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## Strategies for Studying, Learning, and Researching
## By David Alderoty © 2014

## Chapter 19) Reading for College and Graduate Studies, with Active Learning Strategies
## Over 2,950 words

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## If you want to go to the previous chapter, left click on the link below
### www.TechForText.com/SL/Chapter-18/PDF.pdf

## If you want to go to the table of contents of this chapter left click on these words

## To Access Additional Information with Hyperlinks

After I complete a writing task, I select a number of websites from other authors, to provide additional information, alternative points of view, and to support the material I wrote. These websites contain articles, videos, and other useful material. The websites can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinks, which are the **blue underlined words**, presented at the end of some of the sections, subsections, and paragraphs.

If a link fails, use the blue underlined words as a search phrase, with www.Google.com, or www.Bing.com The search will usually bring up the original website, or one or more good alternatives.

## Note for the Review Section

Most of the material in the following section was presented in previous chapters, and it is repeated for review.  All of the review material is highlighted in light yellow.  If you are familiar with this material, you can skip it.  You can left click on these words to go directly to the new material.

### REVIEW SECTION
### A Review of General Study Concepts and Strategies, Most of which were Presented in Previous Chapters

### How to Determine What Learning Techniques and Strategies (Study Skills) Will Work for You

There are many learning techniques, and strategies (study skills) presented in this e-book, and the websites that are hyperlinked to it.  However, each student must select the techniques and strategies that work for them.  This can involve testing various study skills for a couple of weeks, to determine how well they work **for you**.  This essentially involves practicing with various study skills, to evaluate them.  Based on your experiences with your practice sessions, you can modify the study skills so they work better for you.  **However, each student is unique, and study skills that work well for one student, may not work for another.**

# Factors that Determine the Usefulness of a Study Skill, and Academic Success in General

<u>Important factors that determine the usefulness of a specific study skill relates to the courses a student is taking, and how the course grades are evaluated.  Generally, you should focus on study strategies that are closely aligned with your courses and related examinations</u>.  Three simplified examples are presented below.

**1)** If you are taking a math course that is graded on solving math problems, you should practice solving math problems of the type that will be on the examinations.

**2)** If you are studying, a social science course, which will be graded on multiple-choice questions, you should practice answering the type of multiple-choice questions at will appear on the examinations.

**3)** If you are taking, a business course that will be graded on how well you answer essay questions, you should practice answering the type of essay questions that will appear on your examinations.

Practice of this nature, and study in general, should be spread out over the entire term, involving at least six hours a week of study for each 3-credit course.  Cramming should be avoided, but before examinations, you should do some intense study and practice on the material that will be on the test.

## **Grades Based on Term Papers, or Research Papers**

If a term paper or research paper is involved with your course grade, you should write a first draft early in the term, and submit it to the instructor for evaluation and correction.  Then you probably will have to rewrite part or all of it, to obtain a good grade and meet the instructor's requirements.  **This strategy will eliminate all of the problems presented in the following paragraph.**

An important idea to understand about term papers and research papers is they are graded subjectively.  Your grade may be partly or totally determined by what the instructor believes is appropriate for the course.  You can also get a low grade, for a good paper, if the instructor does **not** understand your work.  This can happen, when the sentence and paragraph structure is faulty, excessively complex, or when the instructor does not have the knowledge required to understand the topic of your paper.

## **Material to Review Before Reading THIS Chapter**

The ideas and techniques in this chapter are based on **active learning** strategies.  Active learning was discussed in chapter 17. If you are not familiar with active learning, you should read the first section from chapter 17, **which is reproduced below**:

## <mark>Review of Passive and Active Learning from Chapter 17</mark>

### <mark>Passive Versus Active Learning</mark>

### Review from Chapter 17 on Passive Learning

#### What is Passive Learning?

Based on the way I am using the terminology, passive learning, is an attempt to acquire knowledge, **just** by listening, reading, and/or watching.  For example, when you are listening to a lecture, reading a textbook, watching a video, without any reinforcing learning activities, you are engaged in passive learning.  This is not an effective learning strategy for most people, because it does **not** facilitate skill development, and it usually does not aid comprehension and long-term memory retention.  Active learning is the alternative to passive learning, which is highly effective, and it is explained below.

