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READING SKILLS:

A particular interpretation of something. It is the complex cognitive process of decoding symbols to derive meaning from the text

For example reading a book

Reading is a skill which enables us to get a message, recognize written words, to understand the meaning, used to teach pronunciation, grasping information from the texts.

There are three components of reading

1. Decoding: refers to the process of translating a printed word into a sound.
2. Comprehension: it is the level of understanding of a text or message. This interaction comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text or message.
3. Retention: the condition of retaining (keeping) something. It could be in the short-term memory or long term memory.

ACTIVE READING TECHNIQUES:

Active reading is the mental process that highly effective readers use when approaching reading. This technique require a reader to read critically by focusing on the material to understand and actively engage with the material by being aware of one's own thought process when reading. Through active reading readers gain greater critical thinking skills that makes things easier to understand and enables readers to retain information for a longer period of time.

Following are the techniques to make the reading active:

- 1. IDENTIFY NEW WORDS**

Most of us develop a bad habit of glossing over words that are vaguely familiar to us, often not even realizing we are doing so. When you read a difficult passage or book, take a few moments to really observe challenging words.

Practice by underlining every word that you cannot replace with a synonym.

Once you have a list of words, write the words and definitions in a logbook. Revisit this log several times and quiz yourself on the words.

2. FIND MAIN IDEA OR THESIS

As your reading level increases, the complexity of your material will likely increase as well. The thesis or main idea may no longer be provided in the first sentence; it may instead be located in the second paragraph or even the second page.

Finding the thesis is crucial to comprehension. You'll need to practice finding the thesis of the text or article each time you're reading.

3. CREATE A PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

Before you dive into reading the text of a difficult book or chapter, take some time to scan the pages for subtitles and other indications of the structure. If you don't see subtitles or chapters, look for transition words between paragraphs.

Using this information, you can craft a preliminary outline of the text. Think of this as the reverse of creating an outline for your essays and research papers. Going backward in this way helps you absorb the information you are reading. Your mind will, therefore, be better able to plug the information into the mental framework.

4. READ WITH PENCIL

Highlighters can be overrated. Some students commit highlighter overkill and end up with a sloppy multi-colored mess.

Sometimes it's more effective to use a pencil and notes when you write. Use the pencil to underline, circle, and define words in the margins.

5. DRAW AND SKETCH

No matter what type of information you are reading, visual learners can always create a mind map, a Venn diagram, a sketch, or a timeline to represent the information.

Start by taking a clean sheet of paper and creating a visual representation of the book or chapter you're reading. You'll be amazed by the difference this will make for retaining information and remembering details.

6. MAKE A SHRINKING OUTLINE

A shrinking outline is another useful tool for reinforcing the information that you read in a text or in your class notes. To make a shrinking outline, you need to re-write material you see in your text. While it is a time consuming exercise to write out your notes, it is also a very effective one. Writing is a necessary part of active reading.

Once you have written out a few paragraphs of material, read it over and think of one keyword that represents an entire paragraph's message. Write that keyword in the margin.

Once you have written several keywords for a long text, go down the line of keywords and see if each word will prompt you to remember the full concept of the paragraph it represents. If not re-read the paragraph and choose a more accurate keyword.

Once every paragraph can be recalled by a keyword, you can begin to create clumps of keywords. If necessary (e.g. if you have a lot of material to memorize) you can reduce the material again so that one word or acronym helps you remember the clumps of keywords.

7. READ AGAIN AND AGAIN

We all retain more when we repeat a reading. It's good practice to read once for a basic understanding of the material, and read at least one more time to grasp the information more thoroughly.

SKIMMING:

Skimming is high speed reading the material in order to get idea of its subject matter without paying close attention to the details.

It can save a lot of time and help to get through lots of material quickly. It is to get general sense of the passage or a book. It is really a useful skill because it helps to skip over unimportant words so that one can read faster.

WHEN SKIMMING?

- Don't read everything but try to skip the text
- Read the titles
- Read the first and last sentences of the paragraphs
- Notice any picture, charts, graphics
- Read the introduction and the summary
- Read a few examples until you understand the concepts that are meant to illustrate

GENERAL AND CAREFUL READING:

General reading:

General reading refers to simple reading. The process whereby a mind, with nothing to operate on but the symbols of the readable matter, and with no help from outside, elevates itself by the power of its own operations. The mind passes from understanding less to understanding more. The skilled operations that cause this to happen are the various acts that constitute the art of general reading.

Careful reading:

Careful reading allows you to understand material thoroughly and to monitor your comprehension. During this technique you read the text slowly to pay close attention to all the details.

Careful reading or reading for detail is probably the most commonly used reading strategy. This is a **slower reading process** that starts at the beginning of a passage and proceeds to the end. When reading for detail, **we should read every sentence**, but we should not try to know the exact meaning of each word. Even native speakers infer the meaning of unknown words as they read. Reassure yourself that even when reading for information, we do not need to know every word on the page but should try and guess its meaning from the context, a valuable skill in and of itself. If you put too much pressure on yourselves when it comes to new vocabulary, the dictionary may become more of a burden than a blessing.