Reading Comprehension:
Adapted from Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success, Dembo (2008).

No matter how interesting a particular subject may be, textbook reading is not very exciting; therefore, students may find themselves thinking about everything other than the topic they should be focusing on.

Use the four steps below to put reading into action instead of making it a passive activity to improve reading comprehension and retention.

- **Step 1: Set reading goals** - Decide ahead of time how long to read and how many pages will be completed. The most important thing to remember when setting any goal is that goals should be realistic. For example, setting a goal to read 6 chapters in one night may not be realistic. Reading goals need to be more attainable and should factor in reading breaks.
  
  - I will read 10 pages before I go out tonight.
  - I will read for 15 minutes in my Psychology book and 15 minutes in my History book.
  - I will read one chapter before dinner and one chapter after dinner.

- **Step 2: Skim the chapter** - Get an idea of heading topics and become familiar with different learning tools in each chapter such as: bold or italic print, definitions in the margins, chapter summaries and questions.

- **Step 3: Give reading a purpose** - Take notes as you read or turn the headings in each chapter into a question and then read for answers.
  
  - For example, consider the chapter heading, “Financial Forecasting.”
    
    - What is financial forecasting?
    - How does financial forecasting work?
    - Who performs financial forecasting?

Turning headings into questions makes reading active because searching for answers gives reading a purpose. Taking notes as one reads has the added advantage of enhancing memory and making recalling information much easier.

- **Step 4: Review after reading a chapter.** Summarize the chapter verbally or write a summary.
  
  - If students find it difficult to summarize what was just read, then the chapter will need to be re-read for clarification.
  - Another way to test reading comprehension is to try to answer the summary questions at the end of the chapter.