### Review from Chapter 17, on Active Learning

#### What is Active Learning?

Based on the way am using the terminology, **active learning** involves one or more **learning activities** to facilitate **comprehension, skill development,** and **memory retention** of study material.  The **learning activities** can involve any of the following, **in relation to the study material**: problem solving, answering questions, creating questions, discussing, explaining, teaching, or working on a project.  The above is not a complete

list; there are **many other** learning activities.

  Even <u>thinking about the study material</u>, may function, as a learning activity, but it will usually be much less effective than the examples listed above.  However, if the thinking is coupled with other learning activities, such as <u>problem solving</u>, and <u>answering questions</u>, or <u>any type of practice</u>, it is an effective learning strategy.


## Word Processor Software

Note, I use the phrase Microsoft Word throughout this text for convenience.  If you do not need the advanced features in Word, you may prefer simpler word processor software, which is usually less expensive or free.  See the following website for free alternatives: [10 Free Minimalist Word Processors for Greater Productivity](#)


## <mark>The following material is new.</mark>

## <mark>Reading to Learn, Using Active Learning Strategies</mark>

### Reading for College and Graduate Studies

Much of college and graduate school studies involved reading textbooks and articles.  For some courses, especially in graduate school, the material that you are required to read may have **not** been covered in class.  Thus, much of college and graduate school involve an independent learning effort, based on reading.

  However, simply reading textbooks and articles is an

ineffective **passive learning strategy**, if it does not involve reinforcing learning activities.  Under the following subheadings, there are techniques that you can use with reading that are based on active learning, which will facilitate comprehension and long-term memory retention.

### **Reading and Rereading, to Reach a <span style="color:red">Goal</span>**

If you happen to be very familiar with the material you are reading, you might be able to learn the material, simply by reading it once.  However, this is usually **not** the case, with most of the study material from college and graduate school courses.  Thus, all of the techniques in this chapter require reading the study material **more** than once.

**However, simply reading, and rereading study material, <span style="color:red">without a specific goal,</span> is generally an ineffective strategy for most students.**  Your reading efforts should be based on one or more **goals**.  **For example,** rereading a chapter in your textbook, until you can answer a series of questions, until you understand the material you read, and/or until you obtain adequate notes from your reading material.

**You must keep your goals in mind as you read, and you must read with the aim of understanding the text.**  This generally requires that you very your speed as you read.  Difficult sentences and paragraphs should be read slowly, and perhaps reread several times.  The easier portions of the text can be read

faster, providing you understand it.

Your first efforts at reading study material can involve skim reading, to obtain a general outline in your mind.  You can place this general outline on paper if you prefer.  After this, you should carefully and thoroughly, read the study material, without skim reading or speed-reading.

When you reread a chapter in a textbook more than twice, you might prefer to <u>skim read</u>, or use <u>speed-reading techniques, or only read the portions of the text that you have not mastered.</u> You can mark paragraphs that you mastered with a pen or highlighting marker to avoid unnecessary rereading.


## <u>Skim Reading, and Speed-Reading, can Sometimes be Dysfunctional</u>

<u>Note, all of the dysfunctions mentioned below, are likely to happen when selective portions of the text are **not** read, or when the text is read at a speed that interferes with comprehension. Skim reading and speed-reading, can be a highly effective strategy, **to prepare yourself for a thorough reading of the text, or to review text after you have carefully read it**. However, when someone attempts to substitute skim reading or speed-reading, for a careful reading of the entire text, at moderate speed, the dysfunctions mentioned in the following paragraphs are likely to result.</u>

Skim reading and speed-reading can result in a

misinterpretation or misunderstanding of the text.  The reader might inadvertently devise their own meaning to the text, based on keywords.  When this happens, the reader is not likely to know that he or she misunderstood the text.

