Building Comprehension

The following strategies may help increase your understanding of what you read.

1. Continually build your knowledge through reading and studying. What you already know before you read a passage will determine your ability to understand and remember new ideas, offering context through familiar vocabulary and facts.

2. Establish a purpose for reading. Once you have established this, you will know what to focus on as you read. For example, if you are looking for answers to questions, you may skim pages to find them, rather than read every word of the chapter.

3. Pre read textbooks. Before actually reading, spend some time surveying the text. Textbooks offer many features that help students become more aware of the topic. Some features students should survey are the introduction, chapter overviews and objectives, headings and subheadings, diagrams, tables and charts, summaries, and key word lists and questions at the end of each chapter.

4. Remove the barrier of self doubt. Be positive; don’t tell yourself you won’t understand.

5. Think critically as you read. Ask yourself questions to keep your interest and help with your understanding of the text. Consider how the information fits in with the other course material you’ve read or studied and how important is it to the course as a whole.

6. Try the following methods to increase your reading speed:
   a) Try to read groups of words rather than word by word.
   b) Avoid thinking each word to yourself as you read. This is one of the primary causes of slow reading.
   c) Avoid pointing your finger to guide your reading as this will slow your pace.
   d) When reading narrow columns, focus your eyes in the middle of the column and read down the page.