



Reading a Book Proactively

Introduction

Statistics show that we create as much information in two days as we did from the dawn of man through 2003. Living in an information age society begs the question of how we help our students stay current in their discipline of study. In addition to recognized websites, and refereed journals, books by leaders in the field are another source of relevant information. Most of us, however, do not have the time to read a book cover to cover. Reading a book proactively is a technique to gain valuable information from leading authors in a timely manner.

Procedures

1. Turn to the front of the dust jacket (if available) and read what the publisher has to say about the purpose of the book.
2. Turn to the rear of the dust jacket (if available) and read what the publisher has to say about the author and his or her qualifications to write such a book.
3. Turn to the front matter (introduction, foreword, preface) and read the author's or editor's orientation to the book.
4. Turn to the table of contents and see how the author has organized the information into chapters, subsections, or other content categories.
5. Put the book down, get out a sheet of paper, and write down three questions about things relating to Adult Education you have become curious about as a result of this preliminary examination of the book.
6. Now that you have thought of three questions, review the first question and find in it a key word or phrase that you think might be in the book's index.
7. Turn to the index and look up that key word or phrase. If the word or phrase is not there, think of a synonym and see if the synonym is there. If it isn't, then see if the table of contents can lead you to the page of the book where the question can be answered.
8. Now turn to that part of the book that deals with your question and get the answer. If the author refers to material in other parts of the book, follow his leads until you have all the information relevant to your question.
9. After you have answered the question, write your personal and professional reaction to the author's contribution. Your interaction with the author's writing is very important. What do you think about the question or issue the author addressed?
10. Follow the same procedure with the second and third questions.

Assessment

Once students learn they do not have to read an entire book, relief is evident. Evaluation of the assignment is based on the following criterion:

- Selection of a reference that directly relates to the course content, including the appropriate
- Bibliographic citation
- Identification of three different thought-provoking questions
- A thorough response to each question
- Student's reaction to the issue/question including agreement/disagreement with the author and perceived usefulness of the information
- Grammar, spelling, punctuation, writing style, clarity
- Length – 3-4 pages (approximately one page per question)

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