Academic Reading Strategies

Maintain Focus, Determine Importance and Retain Information

To better demonstrate these strategies, this presentation will reference a short article on Ethanol. This article can be found here

You will need this to understand the workshop!!

Effective academic reading=

pre-reading + targeted reading + processing

Skimming &

Questioning

Scanning for answers & text marking

Organizing & connecting info

Before you begin, ask yourself

- Do you read too quickly?
- Are you just scanning and not seeing important details?
- Do you read too slowly and highlight too much information?
- What would make you a better reader?
- Are you able to focus while reading?

Have a goal in mind before we begin.

PRE-READING

Skimming= lifting off the surface
Title + Abstract + Headings + 1st sentences

This first step does not involve any text marking, it is only meant to give you a general understanding of the article/chapter before proceeding to the next steps.

Now try skimming the practice article to see how it works.

This article is short, so there are no headings or abstracts. For this exercise, only read the first sentence of each paragraph.

What happens when we combine the first sentences into one paragraph? This is demonstrated below:

“Ethanol (CH3CH2OH; which is also called ethyl alcohol, grain alcohol, and EtOH) is a clear, colorless liquid. American proponents of ethanol fuel highlight two principal advantages: its environmental impact and its energy security benefits. The adoption of ethanol reduces noxious emissions such as carbon monoxide (CO) and pollutants from internal combustion engines; hence, it is appreciably less deleterious to the environment than gasoline.Ethanol is a renewable biofuel; in only six months a new crop can be grown, harvested, and converted to fuel, so it is profitable for rural crop–producing economies. American opponents of ethanol fuel point to three disadvantages: its price fluctuations, its energy level, and its availability. The price of ethanol fluctuates on a different cycle than gasoline; therefore, at times ethanol is more expensive than gasoline, and at times it is cheaper. The Obama administration is working on expanding the ethanol infrastructure.”

This is a great way to preview the contents of a reading. While this is helpful for skimming for general information, this still leaves us with a lot of questions about Ethanol! The second part of skimming involves questioning.

Questioning= Finding/Creating Qs from preview

Who? What? When? Where? Why? Which?
How many/much? How long? How often?

Now try creating questions based on the preview and write them down.

Possible questions:

- What types of grain can produce Ethanol?
- How does it produce energy security?
- How much less harmful is Ethanol to environment?
- Where are biofuel crops grown?
- Why does the price fluctuate? What's its cycle?
- What are the probs with the energy level?
- Why is availability low?
- How will the US gov. expand infrastructure?

TARGETED READING

Scanning= Step 1) find answers to Q's Step 2) mark names, dates, etc.

Tip: When we stop reading to look up words that we are unfamiliar with, our brains shift focus and much of what we just put into our short-term-memory is lost. This is not effective for long-term learning, and makes academic reading more time consuming and difficult. If you are unfamiliar with a word, use context clues to continue on. Don't stop every time a word is unfamiliar to you!

Text Marking

Find yourself highlighting everything? You are not alone!

Many students over-notate their reading and notes, leaving them with lots of information to trudge through during their studying. This is not very effective for learning!

Practice only marking the most important words. For example, if we wanted to know what ethanol was made of, we would not underline the entire sentence that tells us. We would only underline the parts that answer our specific question:

"[Ethanol] is a renewable biofuel made from starch and sugar–based crops like corn grain and sugar cane or from cellulosic feedstocks like grass, wood, or recycled newspapers."

Be concise! You can always go back to mark more later if you need to, but it is more difficult to get rid of markings that have already been excessively made.

Text Marking

Now try scanning the practice article to find the A's to our Q's and text marking key points.

Here are a few of the example questions that were listed earlier in the presentation. We would note the answers to these questions in our notes!

Questions

1.)What types grain produce Ethanol?
2.) How produces energy security?
3.) Where are biofuel crops grown?
4.) Why does price fluctuate? Cycle?
5.) What are problems w/energy level?
6.) How will US Government expand infrastructure?

Answers

1.) Corn, sugar cane, grass, wood,newspaper
2.) Lower dependence on fossil fuels/imports
3.) Mostly Midwest?
4.) ----------
5.) 20-30% less energy level than gasoline
6.) Department of Agriculture will invest in future biofuel tech

What about question #4?

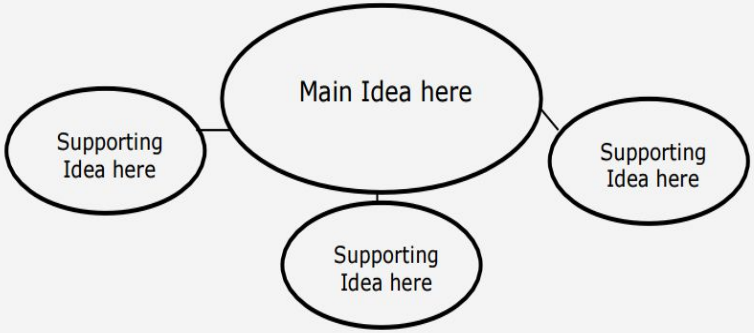
What about questions without answers in the reading?

- Future topic for a research project
- Discussion topic in class
- Way to engage and connect with your professor

PROCESSING

Organizing / Connecting Information

Create a mind map of your notes



For some students, **recopying** their notes is the best method of review. Try it!

For other students, **typing** their notes works great.

