



## Reading Skills

### Session Aims

It's not called 'reading for a degree' for nothing. University study involves gathering, processing and understanding vast amounts of information for which efficient and effective reading skills are crucial. This session aims to enable mentees to reflect upon their own reading style and consider strategies for improving this skill.

### You will need:



To access 1<sup>st</sup> years' reading list and print off a selection of articles – one for each member of your group

### Activity

- Assign each member of the group one article, relevant to their course, and ask them to read it. (*15 minutes*)
- Each student writes a short summary of the main arguments/points in the article. (*15 minutes*)

Encourage them to consider the article critically by thinking about:

- Who is the author and what was their purpose/agenda?
  - How reliable is the source?
  - How accurate is the information? What was it based on?
  - How current are the views expressed?
  - What does it omit?
- Each mentee to feedback to the rest of the group (*30 minutes*)



**Session:**  
**1 Hour**  
(Timings are approximate)

### Useful Resources

For more techniques and advice see Transition Tips 'Reading and Research' available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transition/study-skills-resources>

See also, Strategies for Reading on Key Skills Moodle course

# Reading Techniques



## **Be selective about what you read**

- Compare books thoroughly before deciding which one to use
- Leaf through the book you choose and look at the pictures, tables, charts. Read the titles of chapters and see whether you need to read all or just part of it.
- Skim the introduction and conclusion before you start; read the abstract if there is one. This will give you an idea of what the reading is about. The introduction often describes the structure of the book so can be useful in determining which parts will be relevant.
- Establish what your purposes are – are you looking for facts, ideas, evidence, theories or background? You will get more out of the text if you know what you are looking for.
- Skim read – try to read a sentence or a phrase at a time rather than each individual word.
- Monitor your understanding – read a few sentences then think about it. Sum up what you have read in your head.
- Re-read difficult paragraphs – don't worry about doing this, as academic texts are often hard.

## **Making Notes**

- Underline & highlight important points (if it's your own book!), write down questions as you think of them and note key words and concepts.
- Make notes by paragraph – do not take lots of notes as you go along. Read a paragraph then think about it and summarise it.
- Read without your pen in your hand so you won't be tempted to copy out of the book; make notes in your own words.
- Use a mind map to take notes – this forces you to use keywords and truly understand what you are reading

**See 'Effective Note-Taking' sheet for more tips**