Effective Textbook Reading

Reading textbooks can be challenging compared to a novel or website. Students often spend lots of time re-reading without recalling what they just read. If you use active reading strategies, you will understand and recall what you have read more effectively. How? Use the SQ3R strategy: **Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review.**

1. **SURVEY**
   Spend 5-10 minutes previewing the reading. This prepares your brain to learn new information. Focus on:
   - Chapter summary
   - Chapter introduction and learning objectives
   - Skim the titles, headings and subheadings, **bold** or **italic** words
   - Pictures, charts, graphics

2. **QUESTION**
   What do you need to know or do after your reading? Having a purpose will focus your attention and your notes. You can:
   - Use learning objectives from the text or instructor
   - Use chapter review questions
   - Turn headings and subheadings into questions. *Example heading: “The Health Care Team”* → “Who is the health care team?” “Why is the health care team important?”

3. **READ**
   Break the reading up so it’s manageable- by chapter, section, or page. Keep your questions in mind as you read

4. **RECITE**
   Record your learning at the end of each section.
   - Write down answers in your own words (paraphrase) and any new questions
   - Summarize aloud at the end of each section

5. **REVIEW**
   - Summarize the key concepts of the whole reading. Think about how the reading links to lecture, your previous class, and what you already know.
   - Check if you can answer the questions you created without looking at your notes or the book. Review any sections where you couldn’t.

**FINAL TIP:** It will take some practice to get used to SQ3R. If all 5 steps seem overwhelming, try adding just one or two into your reading approach.