

Active Reading and the 5-Year Old Method

This time I'm going to continue with the Active Reading of the notes I was doing in the last video, except I'm going to use all the layers at the same time. Again, if you're familiar with the Active Reading approach, then this can actually save you a little bit of time because you don't have to go through all of the layers separately. Also, instead of using metaphors as my main technique, for the third layer, I'm going to use the 5-year old method of trying to break down the ideas into a simplified form. So let's walk through that example right now.

So again, here I am starting by speed-reading, but as I'm speed-reading I'm also going back and highlighting notes, so it's a little bit slower than if I just speed-read the entire document. However, it allows me to automatically add those extra layers in so I don't have to go through the entire document multiple times. This can result in some significant time savings if you do it in this fashion.

So here, I've gone through all three layers quickly. I've sped-read those first two points, and then I underlined what was important, and then I simplified it using the 5-year old method into language that is more...closer to what I would understand. So when they say, "Stock variables and flow variables," I switched it to examples that I thought would be illustrative for me. So inventory is a stock, and output is a flow.

Again, also going through each of the examples in that they give, underlining what are the key words, and then translating it into my own words. This is sort of one approach to do the Active Reading. You don't have to use these layers, so for example, you could just mentally go through and do a visualization or a metaphor or even just speak out loud to yourself the 5-year old method.

I've written it down here in the margins just for aid in making it easier for you to visualize, but that doesn't mean that you have to take that approach. You could just imagine what you want to do for the third layer as a way of saving time. Because obviously, writing down in detailed form all of the notes takes a lot more time than just quickly making a mental note.

One of the disadvantages of doing all the layers at once is that you tend to have a little bit more redundant information. So you'll see here, I'm writing down that the CPI index is a way of measuring inflation, and that was my extrapolation, my understanding of what the Consumer Price Index means. However, right after that, it shows a formula and explains it. That's exactly what it's for. So if I had read that, I probably wouldn't have needed to make the extra notes in the margin.

So if you do the layers separately then you do get the benefit of being a little more thorough and you get a better idea of where the article is going, where the chapter is going before you commit to, "Okay, this is the information that I'm going to use the metaphor on, this is the information that I'm going to simplify, this is the information that I'm going to try to focus on."

Also, don't worry about getting involved in the notes. So here, I am taking a chart they have and trying to create my own intuition about what's going on. So they have a chart showing the tuition price over a few years, and they're using it as an example of how tuition has outpaced inflation, and so I am using this as sort of my analogy that...I'm just going through it and trying to get an intuition about, "This is what's happening in the chart." So if you're going through a technical book, this is another way you can do it, is by drawing or creating metaphors. You create an intuition about more abstract ideas that aren't necessarily textual.

And again, put things into the simplest language possible when using the 5-year old method. I'm writing this on paper, but you could even just say this out loud. So positive and normative, that's a little vague. I'm saying, "what is and what should."