How To Read Quickly

Thursday 3rd December 2020

1. Introduction

- Who has too much to read?
- How can you read it all?
- Got to look at reading a text in context of your course:
1. What type of text are you reading?
2. Why are you reading it?
3. Do you have to read it?
4. Do you have to read it in detail?

2. Prioritisation

- Can't read it all in detail – have to prioritise
- What are the most important tasks?
  - ❑ Reading to prepare for a lecture
  - ❑ Recommended reading on reading list
  - ❑ Reading to make notes for assignment
  - ❑ Reading to prepare for seminar
  - ❑ Reading all-students email
  - ❑ Reading email from lecturer

Go to https://pollev.com/richardknott778 and put them in order of importance

3.1 Reading at different levels of detail – skimming

- Skimming is general idea of text
- Can be to get very general idea without scaffolding first
- 2 methods:
- Reading at random points in each line
- Reading word in middle point of each line
- tiny.cc/australiareading
- The context is Australia, but what is it about?

3.2 Reading at different levels of detail - scanning

- Have particular word or phrase you're looking for
- Read each line quickly, not for comprehension, just to see if you can find the word
- Usually use it to find where text talks about a topic
- But with an online document (e.g. .pdf) just use the search function
- tiny.cc/australia reading
- When did the first group of British free settlers arrive in Australia?

4. Reading for a purpose

- Can't read an academic text for interest with no aim – too much detail
- Academic texts not designed to be read beginning to end – 'to be plundered for content'
- So, need a reason for reading, or make one up
- SQ3R:
- Survey, Question, Read, Recall, Review

4.1 Reading for a purpose: SQ3R

- **Survey** – will the text be useful? What's the structure? Contents, abstract, headings, conclusion, summaries
- **Question** – what do you want to find out? If you haven't got one, think of one: who/what/when/why …
- **Read** – look through it quickly, then in detail
- **Recall** – what can you remember of the main points?
- **Review** – have a look at the text again. Did you miss anything? Take notes now, if you want

5. Reading at different levels of detail

- Which parts of a textbook chapter should you survey?
- Summary, headings, subheadings
- Which parts of a report should you survey?
- Executive summary, conclusion, headings, subheadings
- Which parts of a journal article should you survey?
- Abstract, conclusion, headings, subheadings

5.1 Reading at different levels of detail – using text structure

1. Look at general survey if possible – textbook, Wikipedia
2. Read summaries, abstracts, conclusions first
3. Read headings
4. Read subheadings
5. First line of each paragraph – usually topic sentence
6. THEN read in detail, best about 3 paragraphs at a time

- tiny.cc/mixedmethods

5.2 Reading at different levels of detail – taking notes

- Taking notes can help with retention of info & be useful later on
- If take notes, use index cards – smaller area and can file for use later
- If you want to hold electronically, use Word & change size of page to resemble index card (-> Layout -> Size)
- If you use a highlighter, get the reason for reading clear in your head and limit the number of lines you can highlight

5.2 Reading at different levels of detail – taking notes

- Note major headings, so can refer to it while reading
- You will need a criteria for what you take notes on – like reading
- Small size of index cards forces you to choose what's important enough to write down, and what isn't.
- Aids retention of information
- Can use online note-taking apps, eg OneNote, Evernote, but gives you too much space.

5. Summary

- Prioritise what you read & what you don't
- Skimming (for general subject) & scanning (for specific information)
- Read for a purpose (SQ3R)
- Some parts of texts more important to read than others (e.g. abstract, conclusion)
- Scaffold your reading: Wikipedia →abstract/summary →headings & subheadings → first line of each paragraph → read in detail
- Notes help: index cards (paper or online)

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