2.17: Reading the Article in Full

Now that your pre-reading is done, you have an overall sense of what to expect when you read the text in full. What’s involved in doing a close reading of the full text? Keep reading and you’ll find out.

Close reading

Close reading allows you to concentrate and make decisions about what is relevant and what is not. Its main purpose is to help ensure that you understand what you are reading and to help you store information in a logical and organized way, so that it is easier for you to recall the information when you need to. Close reading is a necessary strategy in university nursing programs for the following reasons:

- You can effectively summarize what you read by identifying the main concepts/points, key details, and their relationships with one another.
- You read as if you were going to be tested on it immediately upon completion: you read to remember at least 75–80% of the information.
- Your ability to answer essay questions improves because the concepts are more organized and understood rather than merely memorized.
- You become more confident because your understanding improves, which in turn increases your enjoyment.

Identify the main point

Regardless of what type of text you are assigned to read, your primary comprehension goal is to identify the main point: the most important idea that the writer wants to communicate and usually states early on. Finding the main point gives you a framework to organize the details presented in the reading, and to relate the reading to concepts you have
learned in class or through other reading assignments. After identifying the main point, you will find the supporting points, details, facts, and explanations that develop and clarify the main point.

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**When the text is complex**

At the far end of the reading difficulty scale are *journal articles and scholarly books*. These types of text are common in nursing. Because these texts are aimed at a specialized, highly educated audience, the authors presume their readers are already familiar with the topic. The language and writing style is sophisticated and sometimes dense.

In this context, it can be helpful to read slowly, and to pause and reread sections that you don’t understand. Also, have a dictionary nearby to look up unfamiliar words. In your nursing program, expect to come across a lot of new terminology. You might even create a list of unfamiliar terms to help you remember them the next time you encounter them.

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*Figure 2.4:* Have a dictionary nearby

**Student Tip**

**Pay Attention to Details**

Although identifying the main point is important, for some nursing readings you will also need to identify precise details and step-by-step processes. These detailed processes are important when learning about skills such as how to do a physical assessment of a client’s skin or taking a health history related to a client’s immunization status.

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