Incorporate PowerPoint slides into your recopied notes.

Once a week, review all of your notes from the entire week. This review should be longer, at least 30 minutes. By doing a **weekly review**, you won't have to spend as much time studying when exams come around.

Graphic organizers- sort info by mind maps, tables, graphs

Another option- recite/ discuss with yourself/ a friend

Adapted from "How to Study in College" by Walter

The Cornell Method

The Cornell Note-taking System

2 1/2"	6"
Cue Column	**Notetaking Column** 1. **Record**: During the lecture, use the notetaking column to record the lecture using telegraphic sentences. 2. **Questions**: As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. Also, the writing of questions sets up a perfect stage for exam-studying later. 3. **Recite**: Cover the notetaking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words. 4. **Reflect**: Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: "What's the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know? What's beyond them? 5. **Review**: Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you'll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.
2"	Summary After class, use this space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.

Adapted from How to Study in College 7/e by Walter Pauk, 2001 Houghton Mifflin Company

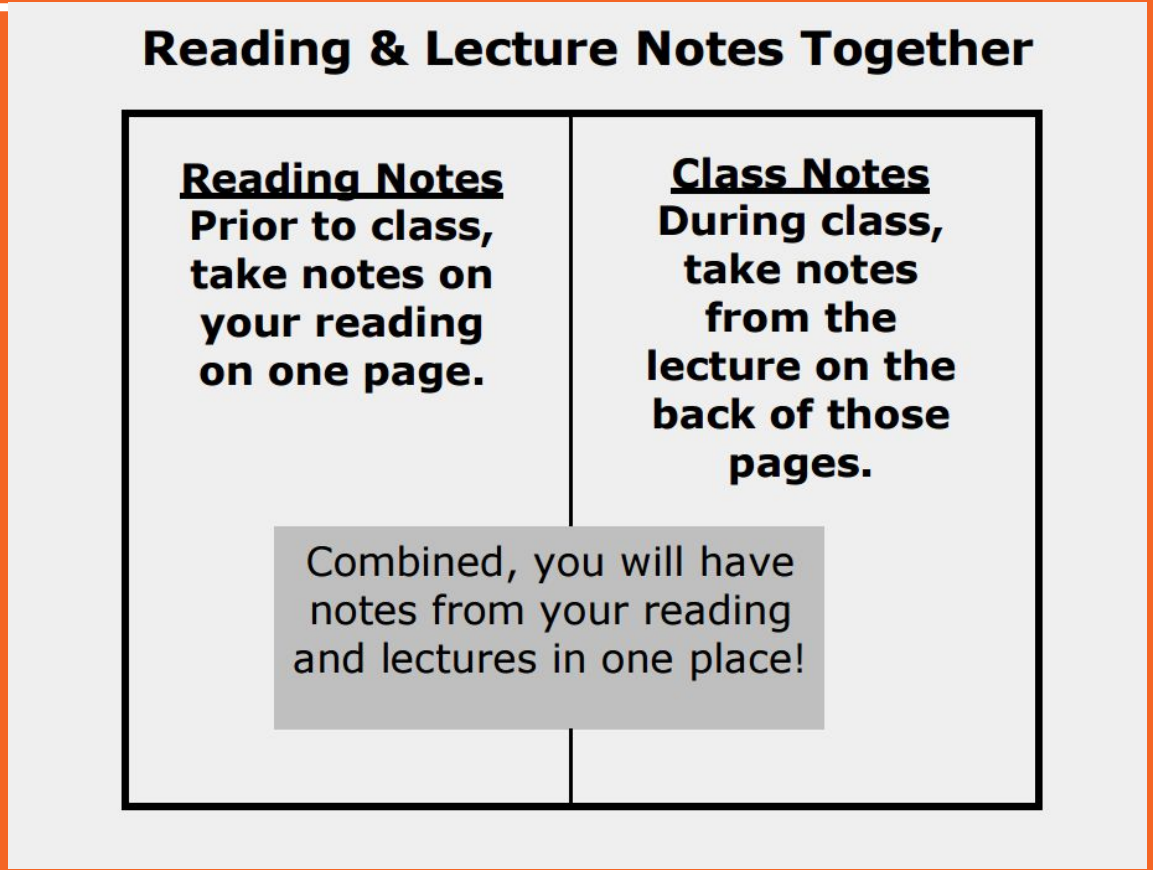
L= cues

R= notes

B= sentence/ paragraph summary

Same style= easy comparison

Predict test content, prepare model ?s



Doing this Workshop for Class Credit?

Once you have completed this workshop, email our office at studentsuccesscenter@uhcl.edu (subject line: "Reading Strategies Online Workshop Confirmation") with your name, student ID, and **one** of the following tasks:

1.) Find a scholarly article that you have been assigned for class or on a topic you find interesting. Then send 3 questions you came up with during your pre-reading, the answers found in your targeted reading, and then how you processed the information with other topics from class, real life, etc.
2.) Send a picture of how you currently text mark your reading and another picture of an example of how you would text mark based on the tips from this workshop for future readings. Then write 6-8 sentences about why you would use either your own strategies or the strategies proposed in the workshop.

3-question survey (30 sec-1 min) at this link:

https://tinyurl.com/uhclsscworkshop

Good to see you here today!
Let us know if we can be of help to you throughout the semester-
studentsuccesscenter@uhcl.edu