2.6: Reflecting and Summarizing

Whenever you finish a bit of reading, it’s worth taking time to stop and reflect on it. Part of your reflection should involve concisely summarizing the main points. This summarizing will help you think about the content and what it means to you, and also help you remember the main points later so you can apply them in other reading and writing situations.

Here are some ideas for post-reading reflection:

- Write in a personal reading journal—A good way to use journals is to write a quick summary of the reading immediately after you have finished. Capture the main points and explore any questions you had or any ideas that were raised.
- Write a one-minute paper—Take one minute to jot down a few sentences about something you learned or discovered while reading, or ask yourself a question about the reading and write an answer.
- If applicable, refer back to the learning objectives/outcomes at the start of the reading or related to the week’s content of the course the reading is related to. Document your reflections related to these objectives/outcomes.

Many times, the purpose of your reading is to shift you into writing a paper or completing an assignment. Thus, you need to consider synthesizing the ideas in your summary and your other writing. “To synthesize” means to combine ideas to create a completely new idea. The new idea becomes the conclusion you have drawn from your reading. This is the true beauty of reading: it helps you weigh ideas, compare, judge, think, and explore – and then arrive at a moment that you hadn’t known before. You begin with a simple summary, work through analysis, evaluate using critique, and then move on to synthesis.

Student Tip

Reflection

It’s a good idea to reflect on the question: How do I want this reading to influence my thinking and practice as a
nurse? This is an important question considering that you will often be reading about theoretical and empirical ideas related to nursing knowledge and practice. For example, you may read about how to develop therapeutic relationships with clients and families and/or how to communicate with clients who are aggressive. When you finish reading a text, think about this and document your reflections related to how your reading will guide your practice in the clinical setting.

Activity: Check Your Understanding

The original version of this chapter contained H5P content. You may want to remove or replace this element.

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