“In graduate school the work load increases and students will find that they are expected to master two to three times the material that they were used to as an undergraduate. This can be intimidating to the point of overwhelming a student into paralysis.” (Sweeney, 2012)
Before we start, please quickly fill out the following attendance form (I’ll link it in chat), so we can get a sense of how many folks participated today.

I’ll link this form again at the end of the presentation for folks who join us halfway through!

Form link: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=bC4i9cZf60iPA3PbGCA7Y0XskGmaa55NuVdhoDzwiZFUOVNLUkxZSkowMk05MDA3VEE3U1hJRDRWVS4u
I’m Emily Rose Cole, the Graduate Assistant to the Academic Writing Center (coleer@mail.uc.edu)

I’m a PhD candidate in the English and I’ve taught composition and creative writing for over seven years at the university level.

I’m here to develop presentations through AWC and to assist you in your needs as grad students.

Don’t hesitate to reach out!
In this workshop we will...

* Examine how reading in graduate school is different from reading you may have done before
* Discuss the transition from reading in graduate school to reading as a professional in your field
* Compare different reading strategies
* Identify three criteria that impact reading effectiveness: speed, critical comprehension, and retention/recall
* Introduce the SQRRRR method for reading
Reading in Graduate School
What’s different about reading in grad school?

Pleasure Reading

* Read at your own pace
* Choose what you read
* Topics are varied and fit your interests
* Format of reading (novels, newspapers articles etc.) is familiar
* Content is generally lighter, less dense, and less jargon-heavy

Academic Reading

* Read on a deadline
* Reading is assigned and may not always fit your interests
* Topics are specific to your discipline
* Format and presentation may be unfamiliar
* Content is denser and includes more field-specific jargon
“In her first year of graduate school, Yeshiva University clinical psychology student Sabrina Esbitt read as many **as 12 chapters and 15 professional articles a week**. Now in her third year, she has fewer classes but she's still reading a lot, picking up articles related to her practicum and research while also keeping up with broader trends by browsing such publications as *American Psychologist*.

That's not uncommon for psychology graduate students. According to a study published in *Teaching and Education in Professional Psychology* (Vol. 3, No. 4), **psychology professors assign an average of 330 pages of reading a week**. Grad students, however, only do about half of their assigned reading, according to the study.”

**Question:** For a typical class in your major, how much reading do you have per week?
We think reading is:

* **Static**
  We think of reading as an activity we do in one place, at one level of focus, engaging only one part of our brain

* **Uniform**
  It’s easy to imagine that all types of reading are the same, regardless of context

* **Unemotional**
  Reading (especially academic reading) is often associated with logic, stoicism, and dispassion
In fact, reading is:

* **Dynamic**
  Reading engages many parts of our brain, readers can cycle through many levels of focus, and reading can be done in a variety of settings.

* **Idiosyncratic**
  Context, such as how we’re reading; our reading environment; and the state of our health or emotions, impacts how we read and how effectively we retain information.

* **Emotion-Driven**
  All reading is fundamentally impacted by our emotional state and life experience.
How do you like to read?

Context matters!

* Most folks are used to being asked what they like to read but we don’t often ask how people like to read
* Different folks will prefer different reading styles
* Pay attention to the contexts you find yourself reading in and seek to recreate those contexts

Ask yourself if you prefer to read:

* On paper or electronically?
* Silently or aloud?
* Alone or around others?
* With music or without?
* In short bursts of a few pages at a time, or all at once?
* With your eyes or with your ears?

Reflection: Take a few minutes to reflect on how you read best
One of the most prevalent misconceptions about reading is that reading doesn’t “count” if you’re listening instead of reading visually. This is false!

Recent research from Rogoswky et al. shows that there are no cognitive differences between listening to a book or reading it visually.

However, note-taking and summarizing are important for retention, and they are harder when listening to audiobooks, so make sure to take notes after listening to a chapter or section.

Remember: context matters, and reading the best way for you will increase your understanding and retention overall.
What does it mean to “read well”?

My answer: It is not student’s mastery of a single text that characterizes a well-read graduate student, but rather their ability to participate in professional discourse—which requires the absorption and engagement with key texts and ways of making knowledge, and then posing questions that locate the student’s research in the field.
Three Criteria that Impact Reading Effectiveness
Speed, Critical Comprehension, Retention & Recall
Myth: As you increase your reading speed, you reduce your comprehension.

