**Notes on Annotation**

When you annotate a text, you generate a record of responses to your reading. Those responses can be essential to you later when you proceed to analysis.

Annotating a text is not the same thing as underlining a few words or highlighting several lines. Annotating a text involves an interactive approach with a text's language and images. This approach should help you discover (1) what you find important, (2) what you want to explore, and/or (3) what you find unclear in a text.

Approach a text as if you were entering a discussion with it. Your discussion with a text occurs as you engage with its words, phrases, and ideas. Your thoughts and insights can find their way onto the text's margins (sides) and between the lines. As you underline important sentences, write a note with an idea, link portions of the text (*ex.write a note referring back to an earlier page*), and raise issues and questions around important observations, you establish a written record of your interactive discussion with the text.

If you fail to note what you find remarkable, the initial ideas and important questions you have while reading may be lost to you. By annotating a text, you can return to it later to rethink what you considered important.

**Techniques for Annotating and Marking a Text**

Techniques for annotating a text will vary since each reader generates his or her own reading. Each person will identify upon different portions of a text as worthwhile, interesting, or remarkable.

Here are some questions to guide your annotations:

* What's remarkable? Where do you engage with this text?
* Where do particular ideas or claims pull you in or capture your attention?
* What ideas emerge from this text? What features are at work?
* What patterns emerge from your markings? Do key words, phrases, and ideas emerge?
* Do particular portions of this text link or connect with each other?
* Have you asked questions? How have you answered them?
* Have any questions been answered? Have any new questions emerged?
* When you review your annotations, what do you discover?
* Are there places where the rhetorical intentions are clear?
* Can you link this text with others you have read?

**Marking a Text**

* Underlining (or highlighting): of major points, of important or forceful statements.
* Vertical lines at the margin: to emphasize a statement already underlined.
* Star, asterisk, or other symbols at the margin: to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty

most important statements in the book. You may want to fold the bottom corner of each page on which you use such marks. You will be able take the book off the shelf at any time and, by opening it at the folded-corner page, refresh your recollection of the book.

* Numbers in the margin: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
* Numbers of other pages in the margin: to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
* Circling or highlighting of key words or phrases;
* Writing in the margin, or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind.

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