MODULE INTENSIVE READING
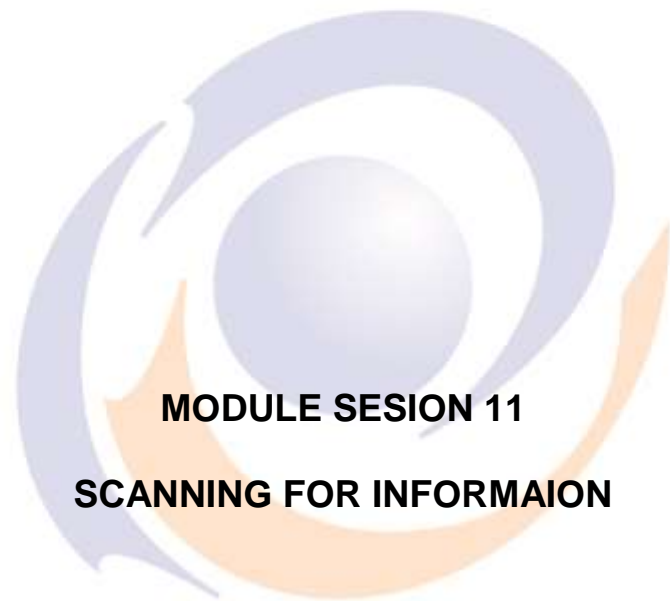**(PBI 221)**

MODULE SESION 11

SCANNING FOR INFORMAION

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What is Scanning?

Scanning is a form of pre-reading. The popular SQ3R method includes survey, question, read, recite and review as scanning tools. Many reading methods like SQ3R advocate scanning a piece before reading the text closely. When you scan the text, you're looking at headings, scanning the body of the piece for any frequently used words or concept while reviewing the thesis of the piece and attempting to gain a general idea of the piece's argument or focus.

Scanning is another useful tool for speeding up your reading. Unlike skimming, when scanning, you look only for a specific fact or piece of information without reading everything.

You scan when you look for your favorite show listed in the cable guide, for your friend's phone number in a telephone book, and for the sports scores in the newspaper. For scanning to be successful, you need to understand how your material is structured as well as comprehend what you read so you can locate the specific information you need. Scanning also allows you to find details and other information in a hurry.

What Material to Leave Out When Skimming?

What you read is more important than what you leave out.

So what material do you read and what material do you leave out?

Let's say you are doing research on a long chapter or a web site.

By reading the first few paragraphs in detail, you will get a good idea of what information will be discussed.

Once you know where the reading is headed, you can begin to **read only the first sentence of each paragraph.**

Also called *topic sentences*, they give you the main idea of the paragraph.

If you do not get the main idea in the topic sentence or if the paragraph greatly interests you, then you may want to skim more. At the end of each topic sentence, your eyes should drop down through the rest of the paragraph, looking for important pieces of information, such as names, dates, or events. Continue to read only topic sentences, dropping down through the rest of the paragraphs, until you are near the end. Since the last few paragraphs may contain a conclusion or summary, you should stop skimming there and read in detail. Remember that your overall comprehension will be lower than if you read in detail. If while skimming, you feel you are grasping the main ideas, then you are skimming correctly.

Suppose you are taking a presentation skills class and have to deliver an oral report in a few days about the first computers ever made. You locate six books and four newspaper articles about this topic. Because you must be ready soon, you do not have time to read each word, but you need a large quantity of solid information. Skimming will help you locate the information quickly while making sure you use your time wisely. It will also increase the amount of usable material you obtain for your research.Suppose you have an exam in a few days. You need to review the material you learned, but you don't want to reread everything.By skimming, you can quickly locate the information you haven't mastered yet and study only that material.

How to scan

Because you already scan many different types of material in your daily life, learning more details about scanning will be easy. Establishing your purpose, locating the appropriate material, and knowing how the information is structured before you start scanning is essential.

The material you scan is typically arranged in the following ways: alphabetically, chronologically, non-alphabetically, by category, or textually. **Alphabetical** information is arranged in order from A to Z, while **chronological** information is arranged in time or numerical order.

Information can be also be arranged in **non- alphabetical** order, such as a television listing, or by **category,** listings of like items such as an auto parts catalog. Sometimes information is located within the written paragraphs of text, also known as a **textual** sense, as in an encyclopedia entry.

Learning to use your hands When Scanning

While scanning is very helpful in locating specific information. Do you do anything with your hands to locate a word in a dictionary? To find a meeting time on your calendar? To read a train or bus schedule? Using your hand or finger is extremely helpful in focusing your attention and keeping your place while scanning a column of material. Your peripheral vision can also help you scan effectively. When your hand moves down a list of names, you see not only the name your finger is pointing to, but also the names above and below. Let your eyes work for you when searching for information.

