Reading and Making Notes from Texts and Articles

Reading Texts and Articles

Part One: Access Prior Knowledge

- What is reading?
- What are two types of reading?
- What is the main difference?
- How do you know when you need to move from passive to active?
- How can you ensure active reading?

Part Two: Process and Practice

The reading process: 3 steps/3 colours (before/during/after)

1. Before
   - establish purpose (background, class discussion, test, research, assigned, suggested)
   - review context (which course, what topic,)
   - skim (overview of format: title, abstract, intro, headings, subheadings, visuals, lists, summary, questions, appendix)
   - scan and highlight (highlight in colour #1: title; main ideas in abstract or intro; main ideas in headings; main idea in summary)

2. During
   - settle down to read carefully without distraction
   - decide how much to read at once, allowing for review
   - pay attention to
     - ideas (what concepts are being discussed)
     - relationships (reading to course, major and minor ideas to main idea)
     - format (titles and headings, sections and paragraphs, bold and italic,
     - concentration level (when it wanders, acknowledge and go back)
     - speed (too fast/too slow)

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- highlight in colour #2: select major ideas (key words) in each paragraph of each section (usually in first sentence)
- highlight in colour #3: minor ideas that support major ideas in each paragraph
- put numbers in margins if necessary (if bullets or lists are not used)

3. After

- do a quick 'memory dump' of section just read; go back to section and check for accuracy and completeness; fill in missing info/concepts in a different colour pen; recite/verbalize missing pieces in context
- write up notes
- review notes within 24 hours and make a quick memory dump

Making Notes

The purpose of notes is to review the information and create a record of it that is accessible and succinct - main ideas, major points, and supporting details.

- Always *scan* the piece before making notes so that you have the "big picture."
- Put *title* of chapter or article at top of page.
- On top right side, put *course* number, *source* (text, article), and *page* numbers.
- Use a *visual format*, such as outline or two-column notes (point form ONLY)
  - for two-column notes, draw a vertical line about 1/3 across page
  - put headings and main ideas on the right as headings and major ideas as subheadings
  - put minor ideas that support the major ones on the left

- Use *colour coding* as an outline: main ideas, major points, and supporting details.
- *Number* sections of notes based on main headings in chapter or article.
- Use bullets and point form *only* - no sentences copied from the text!
- Don't write down anything you don't really *understand.*
- *Indent* major points under main ideas headings.
- Use *abbreviations* consistently. Put a legend in the margin (P=practice, C=child, F=family, Y=youth).
- Use only one side of the page so that you can line the pages up to see the big picture.