

Managing Graduate Research & Readings

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Center

TRC Services

- Graduate Student Learning Assistance
 - Academic coaching
 - Workshop Series
 - Tools for success, including library research skills, comps/quals prep, APA & Chicago citation styles, framing research question, synthesizing research, and presentation skills
 - Academic English Skills Seminar (Sept. 25th)
 - For International and ESL graduate students
 - Thesis/Dissertation Group
 - Spring Writing Institutes
 - For those working on large writing projects such as thesis, dissertation, seminar or exit paper

Today's Agenda

- ◉ Blueprinting
- ◉ Manage reading loads
- ◉ Two approaches to thinking
- ◉ Reading strategies
 - SRRE reading process
 - Reading research articles
- ◉ Note taking

Manage Your Coursework

- Managing your coursework, readings, and research requires *good time management skills* and an understanding of the expectations of the course.
- Each course is different and *requires different study techniques* or skills.

Blueprinting Basics

- ① Write a short summary of the course in your own words, focusing on topics, themes, and relationships among them.
- ② Create a visual diagram that captures the organizational structure of these themes and topics.
- ③ Then try to map the texts on to this diagram, which texts address which topics/themes/purposes of the course.

Why Blueprint?

- ⦿ Prioritize course information
- ⦿ Set clear purposes for reading specific texts
- ⦿ Organize and make connections between seemingly isolated facts or concepts
- ⦿ Remember and recall course content more efficiently
- ⦿ Understand the function of lectures and texts in the course as a whole
- ⦿ Anticipate exam topics and questions

Tools to Blueprint

● Course syllabus

- Key word signals such as *theme, aspect, cornerstone, fundamental, perspective, emphasis, focus*, etc.
- Graphical signals, such as bold face type, underlining, indentation, or boxing
- Repetitive language- these are likely to be organizing themes

● Textbook

- Table of contents outline format can show you the hierarchy of topics
- Same other hints as syllabi- repetition, graphic signals, and key words

● Lecture notes

- Introductory lectures expand on the courses objectives, themes, and theoretical approach

Challenges to Overcome

- Grad level courses don't use typical textbooks
 - Therefore reading demands are embedded in a different kind of course design than is typical with a textbook-centered course.
 - The types of texts use aren't designed to be used as teaching tools.
 - Scholarly or expert texts pose new challenges for a variety of reasons stemming from *audience, purpose, genre conventions, and the knowledge authors assume of their "intended" reader.*

Your task as a student

- ◉ Build cohesion among the texts.
- ◉ Adjust your ways of reading to the variety of genres assigned.
- ◉ Read basic level documents to augment your knowledge.
- ◉ Read critically since you will have to evaluate among competing claims.
- ◉ Read selectively since these genres of text are more repetitive or might contain irrelevant information to your course theme.

Reading for Purpose

- You can vary your reading speed depending on your purpose:
 - Basic understanding of area
 - Class discussion
 - Annotated bibliography
 - Literature review
 - Reading for theory course
 - Reading for methodology course

