HOW TO READ A TEXTBOOK

There is one way to read a textbook to really understand it ... reading it through four or five times.

There is a better way?

1) Preview or skim the assigned chapter by:
   A. Reading the main title
   B. Reading all subtitles
   C. Reading the first sentence of each paragraph
   D. Reading the introductory paragraph
   E. Reading the concluding paragraph
   F. Studying the charts, illustrations and photographs

2) Read the entire chapter through, underlining vocabulary.

3) Re-read and take notes, eliminating details and secondary material in each paragraph and formulate in short sentences or phrases the important facts in each paragraph. Some paragraphs may be general in nature, or peripheral to the subject; others may contain many concrete facts. Use your judgment to decide which facts, opinions, and examples to record.

4) Study your notes. Do not re-read the text unless you have to refer to a particular passage, chart, diagram or the like which you should enter in your note-taking process. For example:
   “Study in Delaware – 96% of all housewives use Zippo laundry detergent (See chart, p. 37)”.

Preparing to Read

Many reading problems are caused by lack of concentration, which is in turn often caused by environment. Reading is an activity requiring great mental effort at first; as understanding and skill increase, the effort lessens. However, reading should be treated with respect in that it is not an activity that can best be done with other activities. A divided attention will result in loss of concentration and comprehension and lead to inefficient reading habits.

In reading, the eye and mind work together, Peripheral, Visual, Audial and Physical distractions will interfere with reading.

The best environment for reading is:
   1) A quiet place.
   2) An isolated place, free from human traffic and interruption.
   3) A place in which it is easy to sit upright, hold a book or lay the book on a surface.
   4) A place that is atmospherically comfortable: neither hot, cold, noisy nor busy.
The proper functioning of the body is essential to successful reading. If there is fatigue, a vision problem, illness, lack of interest in the book, inadequate language preparation, there will be subsequent barriers to understanding.

Reading is on process by which we learn and understand. Respecting that process and making it as free of barriers as possible enables learning and understanding to take place.

Preparation for Exams
1) Read advice in “How to Read a Textbook”.
2) If you are taking a lecture, take notes on each lecture. Listen carefully to record point the instructor emphasizes. Do not be a secretary; sift material as you hear it, evaluate it and record what you feel is important.
3) Read over own notes from textbook.
4) Read over lecture notes.
5) Revise or re-organize notes if necessary to understand material more thoroughly.
6) Ask specific questions of the instructor while you are in class if you don’t understand something. Be aggressive. Ask what you will be responsible for on exams. No one likes surprises on tests.
7) If you have to memorize details or facts, repeat them as many times as needed to be sure of them. Have a friend ask you to recite or respond to questions you know will be on the test.
8) Start studying in time to be ready. Some people need days of preparation; others need hours.
9) When you feel you have studied and mastered all you can, put away your materials and divert yourself. Take your mind off the exam – see friends, go out, forget it all.
10) SLEEP!
11) Smile when you get up.
12) You should be able to pass the exam, as you have done all that is possible to prepare for it.
13) If all proceeding fails, get thee to a tutor fast!