Truth: You will read faster in your subject area as you understand more about your field and how information in that field is presented.

Myth: To read thoroughly, you must read slowly.

Truth: Slower reading doesn’t guarantee a thorough understanding of main points in the text.

Truth: If you’re stuck in a particular passage, skimming ahead to look at main points can speed up the reading process and increase your overall understanding.
Myth: Skimming isn’t real reading.
- **TRUTH:** Skimming is a technique to apply when you are looking for something specific.

Myth: If you don’t comprehend the first time or lose concentration, you must immediately reread.
- **TRUTH:** Rereading can be inefficient and can stop you from actively reading & anticipating what is coming next.
- **TRUTH:** It’s okay to keep reading through parts you don’t understand and review later.

Myth: When you read, you need to remember everything.
- **TRUTH:** Total recall is impossible. Knowing what you want to remember is the trick.
Analyzing Speed

What slows you down?

* Fixating and regressing
* Inability to distinguish important from unimportant information
* Poor attention & concentration
* Subvocalization

What speeds you up?

* Training your eyes
* Skimming
* Building vocabulary
* Improving concentration
* Reducing subvocalization
* Knowing how you read best

Tip: You can use a free reading speed test to practice training your eyes, improving concentration & reducing subvocalization.
Fixation and Regression

* **Fixation** refers to the way your eyes come to rest on a page. If you have a wide vision span, you require fewer eye fixations to obtain the information.

* **Regression** refers to the backward eye movements that occur when you reread a passage.

Subvocalization

* **Subvocalization** refers to the practice of saying the words you’re reading in your head while you’re reading silently. This tendency can be reduced, but not eliminated, and will get faster as your vocabulary improves.
Fixating & Regressing

What your eyes are doing when you fixate & regress:

What your eyes are doing when you are not fixating & regressing:

Peripheral vision helps us to read words beyond the ones we are looking at directly. Aim to take in “chunks” of words rather than individual words at a time.
Read for Indicator & Signal Phrases —and use these in your notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Premise Indicators</th>
<th>Common Conclusion Indicators</th>
<th>Signal Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
<td>Admits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because</td>
<td>Thus</td>
<td>Advances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>Asserts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follows from</td>
<td>Hence</td>
<td>Argues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As shown by</td>
<td>Then</td>
<td>Points out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggest</td>
<td>It follows that</td>
<td>Extrapolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In conclusion</td>
<td>Highlights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accordingly</td>
<td>Theorizes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you read the premise & conclusion indicators, pay attention to the degree or support the writer’s providing for their argument (nil, weak, moderate, strong, deductively valid). Use the signal verbs in your writing notes to be precise about what an article is doing. A longer list of signal verbs can be found on the [SUNY Plattsburgh learning center website](https://www.plattsburgh.edu/learning-center/signal-verbs). These verbs help us compress big ideas into short, dense meanings that can clarify the role of an article within a scholarly discussion for us.
What to do when you don’t understand something you read

Don’t:
- Reread the passage multiple times
- Refuse to read ahead until you understand the concept you’re stuck on
- Assume you’ll never understand what you’re reading
- Give up

Do:
- Skim ahead to other concepts to see if they make sense
- Continue to take notes based on what you think the text is saying
- Go back and review the concept after you’ve finished reading the whole text
- Ask your peers and professor for help
Critical Comprehension
How do you know that you understand what you are reading?
Critical Comprehension Can Help With...

* Making sense of the “big ideas” within a text
* Understanding whether the evidence or information in a text is trustworthy
* Applying ideas in a text to other texts or situations
* Retaining and recalling specific bits of information
* Selecting the parts of a text that are most relevant to your area of study
SQ3R: An Approach to Graduate Reading

**S—SURVEY**
Survey the material—peruse the overall organization in 3-5 minutes.

**Q—QUESTIONS**
Write questions regarding the reading BEFORE you read. What are you aiming to find out? Why are you reading this?

**R--READ**
Read the material looking for answers to the questions you posed. (Taking notes in the margins or in a notebook while you read is a great retention tool!)

