Reading: More Than Just Looking at the Page

Reading to study is critical reading. Apply the 8 elements of critical thought (purpose, questions, assumptions, point of view, data, interpretation, concepts, implications and conclusions) while you read.

Reading is related to culture. Consider that

is meaningless, whereas

is meaningful. The reasons for this have to do with culture, language, and literacy. It has meaning because of the shared cultural conventions about written language.

Reading is thinking. It is a communication process in which an author presents ideas in a certain format (verse, dialogue, prose, or other), and we have to make meaning of the author’s presentation. Reading requires shared understanding of many elements: vocabulary (may be specialized), format, tone, diction and style. For example, we need to understand that information offered in a textbook will likely be of a different nature than what is expressed in verse. To comprehend or make meaning of a text, we have to apply our understanding of many elements to our thinking about the author’s message. A sophisticated reader has a variety of reading strategies that s/he can use to comprehend different kinds of texts. None of this happens automatically; it requires thought. Failure to think means failure to comprehend.
Reading is communication. It is a two-way process. A reader must connect with an author in order to receive the message.

The writer’s role in the communication process

The writer observes the conventions when he composes his message whether he is writing a letter, a poem, a newspaper article, a short story or a textbook. He writes for his audience.

The reader’s role in the communication process

The reader uses his knowledge of the conventions of written language to make meaning of the writer’s message. A reader must also be thinking about what ideas, biases or information he has before he begins reading so that he can integrate what he reads with what he already knows or thinks. The reading/learning happens during the integration of the two sets of ideas. If there is no mental processing of ideas, there is no real communication. Reading has not occurred.

Reading is not just looking at the page and then turning the page...
Reading is a meeting of minds!!