MEET JASON

IT'S HIS FIRST WEEK AT SFU.
JASON, a Transfer Student from Taiwan, is a Straight A Student at his College in Taiwan.

It’s his first time away from home. He lives off campus and doesn’t know what it means to be a University Student in Canada.

He learned English 5 years ago and has been in Vancouver for two weeks now.

Jason, a Transfer Student from Taiwan, is a Straight A Student at his College in Taiwan.

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Jason is in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. He expects to be a businessman and wants to explore his options at SFU.

He was told by his friend to visit an academic advisor at Arts Central.

It is a good idea to do psychology with sociology. They both study individuals but from different perspectives.

Oh ... the courses fit together. I guess I shouldn’t just pick the easiest sounding course.
NESTOR ALSO ADVISED HIM NOT TO TAKE TOO MANY CLASSES IN HIS FIRST TERM AT SFU.

THE WORKLOAD AT SFU IS PROBABLY HEAVIER THAN WHAT YOU ARE USED TO.

IF YOU TAKE 5-6 COURSES HERE, YOU MAY CRASH OUT OF COURSES. THAT WILL BE EVEN MORE EXPENSIVE.

FROM WHAT THE ADVISOR TOLD ME, UNIVERSITY IS HARDER THAN I EXPECTED!

I MUST GET PREPARED AND START EARLY.

DO YOU THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO TAKE 5-6 COURSES? I WANT TO SAVE MONEY AND GRADUATE EARLIER.
WOW!!! This is a huge class... how am I supposed to ask questions? Can I even ask questions?

I am so glad that student explained what he didn't understand! I think that helped the whole class move forward. I love it when students ask questions.
He's speaking so fast! I can't write everything down.

This is frustrating! I am writing down everything. But nothing makes sense at all.

@$#!! How do I take notes?
BEST NOTE-TAKING IS DONE IN STAGES.

BEFORE CLASS,

1. DO THE REQUIRED READING AHEAD OF TIME.
2. WRITE DOWN WORDS (AND THEIR DEFINITIONS) IF THEY ARE NEW.
3. WRITE DOWN: HOW DOES THE LECTURE POINTS RELATE TO CLASS TOPICS AND PREVIOUS READINGS?
4. FIND OUT IF THE PROFESSOR OR TA HAS SUPPORTS IN PLACE FOR LECTURES?
   - SOME INSTRUCTORS AUDIO RECORD THEIR LECTURES.
   - SOME INSTRUCTORS/TAS POST THEIR NOTES AHEAD OF TIME.

DURING CLASS,

1. DON'T WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN.
2. LISTEN FOR THE BIG IDEAS AND CONNECTIONS.
3. SHARE YOUR NOTES WITH THE TA/OTHER STUDENTS TO LEARN GOOD STRATEGIES AND MAKE SURE YOUR NOTES ARE COMPLETE.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER CLASS, WRITE DOWN THE ANSWERS TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. HOW DOES THIS LECTURE RELATE TO COURSE THEMES AND TOPICS?
2. WHAT WERE SOME KEY POINTS AND CONCRETE EXAMPLES GIVEN?
3. WHAT REMAINS UNCLEAR IN THE LECTURE?
I have so many questions about the readings and the lecture, who can help me?

I am afraid that I may look stupid if I asked my instructor questions.
But I am here to study! Asking questions are part of learning. My instructor says I can go speak to my TA...

What is a TA?

Your TA is...

1. The person who teaches weekly tutorials and
2. Holds weekly office hours and
3. Usually marks your assignments and grades your work.
4. Usually a graduate student is knowledgeable about the course material.

A TA can help you a great deal!!
JASON DECIDES TO GET SOME HELP FROM HIS TA.

VISITING HIS TA TURNED OUT TO BE VERY HELPFUL. THE TA ANSWERED HIS QUESTIONS. HE ALSO ADVISED JASON TO READ HIS ASSIGNED READINGS AND PREPARE SOME DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE ATTENDING CLASS AND TUTORIALS.
THE TA HELPED JASON UNDERSTAND HOW TO COPE BETTER WITH LECTURES AND NOTE-TAKING. BUT JASON’S NOTICING SOMETHING IMPORTANT ABOUT READING IN UNIVERSITY.

READING MY TEXT SHOULD NOT BE TOO HARD. I READ A LOT ONLINE E.G. FACEBOOK, TWITTER, YAHOO NEWS!
You see… I am used to reading Facebook and Twitter feeds. This was easy and fun!

But now I have to read this! How do I begin?
READING FACEBOOK IS EASY BECAUSE

1. I DON'T HAVE TO READ EVERY WORD;
2. I AM JUST READING FOR GOOD BITS - I ALREADY KNOW THE CONTEXTS
3. IT'S SHORT; I CAN LISTEN TO MUSIC, PLAY VIDEO GAMES, WATCH YOUTUBE, WHILE I AM READING

ACADEMIC READING IS HARD BECAUSE

1. I HAVE TO READ EVERY WORD CAREFULLY.
2. I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURES AND CONTEXTS.
3. IT OFTEN HAS SEVERAL SECTIONS, COMPLEX WORDS AND SENTENCES. I SOMETIMES HAVE TO READ IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN TO UNDERSTAND IT.
4. I NEED TO FOCUS WHEN I READ.
5. ACADEMIC ARTICLES, IN PARTICULAR, SEEM TO TALK ABOUT MANY PERSPECTIVES - HOW DO I UNDERSTAND IT ALL? WHAT HAPPENS IF PERSPECTIVES OPPOSE EACH OTHER?
First, how did the professor say the lecture related to this reading?