Keep the concept of key words in mind while scanning. Your purpose will determine the key words. Suppose you are looking for the time a train leaves from New York City for Washington, D.C.The key words to keep in mind are "from New York City" and "to Washington,D.C." If you are looking for the cost of a computer printer with the code number PX-710, the key word to locate in a list of many printers is "PX-710."

Use Peripheral Vision When Scanning

Your peripheral vision can also help you scan effectively. When your hand moves down a list of names, you see not only the name your finger is pointing to, but also the names above and below. Let your eyes work for you when searching for information. Keep the concept of key words in mind while scanning. Your purpose will determine the key words. Suppose you are looking for the time a train leaves from New York City for Washington, D.C. The key words to keep in mind are "from New York City" and "to Washington,D.C." If you are looking for the cost of a computer printer with the code number PX-710, the key word to locate in a list of many printers is "PX-710."

When to scan?

You scan when your aim is to find specific pieces of information. If you were doing the research for an oral presentation, you could scan the index of books, web sites, and reference materials. You would discover whether they contain any information you want and the pages where the information can be found.

In the past, you probably scanned without knowing you were doing it. Now with the information provided in this section, you can use scanning more intentionally and frequently. The more you practice, the more effective scanning will become.

Finally, the most important benefit of scanning is its ability to help you become a more flexible reader. Scanning adds another high gear to your reading.

Because you may be used to reading every word and may be uncomfortable leaving some words out, you need to give yourself permission to overlook some words by skimming, scanning, and skipping material according to your reading purpose.

I give you permission to NOT read everything!

Double Your Reading Speed and Cut Your Learning Time in Half

If you truly want to speed up your reading using hand movements, skimming and scanning and other easy to incorporate techniques, I encourage you to check out some online speed reading courses such as those offered by Howard Berg, the World's Fastest Reader.

Here is one I highly recommend. Howard guides you, step by step on how to double your reading speed and cut your learning time in half.

Scanning for Keywords

What is scanning? It is a way to read very fast. You do not read all the words. You read only the words you are looking for. In these exercises you learn to find words quickly. Then you can read quickly. Circle the key word every time you see it in the line.

Example:

Key words

1. Read real   reel   raid   read

2. Three tree   there   three   these   trees

Scanning for Information

Readers often scan for information. They do not read all the words. They read only the words they need. You can learn to scanfor information in these exercises. Work quickly. Remember, you do not have to read all the words.

Scanning for specific information

Having learned what the text is about and how it is organised, you may decide not to read it in depth but to just record some of the very specific information it contains. One reason for doing this may be because you are already familiar with the theme of the text and just need some details. In order to find this specific information, you need to scan the text.

Scanning consists of letting your eyes move quickly through the text until you find what you are looking for. As long as you know how the text is organised, this can be done quickly and without reading every word.

This is a technique many of us use every day. For example, I may scan the telephone directory to find a name. Or when I go to a restaurant, I scan the menu to find the vegetarian options.

Scanning texts is easy if you are familiar with their organisation. For example, I know that the menu of my favourite restaurant lists the main course under the heading 'Mains', so I scan this list looking for the word 'vegetarian', 'vegetable' or simply 'V'.

In academic texts information is often grouped under headings, so to find a specific detail, you need to first locate the appropriate heading. If there are no headings, remember that the topic sentence of each paragraph is like a heading, as it tells you what the paragraph is about. In a paragraph, details can usually be found in the sentences that follow the topic sentence so this is where you need to look.

When you think you have found the relevant section or paragraph, look for key words or figures.

You will practise this skill in the following activity.

How to scan a text

Before you start scanning for information, you should try to understand how the text is arranged. This will help you to locate the information more quickly. For example, when scanning for a word in a dictionary or a friend's name in your contact list, you already know that the information is arranged alphabetically. This means you can go more quickly to the part you want, without having to look through everything. For this reason, skimming can be a useful skill to use in combination with scanning, to give you a general idea of the text structure. Section headings, if there are any, can be especially useful.

When scanning, you will be looking for key words or phrases. These will be especially easy to find if they are names, because they will begin with a capital letter, or numbers/dates. Once you have decided on the area of text to scan, you should run your eyes down the page, in a zigzag pattern, to take in as much of the text as possible. This approach makes scanning seem much more random than other speed reading skills such as skimming and surveying. It is also a good idea to use your finger as you move down (or back up) the page, to focus your attention and keep track of where you are.

When to scan

You scan when your aim is to find specific pieces of information. If you were doing the research for an oral presentation, you could scan the index of books, web sites, and reference materials. You would discover whether they contain any information you want and the pages where the information can be found.

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inally, the most important benefit of scanning is its ability to help you become a more flexible reader. Scanning adds another high gear to your reading. Because you may be used to reading every word and may be uncomfortable leaving some words out, you need to give yourself permission to overlook some words by skimming, scanning, and skipping material according to your reading purpose.

