

Improving Reading Efficiency and Effectiveness

1) Reading Self-Assessment: Place a check mark next to the items that apply to you. (2 minutes)

- I have trouble deciding what is important in a reading assignment.
- I forget what I have read soon after I read it.
- I read assignments straight from the beginning to the end without stopping.
- I have trouble making connections between assigned readings and what we learn in class.
- I tend to lose my place when reading, sometimes rereading what I have already read.
- I feel I have too much to read for my classes.
- I get easily distracted when I read.
- I do other things to avoid my reading assignments.
- I use a highlighter while I am reading and sometimes highlight unimportant information.
- I do not feel that I retain the information that I read.

2) Circle up to three items on the self-assessment that you feel you are most important for you to improve this semester. Share these with your partner. (2 minutes)

3) Read through the "PRR for Natural Sciences" handout and then practice just the Previewing, Reading, and Recalling portions using the included reading (3 to 4 pages selected from your textbook). Be sure to raise your hand if you have any questions about the P-R-R procedure. (13 minutes)

4) Put away the reading and ask yourself the following questions. When both you and your partner are ready, share your responses. (3 minutes)

Name two important concepts or ideas that you recall from the reading.

Name one way that this reading relates to what you are learning or what you already know.

Practice using P-R-R for your next reading assignment! There are some helpful tips on the back. Keep in mind that it will take a few tries to get used to using P-R-R, so give it some time. With practice, you'll build in efficiencies and you will soon find that you are spending less time reading and get more out of what you read.

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Helpful Tips when You Use P-R-R in the future:

Some Tips for Previewing:

- When you preview a textbook chapter, read the introduction, the sub-headings, the bolded terms, the first sentence of each paragraph, and look over the figures, tables and captions. If there are review questions at the end of the chapter, read them before you read the chapter.
- When you preview a journal article, read the abstract, the first paragraph of the introduction, the first and last sentence of each paragraph, and the conclusion (or the last paragraph of the discussion if there is no conclusion).
- When you preview a non-fiction book, read the table of contents, the preface or introduction, and the conclusion or epilogue. Think about the task ahead of you in terms of connecting the introduction and the conclusion. For each chapter, read the first and last page (or summary), the headings and subheadings, and look over figures, tables, and captions.

Some Tips for Reading:

- If your instructor expects you to read before lecture, just move the "Listen, Participate and Take Notes" section of the handout after "Recall." You will still read and recall, but you will do both before you go to lecture.
- Do not try to read the entire chapter non-stop. Instead, divide it up into smaller sections: by heading
- Set realistic goals for how long and how many pages you will be able to read. If you feel your mind wander, you may need to reconsider these goals.
- Take short breaks when you feel your mind wandering. Note that this may be a sign that you are still trying to read too much at once and you may have to break up the reading into even smaller sections.
- Who says you have to read a chapter in one night? Take your book to school with you and work on one chapter over the course of the day when you have breaks. Try bringing a different book each day so that you can maintain interest. Be sure to recall what you've read before you switch to another activity.

Some Tips for Recalling:

- Without looking at your book, try to recall mentally or recite orally the highlights of what you've read. What was most important? What might you see on a test?
- If you want to recall by adding notes from the book to your lecture notes, then write them in a different color ink so that you can keep track of the source of the information. Add the page numbers of helpful figures to your notes.
- You can also recall by testing yourself. With the book closed, try explaining a picture, reciting the definition of an important term, or answering one of the review questions at the end of the chapter.
- If you like highlighting or underlining important information, you can do this when you recall. When you go back to the material in preparation for an exam, you can skim back through the reading and pick out the important parts that you should review. Avoid highlighting and underlining while you read because you will tend to miss the bigger picture and emphasize relatively unimportant material.