking to realize stronger more enhanced learning. Continue to make connections as you move from unit to unit. Search for the strategies that you find most helpful to your learning and thinking processes. Begin to use them over and over because through repetition you will establish habits of success.

III. Powerful Words for a POWERFUL Vocabulary – 7 words in 7 Days

Effective communication is not only an essential academic strategy; it is fast becoming one of the top skills employers are looking for as they screen potential employees. However, how do you become an effective communicator? The answer to this question is actually quite simple, yet it involves some serious commitment on your part. You have to practice and make a firm commitment to equipping yourself with the many different “tools” that you will need in order to express your ideas clearly and effectively in both written and spoken communication. This is where a powerful vocabulary can make a world of difference for you because words are the building blocks of communication. Therefore, the more words you are able to use, the more creative, convincing and powerful you will be as a communicator. What if you could add just one new word to your vocabulary each day? Think about the progress you would make in a week, a month, or even an entire year.
Vocabulary Enrichment Resources

Merriam-Webster's Word of the Day
http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day/

Activity: Make your own flashcards: http://quizlet.com/

Unit 5 Vocabulary Words

Complete the vocabulary activities here
http://www.studymate.com?id=3fpphYHs4

Denigrate: Belittle; attack maliciously.

Interminable: Seeming to have no end; never ending.

Candor: Honesty.

Sedulous: Diligent; persevering; persistent.

Unconscionable: Lacking conscience.

Vacuous: Empty; foolish; without substance; inane; purposeless.

Resilient: Rebounding; returning to original form.

IV. Successories

The information provided in the Successories area is designed to provide you with valuable tips, skills, and resources — all related to your ongoing success here at the university and beyond.

This week, please take time to review the following brief tutorials:
Take the Knowledge check on reading and note taking.

References


