

# Reading Skills Workshop



Workshop hosted by The Writing and Learning Commons

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## I. Improving your reading skills -- some general guidelines:

- A. Pick a quiet place with few distractions to do your reading.
- B. Determine the purpose of your reading.
  - 1. Look over your syllabus to determine the main idea of the reading.
  - 2. Talk to your professor about whether the reading will complement or add to the information covered in lectures.
  - 3. Find out if you are expected to memorize important information from the reading, or if you are expected to interpret, analyze, critique, discuss, or write about the material.
- C. Prepare your brain to take in new information by reading over previous class notes or skimming previous chapters in the book. This will help you relate the new material to relevant ideas and concepts you have already learned for the class.
- D. Maintain alertness by being an active reader. Engage as many of your senses as possible (write, read out loud or talk about the text, look at visual aides included in the reading or create your own).
  - 1. Question what you are reading. Write a list of questions that you hope or expect will be answered by the text; answer the questions as you read; write new questions that may occur to you as you read.
  - 2. Highlight important points in the text. "Highlighted passages should resemble an outline or summary of the work" (Hjortshoj 135). Read carefully to determine the most important points; highlighting the entire next will not help you in the long run!
  - 3. Construct an outline as you read, summarizing the information in your own words.
  - 4. Draw charts or diagrams to organize the material you are reading or to make connections between ideas.
  - 5. Create flashcards for unfamiliar terms or concepts that you will need to memorize.
  - 6. Summarize the reading with a study partner. If you are required to analyze, critique, discuss, or interpret the reading, it is often helpful to hear someone else's perspective on the subject. Work with your study partner to create a list of test questions that may come from the reading.

## II. The SQ3R Method of Reading

**S**urvey. List three ways you might Survey a reading assignment before you begin reading. You should take into account the type of reading assignment you are completing (is it a chapter in a textbook, an article, a novel, etc.):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Q**uestion. List three strategies you might use to generate a list of questions about the reading:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**R**ead. Engage the text; don't just move your eyes along the page! List five strategies you could use to actively engage with the material as you read:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**R**ecall. Stop reading and practice recall after each section or after every 3-5 pages. Quiz yourself on the information. List three techniques you can use to practice your recall of the information you've just read:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**R**eview. Spend time each week reviewing what you've read. Remember: without regular reviews, you are likely to forget the information. List three techniques you could use to review:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.