How to Manage Course Readings & Make Notes
Workshop objectives

• To improve reading skills through specific reading strategies

• To become familiar with the criteria and process for researching & evaluating information resources in an academic context, before, during and after reading

• To develop note-making techniques to enhance reading and research skills
Think – Pair – Share

• What types of texts do I normally read?
• How do I approach a text?
• Do I ask myself questions as I read?
• What difficulties do I face when I read texts?
• How do I overcome these difficulties?
• What strategies can I use to help me read & take notes?
• How much do I read in a given time?
The 4S Reading Strategy

• Survey/Search
• Skim
• Select
• Study
Survey/Search

This requires you to look at the text and ask questions:

• **What** is the title of the text? What is it about?
• **How** is the text organised?
• **Who** is the author? Is the author well known in the field? What is their reputation?
• **When** was the text written & published?
• **What** organisation published it?
• **What** kind of text is it? (e.g. authored books; edited books; conference papers; websites; academic journals)
• **Who** is the intended audience?
Skim

- Main ideas and points
- Identify the position
- Topic sentences
- Thesis
- Visuals
Successful students read with a purpose and change the way they read according to the purpose.
In the study phase, we read the text we have selected carefully (in full or in part). This is also known as ‘intensive reading’. Our objective is to thoroughly comprehend what we are reading.
Focused Reading

• Never read without **specific questions** you want to answer.
• Keep asking yourself:
  – How will I **use** this information?
  – What arguments or **evidence** have I discovered?
  – What do I need to **support** my arguments?
• Remove all **distractions**. 30 mins of quiet reading is better than 5 hours interrupted.
• Try to explain or summarise what you have read to someone else. It **sharpens your focus**.
Activity – Selective Reading

Imagine you have been asked to write a report on the following topic:

*What is intercultural communication? In what ways do differing concepts of management impact on the conduct of business internationally?*

Refer to the reading list for this report (on the next slide). Use the reading list to answer the following questions (make a note of them now):

1. Which of the publications on the reading list are books / edited collections / journal articles?
2. Which of the readings in the list would you expect to include:
   - a general overview of the important issues of intercultural communication
   - information about common difficulties in intercultural communication
   - a discussion of the management styles most common in East Asia
   - a discussion of the problems faced by Western managers in China
   - a discussion of different approaches to the training of managers in effective intercultural communication?
3. Arrange the titles in the order in which you would read them. Be ready to explain why.
4. Are there any publications on the list that you would probably NOT read for the report. Why/why not?

(Adapted from: Brick, J. 2006, Academic Culture, Macmillan, South Yarra.)
Activity – Sample Reading List


Reflect on your Reading

Once you have the *relevant* information:

- What have you discovered and learnt?
- How does your new knowledge help your understanding?
- What arguments or evidence have you discovered?
- How have your ideas/opinions been influenced?
- Do you now have a clearer understanding of the task ahead?
Critical Reading

A critical approach to reading involves examining, judging and evaluating any text carefully.
Reading Critically

Reading critically involves asking questions:

• What position is the writer presenting?
• What evidence is the writer offering to support their opinion?
• Is the evidence presented accurately, logically and convincingly?
• Were the methods used to collect the evidence appropriate?
• Is the writer’s opinion based on a particular theory, approach or assumption?
• Are the writer’s claims reasonable?
• How does the writer’s position compare with other writers in this field?
• Do I agree with the writer’s position? Why/why not?
Why make notes?

• Enhance your comprehension and retention
• Summarise or paraphrase another’s ideas and explanations
• Show your critical thinking skills and engagement with the text.
Effective Notes

Good notes can help you to:

• organise your ideas
• keep focused while reading and engage with a text
• keep a record of what you have read so you can locate it again
• think critically and analytically about what you are reading
• enable you to draw links to, and conclusions from, other research
• highlight areas that you need to develop further

(Adapted from: The University of New South Wales 2012. Note-making from Written Text, UNSW Learning Centre, Sydney)
Note-making strategies

There is no singular, perfect note-making strategy. Start by trying one or combine several strategies to see which works for you:

- **underline** or **highlight** keywords or sections of a text
- use post-it notes or page flags to **distinguish ideas**
- make brief **notes in the margins** or between the lines of the text.
- **transform information into knowledge** according to your needs by manipulating it to improve your understanding
This is useful knowledge for my assignment. However, this information seems to be biased in some way. This section of information disagrees with other authors I have read. These ideas are interesting but not relevant to my discipline. Useful quote here. Interesting point raised here – use this! Theory same as (Smith 2010) and (Allen & Jones 2012), interesting!
Transformative Approach

• Ideational Relationships
• Diagrammatic
• Paraphrase
• Summarise
Useful Symbols

& and
+
 greater/more than/better than
< smaller/less than/inferior to
= is the same as/equal to
≠ is not the same as
∴ therefore
∵ because
w/ with
♂ male
♀ female
→ this leads to/produces/causes
Useful Abbreviations

e.g. for example
i.e. that is, that means
NB important/notice this
info. Information
cd could
wd would
govt government
educ education
impt important
devt development
C19 nineteenth century
Cornell 5-R Method of Note-making (for reading or lectures)

- Record
- Reduce
- Recite
- Reflect
- Review
A Template for Setting Out and Writing Effective Notes from a Reading

Remember to use a new page for each new reading!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bibliographic Details</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>Comments on Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrased notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summaries of important information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct quotes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- author’s surname and initial
- the title of book/article,
- the title of the journal,
- publisher,
- place of publication,
- page numbers of article,
- internet site details, including web address etc.
It is a good idea to include the library call number

Paraphrases (i.e. rewriting somebody else’s ideas in your own words) and summaries should form the bulk of the information in this section.

When using a direct quote, be sure to put it between inverted commas, or write it in a different colour, to remind you that it is somebody else’s words: copied verbatim (word for word).

In the comments section, you may write anything that indicates your response to the reading. The questions included in the template are a guide only. You don’t have to include a response to every paraphrase or quote but it is important to think about why you are including information and to spell out any reasons that seem relevant to why you are reading the text.

(Source: Ferfolja, T. 2012. Note-making from Written Text, UNSW Learning Centre, Sydney)
Supplementary Activity

• Select a (brief) journal article that is currently on your subject’s recommended reading list that you plan to use as part of your research for an assignment.

• Read it using the 4-S strategy.

• Discuss the strategy with a partner. Did you find it useful? Would you recommend it? Why/why not?
Discover these!

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- Drop-in & 1:1 consultations
- Writing support sessions
- Conversations@UTS
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- Daily workshops
- Volunteer programmes

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