**Section Three:**

**Methodical Reading: Reading for Specific Purposes**

**3.1. Reading Techniques**

People read various materials with different reading speeds that go hand in hand with the distinct purposes for which they are reading. Employing the right reading technique ensures reading comprehension which is “an active process that requires an intentional and thoughtful interaction between the reader and the text comprehension instruction” (National Reading Panel, 2000; as cited in Rizkoh, Ohoiwutun & Thamrin, 2014, p.2). Students rarely read study books from cover to cover. On account of that, learning how to read actively is basically a study skill in college.

**3.1.1. Speed reading.** This type of reading aims at saving ***time*** and ***effort*** while trying to get information from a given text or book. Moreover, reading fast is by no means something negative or indicates that the reader does not understand the content of the material. In fact, the reader avoids reading the whole material and preferably selects through employing the techniques of quick reading. Weir and Khalifa (2008) state that “expeditious reading involves quick, selective and efficient reading to access desired information in a text” (p.5). In the same vein, Wechsler and Bell (2006) maintain that speed reading helps to “achieve … reading goals, professional and personal, in a matter of hours, not months” (p.2). In a nutshell, speed reading has many benefits and provides the reader with more opportunities for gaining more information. Reading is no longer a hard task in which the students spend hours and days reading without getting what is exactly targeted. Speed reading includes the following techniques:

***3.1.1.1. Skimming.*** By definition, skimming is a quick reading technique by virtue of which the reader gets the overall meaning or the gist of the content of the material in a short amount of time. The reader gets the essence of the material with the help of some key words or other visual aids in the excerpt. This technique has three types: previewing, overviewing and reviewing.

A number of steps can be followed to skim a given selection or even book:

* Reading the title(s);
* Reading the introduction;
* Reading the opening sentence or only a few words of each paragraph. However, sometimes, important ideas are left to the end. So, it is advisable to read also the last sentence if main ideas are not found at the beginning;
* Reading the sub-headings;
* Checking tables, figures, graphs, charts or pictures if any;
* Looking for any visual aids such as underlined, italicized or boldface words, sentences or passages;
* Reading the conclusion.

In addition to these guidelines, Sutz and Weverka (2009) state that “the two most important techniques to bear in mind when you skim are to move your eyes vertically as well as horizontally and to understand before you start skimming what information you’re looking for” (p.171).

Skimming, as a reading technique, has many advantages. According to Armstrong (2015), skimming can be highly beneficial during exams especially if you have not enough time to study thoroughly. Another advantage lies in some situations in which you are asked to select a number of sources which are related to the same topic for instance.

***3.1.1.2. Scanning.*** Using this technique, the reader does not read every word. Scanning involves looking for specific information such as figures, dates, names, facts, etc. Sutz and Weverka (2009) explain:

*Scanning* is quickly scouring the text for specific information; unlike skimming, you’re not concerned with the broader meaning of the text. Scanning involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words or phrases. It’s the same technique you use when you look up a word in a telephone book or dictionary—you already know what you’re looking for, and you concentrate on finding the word that provides the answer to your search. (p.167)

Scanning relies mainly on:

* Moving the eyes or fingers very rapidly over a paragraph, passage or section;
* Skipping unrelated sections quickly;
* Searching for any visual aids that might help in locating the information in the sections where they appear;
* Catching the needed information as soon as it is found.
* ***Skimming and scanning are two expeditious selective reading techniques that are particularly useful to seek out general ideas or specific information under special circumstances such as time pressure.***
* ***Developing effective scanning and skimming skills requires rooting out some negative attitudes towards these types of speed reading.***

***3.1.1.3. Surveying.*** When we survey a book or other material, we have a brief and quick look at its content, what is it about and then we decide whether we continue reading it or not. Mundsack, Deese and Deese (2003) explain the steps of surveying a textbook. These can be noted as follows:

* Looking at the whole book and reading the preface.
* Looking at the table of contents.
* Leafing through the book. (pp. 74-75)