2 Approaches for Thinking

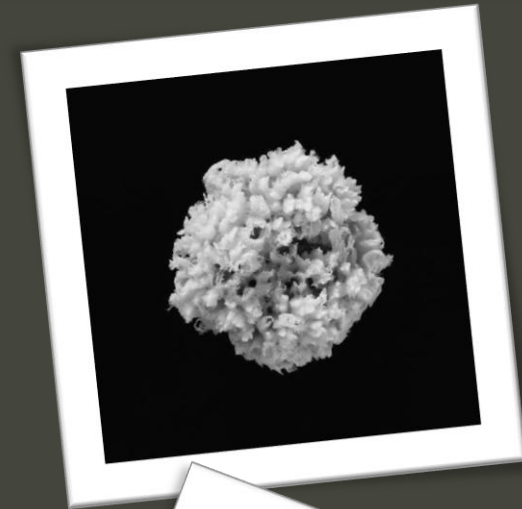
● Sponge

• Advantages

- provides good foundation & base level knowledge
- is mentally easy

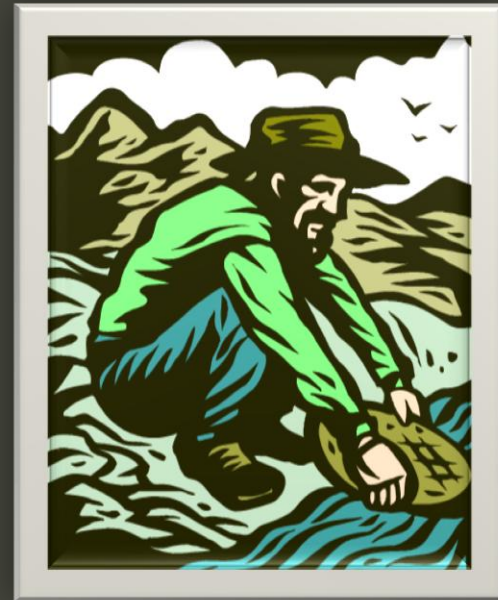
• Disadvantages

- You can become a mental puppet.
- You can spend too much time soaking in non-essential information.



Other Approach to Thinking

- Panning for gold
 - Active interaction with knowledge as you acquire it.
- They work together—the sponge is foundational knowledge—a knowledge required for panning/evaluating.



Example: Reading material

● Sponge

- Read carefully
- Remember as much as possible
- Underline/highlight
- Take notes summarizing main points/topics
- Mission is to find and understand what author says
- Memorizes reasoning
- Doesn't evaluate

● Panning for gold

- Reader asks self a number of questions designed to uncover the best available decisions/beliefs
- Questions author's claims
- Makes notes to self in margins indicating problems with reasoning
- Forms own conclusion

Four step reading process

- 1) Skim
- 2) Reflect
- 3) Read
- 4) Evaluate

1) Skim

- ◉ The title, headings, and subheadings
- ◉ Images and their captions
- ◉ Introduction and conclusion
- ◉ Abstract or summary
- ◉ Visualize (or create) an outline or overview

2) Reflect

- What do you know about this subject or topic?
 - Draw on the knowledge you already have
- What do you think you might know?
 - Are there ideas that seem familiar but need clarification?
- What do you want to know?
 - Set goals
- What's the main idea or purpose of this text?

Know

Might know

Want to
know

3) Read

- Look for answers to your questions
- Look for the essentials
 - According to the article
 - According to your class
 - According to your research
- Vary your reading speed
- Annotate in the margins
 - Ask questions
 - Define key terms
 - Summarize
- After finishing, *briefly* summarize the text
 - What's the argument?
 - What evidence does the author use to support that argument?

4) Evaluate

- ◎ Ask questions
 - How would you answer them?
- ◎ Form counter arguments
 - Do this even if you agree with the text.
- ◎ Think of larger contexts
 - How does this fit with or depart from other texts?

Reading tips

- Pay attention to repeated words
- Reference images and their captions for clarification
- Limit how many words you look up in the dictionary
- You can reread sections that are unclear; however, remember that understanding every part of every paragraph is not essential to your overall understanding.

Understanding Primary Research Articles

- **Title**
 - Focus of the study, hypothesis, or research question
 - Type of article (primary study, position paper, or literature review)
- **Author & Institution**
 - Seminal author?
- **Abstract**
 - Purpose of the study
 - Source from which data is drawn
 - Method used for collecting data
 - General results
 - General interpretations of the results

The Meat of a Research Article...

- **Introduction**
 - Argument crafted from literature review
 - Research question
 - Hypothesis
- **Methodology**
 - Sample
 - Research design
 - Data-collection procedures
- **Results**
 - Findings, support or non-support of hypothesis
- **Discussion/Conclusion**
 - Implications and importance of findings. Further research needed?
- **Limitations: Is this generalizable?**
- **References**

