Developed by the Student Development & Counseling Center
Administration Building, Room 220
797-5365

Effective Textbook Reading

Use these four steps for getting the most out of reading your textbook.

Step 1: Skim Each Chapter before reading it in its entirety. Attempt to determine the structure and organizational plan so that you understand the specific details of the chapter in terms of their relationship to the total picture.

Use the following principles when skimming the chapter:

- Think about the title of the chapter, and speculate about the content of the chapter based on the title.
- Read the introduction. The main ideas which will be discussed in the chapter will be presented here.
- Read the chapter summary or the final summary paragraphs at the end of the chapter. This will indicate what the author thought was important in the chapter.
- Survey the section headings and subtitles, and actively ask yourself what information might be contained in those sections.
- Look at any pictures, tables, graphs and charts which might be included in the chapter, and actively attempt to figure out the point being emphasized by them.

Step 2: Read the Chapter Actively using the following principles:

- Read purposefully to answer questions you have formulated during the skimming process.
- Read paragraph by paragraph, stopping briefly after each paragraph to mark important ideas. (See Guide for Marking Your Textbook).
- Read selectively. Make an effort to focus on the nouns, pronouns and verbs while scanning the rest of the words in each sentence.
- Pace yourself as you read. If you find yourself losing concentration, stop and take a short 5 to 10 minute break.

Step 3: Practice Self Recitation. Stop at appropriate intervals; look away from the assignment; and restate in your own words the main parts of the section you have just read. Then check to make sure you have recalled accurately all important ideas by looking back at the reading material.

Step 4: Review The Material you have read. Build into your weekly time schedule periodic intervals for reviewing the textbook information. Proper marking of your textbook will facilitate this process.