## Guide for Improving Reading Efficiency and Comprehension

Ø **BEFORE YOU BEGIN: READING TOOLS**

*Choosing the best tool for you depends on your work preferences. What works for one person may not work for another.*

· Pencil and notebook

· Post-it notes

· Blank flashcards

· Digital note-taking program: Evernote, Flashcards Deluxe App, desktop sticky notes, etc.

· Highlighters

Ø **PHASE 1: PRE-READING (or Anticipatory Reading)**

*Pre-reading tap into your prior knowledge of a subject, effectively opening a “folder” in your mind of related materials. This improves comprehension and improve time-effective reading..*

**Step 1–Experiential survey (free-write):** Look at the text section and the major titles for each assigned section. What do you think you already know about each title? (Take about 3-5 minutes to jot down a list of your ideas.)

**Step 2–Pre-reading:** Begin by reading with the goal in mind. Identify goals for your reading. (Chapters often do this for you.)Skim your reading and take note of all significant information, including (but not limited to) subtitles, terms in *italics* or **bold** font, author information, pictures, graphs, tables, diagrams, and questions to students within the text. Make a list of what stands out to you. What do you expect to learn that you do not yet know?

**➤ PHASE 2: FIRST READING**

*As you read, take notes in the margins. Ask questions that begin with “How” and “why” in the margins. “How is x procedure conducted?” or “Why does X event lead to Y?” You may also want to mark an important definition or phrase here to find more easily later.*

· **Marginalia/note-taking** [If you do not want to mark your text, consider making notes on sticky notes and post them in the book next to the text section.]

○ Note patterns

○ Make connections (to class discussion, other readings, or your own experiences)

○ Form or revise viewpoints/expectations based on new knowledge (different from opinions)

○ Ask questions

· **Highlighter use** [Some research suggests using highlighters actually DECREASES comprehension. Aim to highlight 20% or less of what you read. Focus on note-taking]

· **Reading analysis and summary:** What seems most unique / unexpected about what you learned? What seems most important? How can you apply it to your own writing and experience? Write a summary for each section. Summary should be about ⅕ as long as the section itself.

Ø **PHASE 3: SECOND READING**

*Once you’ve managed a rough first reading, a second reading will help you comprehend large concepts, patterns, etc.* ***Write short summaries*** *for difficult sections of reading. Explaining what you read typically helps you organize your thoughts.*

Ø **PHASE 4: REVIEW**

*Reviewing your textbook and any notes within will help you to prepare for exams, presentations or other demonstrations.*

· Reread the introductions and conclusions of assigned sections

· Skim chapter headings

· Reread highlighted boxes

· Carefully reread definitions and label illustrations

· Reread highlighted passages.

· Reread any summaries you have written about your reading (during your first and second read-throughs)

· Look at any marginal notes you made, noting how your thinking NOW differs from when you wrote it. (Make corrections as appropriate.)

· Create notecards to help remember key terms or ideas. (Tech savvy/Mobile dependent? Flashcards Deluxe app or Evernote)

· Make specific connections between the reading and the course outcomes on your syllabus. Write a paragraph about these connections and keep it in your notes.

**➤ PHASE 5: REFERENCE**

*You may need to refer back to your textbook for future classes or in the professional field. Reference work is short, and usually for the purpose of checking or clarifying a detail or fact.*

· Place tabs at the beginning of frequently used chapters for easy location.

· Add notes to charts, diagrams, or tables so that you do not have to flip back and forth between pages.

· Review your pre-reading free-write. What has changed in your understanding?