RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING TECHNICAL ARTICLES

Rationale: To give some guidelines for understanding technical articles quickly.

Guidelines:

• Quickly identify what the author is claiming to say.
  o What is the problem?
  o Is the problem all that important?

• Quickly state your opinion about the claim.
  o Is this a significant (radical or revolutionary) insight?
  o What is your intuition about whether the proposed insight/solution is likely to work?
  o What evidence would convince you?

• Determine what evidence is presented to support the author’s claim.
  o Was the evidence you sought presented?
  o If not, what evidence was presented?

• Decide whether the evidence is convincing.
  o Was the evidence complete, reasonable, and believable?
  o Do you trust the conclusions the author reached based on his data?

• Determine the major concepts, keywords, facts presented.
  o Did the author define any new terms?
  o Do you agree with the term definitions?

• Identify things about the article with which you disagree.
  o Is there anything in your experience that would cause you to still disagree with the author?

• Re-evaluate your opinion about the article.
  o Has your opinion of the article changed?
  o What additional information do you need?

• Identify the ways in which the article has increased your understanding of the problem or of possible solutions.
  o Have you profited from reading this article?
  o In what ways?
  o List 2-3 new things you learned.

• List the things that are still unclear about the article.
  o List 2-3 things you still don’t understand.
  o For each, think about how you would go about resolving the question.

• Paraphrase, in one paragraph, what the article is saying.

• Determine the main thing you can use from the article.
  o Did you try to apply the article’s ideas to a small instance of the problem?
  o Could you reach a similar result as the author?
  o If not, why do you think you failed?

• Style of paper: Essay, experiment, survey.