THE TECHNICAL READING EXERCISE

I. <u>What is technical reading</u>?

Technical reading is a strategy you can use to obtain a great amount of information in a short time from textbooks, professional journals, and other technical materials. In using technical reading, you ask yourself the questions the author is trying to ask, and then read to answer them.

II. <u>How do I do it</u>?

A. Survey the chapter

A survey of the chapter will give you a general overview of the information a chapter contains. There are four parts to the surveying process:

1. Read the summary and any questions at the end of the chapter (if included). Summaries and questions are the author's clues to what is important in the chapter.

2. Glance at the headings and sub-headings in the chapter. Look at the captions of pictures, charts, tables, and graphs.

3. Skim over the first sentence of each paragraph in the chapter. If the sentence is long, read for only about two lines.

4. Pick out key words. Look especially for words which are italicized, in bold print, or capitalized.

B. Formulate questions

Generate questions that will enable you to summarize the material and identify main topics in the chapter or article. Parts A and B together should take 10-15 minutes for a textbook chapter.

C. Formulate answers

Try to answer the questions you've just asked. Call on your prior knowledge, information you picked up in Part A, and your ability to guess intelligently. Try not to do any additional reading.

D. Read for answers

Now go back and read the chapter very selectively. Try to confirm your answers when they are correct, revise them when they are wrong, and add to them. The process looks something like this:

1. Ask a question you need to know something about.
2. Try to answer it without looking.
3. Read selectively to see if you were right.