The problem mentioned above is likely to happen, when the reader is trying to decipher the meaning of the text, as quickly as possible, by reading, topic sentences, headings, subheadings, and paying little or no attention to the **remainder of the text**.  This might appear to be a sensible strategy, and some sources recommend this approach.  However, it is **<span style="color:red">quite dysfunctional</span>**, **unless the entire text** is **carefully read**, at a **moderate speed,** before, or after skim reading or speed-reading.

The idea to keep in mind is a single word can change the meaning of a sentence, a paragraph, and an entire paper.  The meaning of each sentence and paragraph is determined by **<span style="color:red">all</span> of the words it contains**.

If you ever obtained an irrational or unrelated response to your correspondence, most likely the individual skim read the material you sent.  When this happens, the reader most likely, inadvertently generated an erroneous interpretation of your correspondence, based on their expectations, experience, and a few of the topic sentences or words in your letter or email.  Problems similar to the above can happen when instructors are in a rush to grade term papers or essays.

When the problems mentioned above happen, it can be

difficult to clear up the confusion, because the reader is usually convinced that they understood the material they read. Difficulties of this nature can sometimes be resolved by sending multiple emails, explaining the material in more detail, or with one or more phone calls or face-to-face meetings.

## Questions and Reading

### Answering Questions, Based on Your Reading

Answering a series of questions that relates to material you read, is an effective way of checking and reinforcing comprehension and memory retention.  This usually involves, rereading the study material until you can answer all or most of the questions correctly.  Some students might prefer to read the questions, before they carry out a thorough reading of the study material.

**The above is a common technique, and many textbooks have a series of questions at the end of a chapter.**

### What to Do If the Study Material Does Not Have a Set of Related Questions

If the study material you are reading does **not** have a set of related questions, you can create your own while you are reading. The act of creating your own questions, based on the material you are reading, can facilitate comprehension and memory retention.  Ideally, the questions you create should be neatly

typed into a Microsoft Word document, so you can review what you learned throughout the semester and before examinations, by answering the questions.  This technique can be combined with taking notes as you read, which is explained below.

## Note Taking, and Highlighting, as You Read

### Taking Notes as You Read

Taking notes based on the study material your reading, is an effective active learning strategy, <u>assuming you periodically review the notes throughout the semester.</u>  Notes based on your reading, should be more organized, and detailed then the notes you take in class.  The notes from your reading can include <u>paraphrases</u>, <u>quotes</u>, <u>diagrams</u>, <u>mathematics</u>, <u>your own questions,</u> your comments, and <u>any other text that will help you master the material you are reading</u>.

These notes should be typed into a Microsoft Word document.  It is generally best to use one Microsoft Word document for each book that you are reading.  Some students may find it more convenient to use one document, for all of the reading material associated with a specific course.

For most students, it might be best to create the notes directly in a Word document.  This is more efficient than writing notes on paper, and typing them into the computer at a later point in time.

## <u>Taking Notes, as You Read for a<br>Research Project, or Thesis</u>

Taking notes as you read for research project or thesis, generally involves many articles, and a number of books.  This might also include Internet-based material.  These notes must be carefully organized, with the publication data, especially the title, and author's name.  This is because some of the notes will generally be used for quotes or paraphrases, in your research paper or thesis.  These notes can easily be organized, if they are typed into a Microsoft Word document.  Specifically, you can rearrange the notes in a Word document when necessary, with the cut and paste function.

**<u>You can write your research paper or thesis in the Microsoft Word document that contains your notes.  This can be very convenient, because, you can consult your notes easily, while you are writing.</u>**

To find your notes quickly, place a title, or even a number, at the beginning of each note.  You can use the <u>title of the source</u>, the <u>author's name</u>, or <u>any words you prefer to use as a title for a note</u>.  **Then, you can use Microsoft Word's search function, to find a specific note.  This involves entering the author's name, or any relevant phrase, into the search function.**

To avoid confusing your notes, with your own writing, use a different color font for your notes.  This is especially important if you are using the same Microsoft Word document for your notes

and your writing.

Notes from websites, should contain a hyperlink to the website.  Hyperlinks, can be created with Microsoft Word simply by typing the URL into a Word document, and pressing the enter key.  The hyperlinks are useful, if you want to obtain additional information from a website, after you took notes.  Sometimes you might prefer to use a hyperlink to a website, without taking any notes.  Keep in mind that the websites that you use can contain articles, as well as videos.

