**Graduate Writing Coach**

Troy Mikanovich

mikanovi@usc.edu

**Reading Checklist**

*Rather than going into your weekly readings looking to be surprised, you may have an easier time if you identify what you need to get out of those readings first. Remember, your job in graduate school isn’t just to retain content. You want to be able to understand your various readings in relation to each other—how they try to answer similar questions, solve similar problems, build off of each other, or argue. Here’s a checklist of things to look for in your readings. --TM*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research Question** | ***Broad/general*** | | ***Specific/operationalized*** | |
|  | |  | |
| **Context** | ***Social/real world*** | | ***Academic (research gap)*** | |
|  | |  | |
| **Methodology** | ***Data gathering*** | | ***Data interpretation (theory)*** | |
|  | |  | |
| **Thesis** |  | | | |
| **Significance** | ***Social/real world*** | | ***Academic*** | |
|  | |  | |
| **Unclear/questions** |  | |  | |
| **Connections to other readings** | ***Readings*** | | ***Relationship*** | |
|  | |  | |
|  | |  | |
|  | |  | |
| **BEAM (how can you use the source)** | ***Background*** | ***Exhibit*** | ***Argument*** | ***Method*** |
|  |  |  |  |

*Of course, these aren’t the only things you can look for in an article—feel free to add to this list, or adapt it for different kinds of readings (newspaper articles, white papers, etc.). If you aren’t sure how to get started, here are some suggestions:*

**Reading Tips/Schedule**

1. Set yourself a timer for an amount of time that seems too short to read the whole article (for example, maybe just twenty minutes).
2. In that twenty minutes, skim through the article seeing how much of the table information you can glean.
   * Pay special attention to the introductions and conclusions of individual sections and the article as a whole
   * Look at topic sentences and transition sentences to see how the article moves from one point to the next
   * See if you can find generic/standard phrases that announce the article’s intentions
     + e.g. “While previous scholarship has found XXXX, it has not YYYY…”
     + e.g. “This research seeks to answer…”
3. After your twenty minutes are up, set the article aside and try to fill out as much as the table as you can. Here, try to paraphrase the article and put it into your own words.
4. Next, identify any questions or information that you are still missing. You can put that in the table, too, under “Unclear/questions”
5. Now, set yourself another timer—this one for a bit more time than the previous block. Go back through the article, paying attention to sections you didn’t focus on before, and try to fill out the sections of the table that you’ve left blank.

*Sections of the table that are labeled in* ***red*** *are very important—knowing these things will be necessary for discussing your readings in class or using them in your future research. Sections of the table that are labeled in* ***blue*** *are important, but not necessarily essential if you are just scrambling to get your reading done. Remember, not every article you read is going to be the most important article you’ve ever read. As you move through the semester, you’ll be able to discern what you want to learn more about, what kinds of information is important for your own research/scholarship, and what kinds of information you can just have a functional understanding of.*