Note taking

◎ Structure

- Linear notes
- Cornell
- Note cards
- Mindmapping

◎ Focus

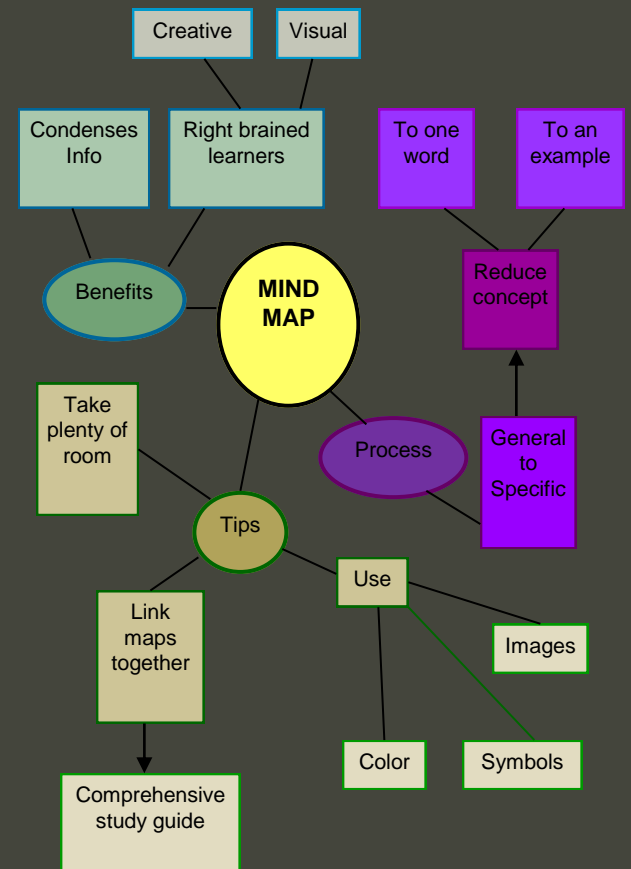
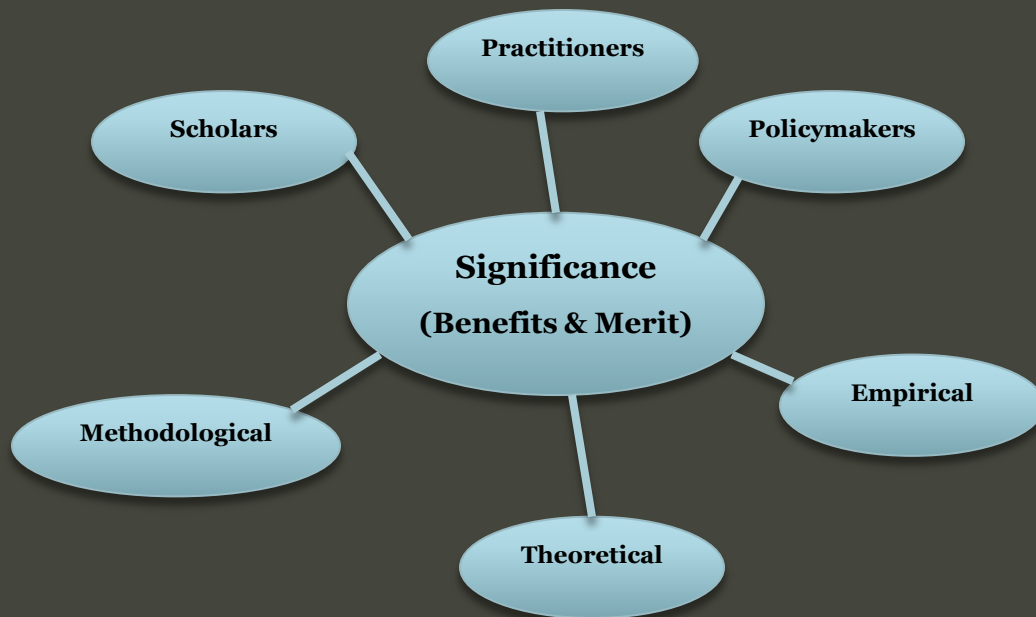
Cornell System

- ◎ Turns your notes into a study guide.
 - The left column is for convenient studying, so write down words that will trigger your memory for what is in the right column.

Recall Column	Notes Column
Write within 24 hrs of class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Key terms•Names•Dates•Questions•Concepts•Ideas•Examples	During class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Take notes here.•This method combines the linear system with the two-column. Tip: Write in words you understand, not necessarily your professor's.
Summary of notes: Write within 24 hours of class.	

Mindmaps or Concept maps

- A catch all organizational structure very similar to a list. Elements are related to a central point in a variety of ways that are not systematized.



Let your focus play to your strengths

Based on...	For those who	Tips
Questions	ask “why?”	Format notes by question. Try to answer the questions later.
Connections	are associative thinkers.	Use mindmaps. Plot and label the connections.
Concepts	love the big ideas.	Supplement details later.
Details	love the minute.	Supplement broader concepts later.
Applications	learn through experience.	Ask, “how does this work?” or “Where have I seen this in action?”
Emotions	are “passionate” learners.	Allow yourself to react emotionally. See where it takes you.
Anecdotes	learn through stories and relationships.	Record other apparently unrelated details...clothing or weather, for example.

Thanks!

Any questions?