To avoid confusing the notes from different articles, books, and websites, you may find it convenient to use a line, or a series of dashes, between the notes.  See the following examples, which include instructions.  (The following instructions are based on Microsoft Word 2010, but you can probably create similar lines with other versions of Word, as well as other brands of word processor software.)

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To create lines similar to the above, place your finger on the shift key, and maintain the pressure.  Then hold down the **– key** (**dash key**) until you have a line that covers approximately half the page, from left to right.  Then remove your fingers from the above keys, and **then press the enter key**.  When this is done, a black line will be created, covering the entire width of the page.

Note you should create a similar line at the end of your notes such as the following.

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A good alternative to the above is to make a series of dots to separate your notes.  This is done with Microsoft Word, in the same way as the above, except instead of holding down the dash key, you hold down the **asterisk key.**  This will initially produce a series of asterisks, such as the following ************.  When the shift key is pressed, the asterisks are converted into a series of dots that covers the entire width of the page.

Note you should create a similar line at the end of your notes such as the following.

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If you want to separate your notes with a heavy black line, such as the above, with Microsoft Word, **hold down the shift key**, press the **#key**, until you have about 10 number signs, such as ##########.  After this, press the enter key, and a thick black line will form. You should create a similar line at the end of your notes such as the following.

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Note, the three techniques described above are not the only way of creating lines.  However, other techniques may result in lines that do not automatically adjust to screen variations, and they may interfere with the text.

## Adding Notes, in your Textbook, as You Read

It is sometimes helpful to create notes, or clarifying questions in the margin of textbooks.  However, you cannot write very much in the margins, because of the limited space.

An alternative to the above is to staple a sheet of paper for notes, onto the pages of a textbook.  Of course, you do not have to do this on every page.  You can staple the sheets of paper at the end of a chapter, or on selected pages throughout the textbook.  It is usually, easier to staple the sheets of paper, after you completed some or all of your notes.  After the sheets of paper are stapled, you could add additional notes if necessary.

## Highlighting What You Read

Many students highlight portions of the text that they are reading.  This technique might be quite ineffective, if you are **not** highlighting important concepts, and if you do **not** periodically review the material, you highlighted.  However, highlighting may be an effective learning strategy, if you are highlighting important concepts that require periodic review to master.

In order to highlight the important concepts, you should thoroughly read the text at least once.  Then, you can skim read the text, and highlight the relevant sentences.  The material you highlighted should be studied, and reviewed periodically throughout the semester, and just before examinations.

Another way of using highlighting is to mark portions of the text that you do not fully understand.  Then, you can show the

highlighted sections to anyone that can explain the confusing material to you, such as your instructor, a tutor, or even another student.  Alternatively, you may be able to obtain the information you need from an Internet search, by using some or all of the highlighted words as a search phrase.

Highlighting will be a more effective learning strategy if you combine it with other techniques, such as note taking, and/or creating a set of questions, based on material you highlighted.

## Advanced Reading and Learning Strategies

### SQ3R Reading Method

The SQ3R reading method, is an effective learning technique that is widely recommended by instructors.  This method is explained exceptionally well on the following five websites: **1)** SQ3R reading method,  **2)** SQ3R, Studying More Effectively,  **3)** SQ3R - Improving Reading Comprehension,  **4)** Videos SQ3R MrGWilson1 **5)** Videos The Learning Edge: Reading Strategies- The SQ3R.mov

I am presenting in my own words a brief description of the SQ3R technique, which is primarily based on the ideas illustrated on the above websites.  SQ3R is a five-step method, and it is explained in the five paragraphs presented below.

**1) Survey** the study material.  This is essentially a quick skim reading of the text, primarily focused on the **title of the chapter**, **introduction**, **headings**, **subheadings**, **topic sentences, graphics**, **definitions, chapter summary**, and

**questions** presented at the end of a chapter.  The primary goal is to get a <u>general picture</u>, or <u>outline</u> of the chapter, which ideally should be written on paper or in a Microsoft Word document.

