

## Moving from Reading to Learning (SQR<sup>5</sup>)

*We all read for many different reasons. But when it comes to reading a textbook, we read to learn. In most university classrooms, the textbook is a foundation for the lecture, the lab and all other learning experiences developed by the faculty member. It is designed to create both a foundation of knowledge and a depth of understanding in a specific discipline.*



*Using the seven steps (SQR<sup>5</sup>) discussed below will help you make the best use of your textbook while increasing your knowledge base.*

- 1 SURVEY:** Skim over the entire reading assignment so that you can preview the material and know what to expect. These are things you should be skimming for:

*The length of the reading assignment.* This will give you an idea of the time it will take you to read your assignment. Don't start a 60 minute reading assignment if you only have 10 minutes. Use your weekly planner to schedule the time needed to complete this critical task.

*The organization of the material.* Read the chapter titles, introductions, headings and sub-headings.


*Topics that are familiar or of interest to you.* Making connections between what you are reading and your prior knowledge will help you achieve higher levels of learning and retention.

*The focus of this chapter.* Reading the chapter summary, last few paragraphs and review questions will help increase your ability to understand the content as you read it for learning.

- 2 QUESTION:** Take time to think through what you have skimmed. What will be covered in your full reading? Do you already have questions about the content? Write these down. Then read for the answers to your questions.
- 3 READ<sup>1</sup>:** This is the most comprehensive step. Take the time to read (and re-read if necessary) the material until you have a good understanding of the content and the connections between the various sections. If there are content areas that you don't understand, make a note of them and ask your instructor or a tutor once you have finished the assignment.
- 4 RECORD<sup>2</sup>:** Write down brief notes with ideas, facts, or details from your reading. You can put these in the margins or on flash cards, mind maps, fishbone diagrams, etc. for future review sessions. The more you do to prepare your future study tools now, the better.
- 5 RECITE<sup>3</sup>:** Read out loud the questions you have written and the answers you have learned from your reading. This should give you a better understanding of the material and, in so doing, allow for better retention.

- ⑥ **REFLECT<sup>4</sup>**: You should reflect on what you are reading throughout your study of this material. Stop whenever you can weave new information or ideas with other information you already know. By making associations between what you already know and what you are trying to add to your memory, you increase both your understanding and retention of that new material.
- ⑦ **REVIEW<sup>5</sup>**: Allow time for a brief review at the end of each reading session. As little as 10 minutes of review each day will reduce your rate of forgetting from 80% to 20%.

Because learning is cumulative, building these short review sessions into your weekly calendar and completing them each day will help you learn today's lessons while reducing the time needed to learning tomorrow's new lessons as well.

 See *Using Bloom's Taxonomy for Successful Learning*, *Reading College Textbooks Effectively*, and *Finding the Main Idea*, for more suggestions for increasing your learning and understanding.