

# Reading Textbooks

## 1. Create the appropriate study environment.

- Find the right location. You may need to try out different places – library, empty classroom, home, CALL Center.
- Limit distractions. Turn off cell phone. Turn off computer so you can't check email.
- Create the right atmosphere. No noise, no interruptions, decent lighting, comfortable, but not too comfortable.

## 2. Divide reading into manageable sections and set goals.

- The mind processes smaller chunks of information at one time better than large amounts. Divide 50 pages into sub-sections of 10 pages each.
- Give yourself short breaks
- Give yourself rewards.

## 3. Use the SQ3R method of reading.

S=Survey

Q = Question

3R=Read, Recite Review

\*Survey – Gather information about what you are going to read.

- Read the title of the chapter – prepare yourself for what you will read in that section.
- Read the introduction and/or summary paragraphs, chapter objectives, end of chapter questions.
- Look at headings/subheadings in bold – these will give you clues of what the text is going to talk about.
- Pay attention to graphics – charts, diagrams, etc.

\*Question – Actively focus your mind on the reading.

- Identify what questions you think will be answered in the text.
- For each section, look at headings in bold, or introductory paragraphs, and try to turn them into questions.
- Write these questions in the margins or on a separate piece of paper.
- If you have questions formed before you begin the reading, you will be more focused on what you are reading because you will be looking for the answers.

\*Read – Engage yourself in the task of reading.

- Read one section at a time. For each section, use your questions as a guide. While you read each section, look for the answers to the questions. You will process what you are reading more effectively.
- Be sure to take note of any new questions that you need to formulate or if you need to change your questions because you are not finding appropriate answers. This will help you pull out the meaning of what you are reading in that section.

\*Recite – Learn from the reading.

- After you read each section, refer back to the questions you came up with and see if you are able to answer them (without looking back at the text).
- If you cannot answer the questions, you should re-read the section and then try to recite again.

\*Review – Retain what you learned from the reading.

- After you complete the entire reading assignment or chapter, review all of the questions from each section. Make sure you can still answer them.
- If there are any questions you cannot answer, go back and review the answers so that you will retain the information.

## 4. How to get the most out of your reading when you are short on time

- Survey, Question, and then Skim, using the suggestions below:
- Identify sections/concepts/diagrams to which the author devotes the most amount of space and focus on those.

- Read the introduction and concluding paragraphs.
- Read the first paragraph of each section.
- Look for transitional words & phrases that introduce important ideas. For example: First, Second, Finally, However, On the other hand, In contrast, Additionally, Therefore
- Don't use a highlighter or use a highlighter sparingly – readers tend to highlight too much. If you are highlighting often, you tend to be more focused on the highlighting than on the processing of the content you are reading. It also slows down the reading process.
- Don't get bogged down on sections you don't understand. You can always come back to them later on.

#### **5. How to take notes from your reading**

- Do not take notes as you are reading – you take down too much info and copy without understanding.
- After you read each section, take notes based on the answers to the questions you came up with.
- Do not copy information directly from the book. Use paraphrasing in your notes.
- Record any questions you have on concepts that are unclear.

At the top of each page of notes, reference specific book, chapter, section, etc.