**2)** Create **questions**, based on the material you surveyed, such as **<u>title of the chapter</u>**, **<u>introduction</u>**, **<u>headings</u>**, **<u>subheadings</u>**, **<u>topic sentences</u>**, **<u>graphics</u>**, **<u>definitions</u>**, and **<u>chapter summary.</u>**  The questions you create ideally should be written on paper or in a Microsoft Word document.

**3) Read** the material carefully, with the goal of *answering the questions and comprehending the overall meaning of the text.  *This should include the questions you created, and any questions that were presented at the end of the chapter.  Your answers, and related questions, should ideally be written on paper or in a Microsoft Word document.

**4) Recite** the material after you read a paragraph, subsection, or section, which should be done orally (verbalized aloud).  This step can include an evaluation of the material you read, and the creation of additional questions, which should be verbalized aloud.  Try to answer the questions you created in this step, step two, and any questions presented at the end of the chapter.  The questions and answers should be verbalized aloud.  Ideally, you should also write the questions and answers on paper or in a Microsoft Word document.  This can also include your notes, with paraphrases and your comments.

**5) Review** the material you read, and the notes and

questions you wrote.  This should be done periodically throughout the semester, and just before examinations.


## A Reading and Studying Technique I often Use
## Multiple Reading & Video Technique

When I want to acquire new information, I read about the same concept, theory, definition, or technique, from a number of authors.  Then I reinforce what I learned from reading, by watching videos that cover similar material.  This usually involves at least three articles, and two videos.  When the material I am studying is lengthy or highly complex, I might read up to a dozen articles, and watch at least six videos.

I am calling the above the **multiple reading & video technique**.  With this technique, any deficiencies in an author's explanations or wording are circumvented by the material from the other authors.

There are a number of advantages of using reading and video.  Reading text has a specific set of advantages in relation to learning, which cannot be obtained from videos.  However watching videos has a set of unique advantages, which cannot be obtained from reading.  When reading text is combined with watching videos, the result is an almost ideal learning strategy.

Usually, text has some advantages over videos, when portions of the material are complex, and require slow reading, and rereading.  With text, you can quickly select a sentence, or

paragraph anywhere in a chapter, for additional study, or to refresh your memory.

However, videos are usually superior to reading when there are visual elements involved.  It is very difficult to describe or comprehend a <span style="color:red">**set**</span> of visual sequences in written language.  A simple example, involves learning how to use software that involves opening a series of menus, and clicking on a specific section of the menu.  Videos are also superior to reading when the learning process involves the study of movements.  Examples are the <u>wing movements of various species of birds</u>, the <u>sequence of movements that take place in mechanical devices</u>, and the <u>study of emotional responses, facial expressions, and body language of people</u>.

The **multiple reading & video technique,** can be used with all of the techniques and strategies described in this chapter, including the SQ3R method.


## See the Following Websites from other Authors for Additional Information, and Alternative Perspectives on Reading and Study Strategies

**1)** [The Read-Recite-Review Study Strategy Effective and Portable Mark A. McDaniel](#),  **2)** [Textbook Reading Strategies](#),  **3)** [How to study: Stop highlighting, cramming and rereading notes. Start taking practice tests and using flashcards](#),  **4)** [ 2 Important Strategies for Effective Studying By JOHN M. GROHOL, PSY.D.](#),  **5)** [Video: Active Reading SQ3R](#),  **6)** [Video: Speed Reading](#)

Course **(1/5)**,  **7)** Video: Speed Reading Course **(2/5)**, **8)** Video: Speed Reading Course **(3/5)**,  **9)** Video: Speed Reading Course **(4/5)**,  **10)** Video: Speed Reading Course **(5/5)**.


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## HYPERLINK TABLE OF CONTENTS

Below is the hyperlink table of contents of this chapter.  If you left click on a section, or subsection, it will appear on your computer screen.  Note the chapter heading, the yellow highlighted sections, and the blue subheadings are **all active links.**

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**left click on the link below**
**www.TechForText.com/SL/Chapter-20/PDF.pdf**

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**the chapters in this e-book go to**
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