**R--RECITE**
Recite (or rephrase) what you learned IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

**R--REVIEW**
Review how this book fits within the larger framework of material you are studying.

“Two experiments with college students investigated the effectiveness of the 3R strategy for learning from educational texts. The 3R strategy was compared with rereading and note-taking study strategies using free-recall, multiple-choice, and short-answer inference tests immediately after study and after a 1-week delay... Results indicate that it is also an efficacious study technique and capitalizes on mnemonic potency of retrieval and feedback.”

# Using SQ3R May Change Your Thoughts about Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Thoughts</th>
<th>New Thoughts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What’s my reading speed?</td>
<td>What’s the appropriate speed for reading this material?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many pages are there?</td>
<td>What’s the most important thing for me to know about this text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to write down these quotes word-for-word.</td>
<td>I need to explain these ideas in my own words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will I be tested on?</td>
<td>What is the most valuable thing to remember?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m done reading the assignment when I read the last page.</td>
<td>I’m not done reading until I’ve reviewed my preliminary questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope I remember everything.</td>
<td>I’ll make my best thinking visible so that I remember it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Retention & Recall

How do you keep all that stuff at your fingertips?
One cannot assume that just because a test identifies a student as ‘remedial,’ for instance, it is a function of the student’s abilities as a writer, especially when larger racial patterns can be seen, and the construct of ‘writing ability’ is likely associated with dispositions that are historically linked to whiteness.” *Race and Writing Assessment*

This language to talk about race is exhausting, but they are talking about it well. I’m remembering Smitherman and Brody and how they talked about the constructs of race and gender as related to writing instruction, and also Ratcliffe, who insists on intersectionality. Side note: Intersectionality would complicate this analysis.

Explicitly connecting new to old, posing questions, and SUMMARIZING will assist with retention, as demonstrated here in the gap between what the book says & what the student wrote.

One source suggests that 61% of what you read is lost after the first hour and 100% is lost after 24 hours—unless you revisit the information. *(Critical Reading for Graduate Students)*

What you write is what you will remember.
Strategies to Improve Retention I

1. Take notes on your notes. Use different modalities—audio, grids, mental maps—to make different aspects of your thinking visible.
2. Join a reading group. Listen to how others put the pieces together.
3. Reread foundational texts after you’ve learned more and rethink how you relate to those texts.
4. Look at someone else’s notes on the same text and consider how they are the same/different to yours—especially before comprehensive exams!
5. Engage key information in multiple formats—e.g. reading three different literature reviews on the same topic, reading two textbooks, looking at visual data representations that are compatible but different.

6. Aim to be able to describe the research to a lay audience, like a parent.

7. Summarize each text in a Twitter-style blurb, complete with hashtags.
You’ll know you’ve become a professional reader when you:

* Become familiar with the types of reading that occur in your discipline
* Understand how **you** read best and enact those best practices in your daily life
* Establish rhythms of reading
* Read for pleasure in your discipline
* Reconsider foundational texts in your discipline and develop more nuanced opinions on those texts
* Are there any questions that you have that weren’t covered by this presentation so far? Ask now!

* Please unmute to ask your questions aloud, since chat can be hard to follow 😊
Reading in graduate school is intense, deadline-driven, and generally more difficult than reading for pleasure. Though we think of it as static and logical, reading is a dynamic, variable process that relates to our emotional and physical states. You can change the way you read by:

- Becoming aware of how you read best
- Training yourself to read with a wider scope of vision, rely less on subvocalization, and employ skimming when necessary
- Employing the Survey, Questions, Read, Recite, and Review (SQ3R) technique
- Taking notes as you read to help improve retention
The Academic Writing Center is here to help you! We have tutors available, helpful handouts, other resources available from our website. Visit our website at uc.edu/awc. All our resources are online this year.

Individual tutoring isn’t just for undergrads! There are graduate tutors who are excited to help you work through any of your writing assignments. Sign up using the “schedule an appointment” tab on the website.

We thank you for attending our first AWC Graduate Workshop. The schedule for the seven other workshops this semester is posted at: www.uc.edu/learningcommons/writingcenter/grad.html
If you haven’t already, please remember to fill out the attendance form before signing out!

Form link:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=bC4i9cZf60iPA3PbGCA7Y0XskGmaa55NuVdh0DzwiZFUOVNLUkxZSkowMk05MDA3VEE3U1hJRDRWVS4u


Critical Reading for Graduate Students. Student Academic Success Services, Queens University. Kingston, Ontario.


