Reading Skills

Reading (Prentice Hall, CALS Reading University)

(Skimming)   (Scanning)

☐   Skimming   Scanning

Reading strategies and skills

This course will give you the opportunity to develop and practice reading strategies and skills which can be applied to all forms of academic study. The strategies and skills you will practice are as follows:

1. Predicting
2. Skimming
3. Scanning
4. Detailed reading
5. Guessing unknown words

6. Understanding main ideas
7. Inferring
8. Understanding text organization
9. Assessing a writer's purpose
10. Evaluating a writer's attitude

Skimming   **Scanning**

Skimming

Skimming involves reading quickly through a text to get an overall idea of its contents. Features of the text that can help you include the following:

(a) Title   (b) Sub-title(s)   (c) Details about the author   (d) Abstract

(e) Introductory paragraph   (f) First, second and last sentences of the following paragraph

(g) Concluding paragraph

A text may not contain all of these features – there may be no abstract, for example, and no sub-titles – but you can usually expect to find at least (a), (e), (f) and (g). Focusing on these will give you an understanding of the overall idea or gist of the text you are reading – in other words, a general understanding as opposed to a detailed reading.

Another term of this kind of reading is *surveying*. Surveying can be described as looking quickly through a book, chapter of a book, article from a journal, etc., to decide whether or not it is suitable for your purpose. To decide whether or not a text is suitable,

especially if it is a book, you will also need to focus on the following features in addition to those mentioned above:

(a) Edition and date of publication   (b) Table of contents   (c) Forward

(d) Introduction   (e) Index

Scanning

When you scan a text, again you look quickly through it. However, unlike skimming, scanning involves looking for specific words, phrases and items of information as quickly as possible. In other words, scanning involves rapid reading for the *specific* rather than the general; for *particular details* rather than the overall idea.

When you read a text, for example, you may want to find only a percentage figure or the dates of particular historical events instead of the main ideas. Scanning will help you find such information more efficiently.

(These sentences are quoted from Don McGovern, *Reading, pp.2-4.*)

Notes:

overall =   abstract =   features =   gist =

article =   scan =   skim =

figure =

☐ skimming   scanning

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