

## IV-Action. The Ethical Summary Protocol (ESP)



The **Ethical Summary Protocol (ESP)** was developed at UAB by Jennifer L. Greer and Julia S. Austin to help research writers approach critical reading, note-taking, and summarizing *systematically*. The goal is that when writers employ this kind of ESP, they remember more of what they read, synthesize that knowledge when writing, and waste less time. Basically, it involves *drafting mostly from memory and your notes followed by checks for quality and accuracy*. If you do not use an ESP and pick up the bad habit of looking at the original source while you write, you may work more slowly (from information overload), lose confidence in your own voice, and write a summary that is too long and too close to the original article.

### 1. READ AND ANALYZE THE ORIGINAL TEXT

- Skim and divide the text into sub-sections;
- Read and analyze the topic of each sub-section;
- Highlight only critical (and easily forgotten) details (e.g., researcher's name, dates, stats).

### 2. TAKE NOTES IN YOUR OWN WORDS

- Make brief notes, or title-like summaries, in your own words, of the **key concepts**; Ex. 5Ws;
- Always connect key concepts with their sources (i.e., speakers or other sources);
- If you need to use the source's language in your notes, put it in quotation marks.

**Remember:** Technical terms do not need to be paraphrased or quoted.

### 3. DRAFT FROM MEMORY OR NOTES ONLY

- Hide the original text; do not look at it while you write; give yourself a chance to think;
- Draft your summary of key concepts from memory or your notes, in your own words, writing 1-2 sentences per sub-section;
- Trust yourself to remember the highpoints. The mind is a good editor.

**4. CONDUCT A R.A.P. TEST:** Review your draft summary with the author's original text for **R.A.P.**, then correct and revise.

- Is your summary **Relevant**?
- Is your summary **Accurate**? Check the highlighted/underlined details first.
- Is your summary **Paraphrased** (synthesized in *your* words, *not* the source's)?

### 5. CITE RE: THE 3-STEP RULE

- Mark (quote, or indent) any original language from the source(s);
- Cite the primary source in the paragraph;
- Cite the primary source again in the reference list; check style guidelines for details.

## Testing the Ethical Summary Protocol (ESP)



**Instructions:** Imagine that you are surfing the Internet for sources for a paper and find an essay by Marc Prensky (2001), from his essay, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," in *On the Horizon*, 9 (5), MCB University Press, at <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/prensky%20-%20digital%20natives,%20digital%20immigrants%20-%20part1.pdf>.

Below is the excerpt that you see on your computer screen. You want to include the essential point of it in your paper. Take a few minutes to read the excerpt and make notes in your own words in the section below (Don't write sentences; just make sketchy notes). Then fold your paper on the dark line so you cannot see the excerpt. Write a 1-2 sentence summary, drafting from your memory and notes only (using Step #3 of the ESP). Then open your paper, compare your summary with the source's excerpt. Conduct a **RAP** test (Step #4). Is your summary **Relevant? Accurate? Paraphrased** or synthesized in your own words? Revise. Once you do Step #5, marking and citing sources, you will have completed some valuable pre-writing. Try the ESP with more difficult passages to see if the protocol enhances your process and product as well as your learning and retention of knowledge.

**[Today's college students] represent the first generations to grow up with (digital) technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded by and using computers, videogames, digital music players, video cams, cell phones, and all the other toys and tools of the digital age. Average college grads have spent less than 5,000 hours of their lives reading, but over 10,000 hours playing video games (not to mention 20,000 hours watching TV). As a result . . . students *think and process information fundamentally differently* from their predecessors . . ." Different kinds of experiences lead to different brain structures," says Dr. Bruce D. Perry of Baylor College of Medicine. It is very likely that *students' brains have physically changed* . . . as a result of how they grew up.**

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SUMMARY: \_\_\_\_\_

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