**How to Read a Paragraph**

If you can read a paragraph, you can read a chapter, if you can read a chapter, you can read a book

Skilled readers read purposely. They have an agenda, goal, objective.

**Recognize different levels or reading and engagement:**

* Sheer pleasure: requires no particular skills level
* To figure out a simple idea: may require skimming the text
* To gain technical information: skimming
* To enter, understand and appreciate a new world view: requires close reading skills in working through a challenging series of tasks that stretch our minds
* To learn a new subject: requires close reading skills in internalizing and taking ownership of an organized system of meanings

**Consider Author’s Purpose:** What is the agenda or goal? (for example: politicians, newspaper editors deciding which stories their readers would be most interested in and how to tell the story to maintain that interest); a chemist writing a lab report, advertisers, a poet, etc

**Distinguish Primary/Core Ideas (and their connection to the system or discipline as a whole), Secondary Ideas, and Peripheral ideas**

Avoid **impressionistic reading** which focuses on the reader’s own thoughts more than the authors – **a reflective mind and reflexive reading** tries to distinguish one’s own thoughts from the author’s.

**\* Difficulty paper: thinking about HOW you read helps you read reflexively.**

**Engage:**

* Can I summarize in my own words?
* Can I give examples from my own experience of what the text is saying?
* Can I generate metaphors and diagrams to illustrate what the text is saying?
* What is clear to me and what needs clarifying?
* How do the main ideas of this text connect to other core ideas I understand?

**How to Read a Paragraph:**

* What is the most important idea in this paragraph?
* How do the ideas in this paragraph relate to the ideas in previous paragraphs?
* How are the important ideas in the text connected?
* How can I relate this to something I already understand?
* Is there an important idea here that I can use in my thinking?
* Have I experience a situation that sheds light on this idea or on which this idea shed light?

From *The Thinker’s Guide to How to Read a Paragraph: The Art of Close Reading* by Dr. Richard Paul and Dr. Linda Elder, *The Foundation for Critical thinking*, 2006.