Maybe there are bolded words, or study questions or summaries?

Then, I wonder if they are clues in how this text is put together?

There are so many definitions!
TO HELP MAKE SENSE OF THE READINGS, THE INSTRUCTOR ADVISED JASON TO:

1. REFER TO THE CHAPTER SUMMARY AND THE CHAPTER INDEX.

2. REFER TO THE GLOSSARY AT END OF THE BOOK.

3. TAKE NOTE OF THE TITLES OF EACH SECTION.

4. SUMMARIZE EACH CHAPTER IN YOUR OWN WORDS. THE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE IS SO THAT YOU SELECT THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

5. TRY ANSWERING STUDY QUESTIONS AT THE END OF EACH CHAPTER.

JASON FOLLOWED HIS INSTRUCTOR’S READING STRATEGIES.

IT TOOK HIM MORE TIME THAN HE HAD EXPECTED!

WOW... I NEED TO SCHEDULE MORE TIME TO DO MY READING.
JASON COMPLETED HIS READINGS.
HE READ EVERYTHING ONCE.
HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF IT.
HE REMEMBERED SOME DEFINITIONS.
HE HIGHLIGHTED ALMOST EVERY LINE!
MOST OF ALL, HE FEELS GOOD ABOUT COMPLETING HIS READINGS.
HE FEELS EVEN BETTER THAT HE DID IT THREE HOURS!
BUT THEN,

JASON REALIZES HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND HIS READINGS.

AS A RESULT, HE IS UNABLE TO ANSWER THE STUDY QUESTIONS.

CRAP! I HAVE HIGHLIGHTED EVERYTHING. NOW I CAN'T TELL WHAT'S IMPORTANT.

DON'T JUST READ FOR COMPLETION.

DON'T RUSH THROUGH YOUR READING.

DON'T HIGHLIGHT EVERYTHING.

YOU MAY NEED TO READ MORE THAN ONCE.

1. SET A TIME WHEN YOU ARE RESTED AND ALERT TO READ.

2. RE-READ.

3. HAVE A PURPOSE FOR READING (ASK YOUR TA FOR HELP IF UNSURE)

4. USE YOUR NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES TO EMPHASIZE IMPORTANT INFORMATION.
JASON prepares for his second week of classes. He spent around 7 to 10 more hours completing his assigned reading in preparation for his second week of class. He prepares a few discussion questions. In his second week of class, he has to start attending a tutorial and wonder what it will be like... And he’s super stressed!
What do I do here?
@#$%%!

Man, this is so stressful!
Everyone else has so much to say! What do I say?

The participation grade is 15%!!!!
Can I voice my opinions?

But that's so rude!

What does 'participating' mean?

WTH!!!!!
1. AS WITH LECTURES, ALWAYS COME PREPARED!

   - DO THE REQUIRED READING AHEAD OF TIME;
   - GATHER DEFINITIONS OF NEW WORDS;
   - WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS YOU WANT ANSWERED.

2. INVENT SOME QUESTIONS YOU THINK WOULD BE GOOD FOR A DISCUSSION OR EVEN AN EXAM. GIVE THESE TO YOUR TA FOR A RESPONSE.

3. LISTEN CAREFULLY AND ATTEND TUTORIALS REGULARLY. OFTEN, TAS GIVE USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, GRADING, AND LECTURES DURING THE TUTORIALS.
BEST PRACTICES

1. PARTICIPATION MEANS:
   
   A) ASKING THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS, EVEN IF THEY ARE BASIC QUESTIONS.

   B) LINKING YOUR OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE TO COURSE MATERIALS.

2. NON-PARTICIPATION MEANS:
   - ALWAYS WAITING FOR OTHERS TO SPEAK;
   - BEING DISTRACTED OR DISTRACTING OTHERS.

NOTE: IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT SPEAKING IN FRONT OF OTHERS, ASK YOUR TA FOR OTHER WAYS YOU CAN PARTICIPATE. THERE ARE MANY STRATEGIES TO PARTICIPATE!
JASON SPOKE TO HIS TA AFTER CLASS. HIS TA ENCOURAGED HIM TO JOIN A STUDY GROUP.

IN THE STUDY GROUP, JASON

1) COULD PRACTICE ASKING QUESTIONS;
2) IMPROVED HIS CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING;
3) LEARNED FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES;
4) STAYED ON TRACK OF HIS READINGS;
5) REVIEWED HIS STUDIES.
Jason joins the English Conversation Group, hosted by the Learning Commons.

He slowly gains confidence in speaking in class.

He also made a few friends!

Everything seemed to be going well until.....

His first paper assignment !!!!

To be continued...