Benefits of Scanning

Scanning an article helps you understand the article's main points before you dive into the meat of the article. This can make it easier to critically read the piece and to develop questions. It can also help you decide if there are any unfamiliar concepts or terms that you need to study up on before you read the piece. Because it can sometimes take several pages for an author to get to the meat of her argument, scanning also enables you to understand what the author is building up to when you sit down to read the piece in its entirety.

Searching vs. Scanning

Sometimes you may be looking for an idea rather than scanning for an actual word or phrase. In this case, you will be searching rather than scanning. Skimming the text first to help understand organisation is especially important when searching for an idea. It is also useful to guess or predict the kind of answer you will find, or some of the language associated with it. In this way, you still have words or phrases you can use to scan the text. As such, searching is part skimming, part scanning. For example, if you are reading a text on skin cancer and want to find the causes, you would skim the text to understand the structure, which might be a problem-solution structure; you might already know that exposure to sunlight is one of the causes so

you might scan for 'sunlight' or 'sun', and because you are looking for causes you might scan for <u>transition words</u> such as 'because' or 'cause' or 'reason'.

Precautions

Scanning reading is not a substitute for reading and students who choose to only scan can end up with major comprehension issues. Missing even a single qualifier can dramatically change the meaning of a passage. Scanning can also sometimes establish some preconceived notions that may be incorrect. For example, you might assume an article is about the writer's opposition to a law but it could turn out that the article addresses the law's pros and cons. The things you learn scanning a piece are not set in stone and you'll need to adjust your perceptions based upon a subsequent thorough reading.

The Importance of Scanning

In *Reading Multiple Choice, Choose Single Answer,* limit your time to two minutes. If you do not make a choice and move on, you will leave yourself short of time. So make a choice, and move on. There is no negative marking in this section so you will not be penalised for a wrong answer.

In *Multiple Choice, Choose Multiple Answers,* there is negative marking for choosing an incorrect answer. In this section, limit your time to three minutes. You will need to select one, two or three answers at this time. At about three minutes, make sure you have made your selections and move on. Two correct answers are worth more than two correct answers and one incorrect one, so leave it at two. Of course, if you can figure out three correct answers at the time, then well done. Even so, limit your time to close to three minutes, and move on. You will need to watch the clock, as these sections are not individually timed.

To help you make the best choices in all sections of the reading test, the skills of scanning will help.

Scanning can be used to select keywords from the answer options and then locate them in the text. Select the word. Then quickly look for it in the main text, by either seeing it straight away or systematically looking very quickly over the text from the beginning until you see the word in the text. Then slow down, and read around the keyword, deciding if the sentence has the same meaning as your answer option. Skimming and scanning are good skills to develop to speed your accuracy in the reading section of the test, and we all help our students master this strategy (that's why they get the highest possible scores)

Skimming and **Scanning** also apply to Fill in the Blanks. Here, it is a good idea to:

(1) identify the word type—noun, verb or adjective,

(2) predict what word is needed, and

(3) select from the options.

In conclusion, it is a good idea to manage your time in the reading section of the test to ensure you have sufficient time to answer each question as accurately as you can. Time management means budgeting your time.

Use skimming (to predict) and scanning (to find) to help with the management of these tasks.

Scanning for research and study

Scanning, too, uses keywords and organizational cues. But while the goal of skimming is a bird's-eye view of the material, the goal of scanning is to locate and swoop down on particular facts.

Facts may be buried within long text passages that have relatively little else to do with your topic or claim. Skim this material first to decide if it is likely to contain the

facts you need. Don't forget to scan tables of contents, summaries, indexes, headings, and typographical cues. To make sense of lists and tables, skim them first to understand how they are organized: alphabetical, chronological, or most-to-least, for example. If after skimming you decide the material will be useful, go ahead and scan:

1. Know what you're looking for. Decide on a few key words or phrases–search terms, if you will. You will be a flesh-and-blood search engine.

2. Look for only one keyword at a time. If you use multiple keywords, do multiple scans.

3. Let your eyes float rapidly down the page until you find the word or phrase you want.

4. When your eye catches one of your keywords, read the surrounding material carefully.

Scanning to answer questions

If you are scanning for facts to answer a specific question, one step is already done for you: the question itself supplies the keywords. Follow these steps:

1. Read each question completely before starting to scan. Choose your keywords from the question itself.

2. Look for answers to only one question at a time. Scan separately for each question.

3. When you locate a keyword, read the surrounding text carefully to see if it is relevant.

4. Re-read the question to determine if the answer you found answers this question.

Scanning is a technique that requires concentration and can be surprisingly tiring. You may have to practice at not allowing your attention to wander. Choose a time and place that you know works for you and dive in.

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