Strategies for Active and Efficient Reading

- Every study skills textbook recommends surveying your chapter before you read it. Skim it for topic, headings, sub-headings, important graphics, organizational structure, summaries, etc…
- Identify your purpose for reading and set goals based on that purpose:
    - General Understanding – Skim
    - Details – Read and take specific notes
    - Advanced Comprehension – Read and take summary notes, linking details and big picture ideas
- See **PhD Skimming** resource (return to index for link) for different ideas and approaches to reading based on task
- Preview vocabulary words before reading. Write definitions in your own words ahead of time so you can process the words while reading.
- Adjust your reading rate for different types of reading. Quickly skim, slow down for detailed note taking and unfamiliar concepts, skim examples and graphics (but register them – they are often vital)
- Keep a dictionary or dictionary app handy when reading
- Time how long it takes you to read and/or take notes on reading. Block sufficient time for chapter reading based on what you learn
- Read in chunks if needed to aid focus and comprehension
- Find a system for capturing key information. (Return to index to link for **SQ4R** and **S-RUN-R**). Think whether a linear system like a formal outline (Roman numerals), informal outline (outline form without high structure of Roman numerals), key terms (list key ideas), concept map, like Coggle, etc….
- Verbalize and visualize written information. Read out loud if it helps. Create drawings, concept maps, outlines, etc… to increase active reading and make connections with and between the material
- Write questions in the margins or the text or notes to keep interest and attention
- Read an entire paragraph or section before you highlight. Read once, see what the key points are, then go back and pick important information to highlight.
- Use different colored highlighters to mark main points, key vocabulary, and sub-topics. Keep highlighting to 20% of the page, however.
- Read multiple times for multiple purposes. First time – skim. Second time – highlight and notate. Third time – for understanding; connect key ideas/summarize notes or highlights
- Use the **Pomodoro Method** to increase focus and freshness. This helps you read in chunks and take systematic breaks. See additional handout.
- Read chapter material BEFORE lecture so you don't have to struggle to write and comprehend at the same time during class.