

## Encouraging students to read

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*Show students how to skim & scan their textbooks*

*Teach students ‘how’ to read their textbook*

*Use quizzes to check understanding*

Reading can be a passive process particularly if it involves the content of handbooks and manuals. Many students think that they have to read every word rather than using the important skills of ‘skimming and scanning’ so that they easily locate the information that they need. If you want students to learn from written material it is a good idea to spend time consciously teaching them how to read actively and effectively.

The first step is to encourage VET learners to engage with their textbooks and manuals so they can ‘skim and scan’ effectively by becoming familiar with the structure of the text. To help them, you can go through the structure of their text or manuals together and give them pointers for using them effectively. It is useful to highlight the following:

**Headings and sub headings** are a useful guide to what is important in any given topic. They give the reader an understanding of how the content and content chunks are organised.

**Glossaries** or lists of new words / terminology and their meanings are often included in textbooks. Encouraging students to compile a class or individual glossary during the course is a very useful teaching and learning strategy.

**Summaries or overviews:** Some texts have summaries or main points at the beginning or end of chapters. If so, encourage students to read them first to get an overview of the topic and to gain an understanding of the key points to be covered.

**Index and chapter headings** assist students to locate information easily for revision or cross checking. Often students don’t know where an index is in their textbook and how to use it. Some initial activities that use the index during class time are helpful in encouraging students to use their text book / manual more effectively.

**Questions and answers** may be included in a section of text, for example after a chapter or unit of work. Students need to know where to find the answers easily – they could perhaps place a marker or sticker in the page for easy reference.

Use quizzes – both oral and written during or after reading or theory sessions. This is a good way to check the students’ understanding of a topic area or unit of work.