English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
Module 3: Task 1 – 5 Video Lectures
Video 3.5: *Strategies in Action: Scanning for Specific Information*

Dr. Bikowski: Welcome to our video on Strategies in Action: Scanning for Specific Information. I'm Dawn Bikowski at Ohio University. In this video we will be looking at some examples of how you can support your students as they gain mastery over your content while also helping them with the reading skill of scanning for information. To help me with our video today, we have Dr. Moon Cho. She is a Visiting Professor in the Linguistics Department at Ohio University and has years of experience with studying about EMI and teaching EMI courses, such as in Math and Statistics. Pay attention to the strategies that Dr. Cho uses for helping students with scanning. Welcome, Dr. Cho. Dr. Cho is going to demonstrate scanning activities with us today.

When students scan for information, that means they are looking for specific information. Think about all the times you scan for information, no matter in what language. You scan for information when you read a menu and look for the desserts, you scan for information when you read a journal article and are trying to find the results of a specific research question. You even scan for information when you review a list of TV shows or movies, trying to find the one you are looking for. For our students, they need to be able to scan for information so that they can find information fast. Scanning does not mean reading carefully for main ideas. It means looking for specific information. One of the reasons it is important is because it helps good readers read quickly and for a purpose. Can you imagine if you wanted to have dessert at your favorite restaurant and you had to read every word carefully of the appetizers, salads, main dinners, and drinks, before you got to the desserts? That would be very frustrating. It's better to scan and find what you need fast.

Students need help with this, though. You can help them by training them to look for information and not read every word. For example, students can look for key words based on the information they need. Imagine our dessert example. You might look over the menu quickly to find the word "chocolate." When you're scanning, you can also look for the shapes of words. Imagine the outline of the word "dessert" in your mind. There's a tall "d" at the beginning and tall "t" at the end of the word—imagining that can help you find that word. Another strategy is to guess where you think the information will be found. Most restaurants put the desserts at the end of the menu, so if you want a dessert, you go to the back. In academic reading, if you're looking for the results of a study, you go toward the end to find the Results section and then scan that area for specific information.

We can practice together. I'm going to put up a text from a sociology textbook, about the Scientific Method. But first, I'm going to tell you the information I want you to look for. As soon as I put up the text on the screen, try to find the information I asked you for, as quickly as you can. That usually means

you don’t read the beginning of the paragraph word-by-word. Instead, you quickly look for key words related to my question. Are you ready? Ok, here is the information I want you to look for: “What does reliability mean?” We’ll look at the longer text together and then zoom in to part of it.

The Scientific Method

Sociologists make use of tried-and-true methods of research, such as experiments, surveys, field research, and textual analysis. But humans and their social interactions are so diverse that they can seem impossible to chart or explain. It might seem that science is about discoveries and chemical reactions or about proving ideas right or wrong rather than about exploring the nuances of human behaviour. However, this is exactly why scientific models work for studying human behaviour. A scientific process of research establishes parameters that help make sure results are objective and accurate. Scientific methods provide limitations and boundaries that focus a study and organize its results. This is the case for both positivist or quantitative methodologies and interpretive or qualitative methodologies. The scientific method involves developing and testing theories about the world based on empirical evidence. It is defined by its commitment to systematic observation of the empirical world and strives to be objective, critical, skeptical, and logical. It involves a series of prescribed steps that have been established over centuries of scholarship.

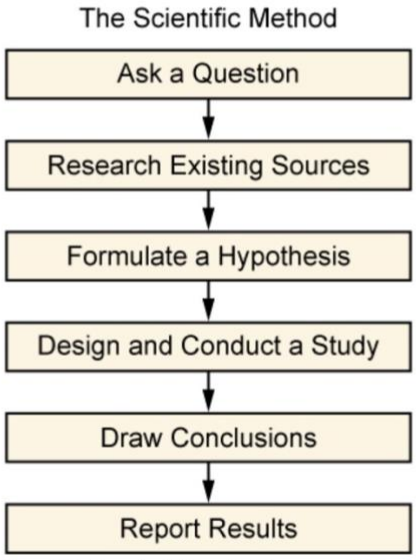

Figure 2.2. The scientific method is an essential tool in research.

But just because sociological studies use scientific methods does not make the results less human. Sociological topics are not reduced to right or wrong facts. In this field, results of studies tend to provide people with access to knowledge they did not have before—knowledge of other cultures, knowledge of rituals and beliefs, knowledge of trends and attitudes. No matter what research approach is used, researchers want to maximize the study's **reliability** (how likely research results are to be replicated if the study is reproduced). Reliability increases the likelihood that what is true of one person will be true of all people in a group. Researchers also strive for **validity** (how well the study measures what it was designed to measure).

Ok, did you get the answer quickly? We can see that reliability means if someone reproduces a study, how likely it is that the results will be the same. You probably noticed that the word reliability was bolded, which helped with scanning.

Now Dr. Cho is going to demonstrate how to help your students be more comfortable with looking for information quickly and not reading every word. You can do this by asking your students to find answers to specific questions. That way, they know they need to focus on specific information and getting it fast. Be sure to tell your students that you are going to time them, and the fastest student wins.

Dr. Cho: Ok, everyone, today we're going to practice looking for specific information. The purpose of what we'll do isn't for you to read each word carefully and completely today. Instead, I want you to look for the answers to questions that I'm going to ask you. This is a different type of reading and is a useful way to find information when you need it fast. The winner will be the student who finds the answer first. We will be timing this. So you need to find the answer in 5 seconds if you can. The reading we'll practice with is in our statistics textbook. Here is the first question I want us to consider: "What are the steps for learning from data?" [Dr. Chose writes this question on the board]. Now, turn to page 5 and Go, find the answer! The first student to find the answer in the book wins. You have to tell us exactly where the answer is located.

Dr. Bikowski: So, here, Dr. Cho is training students on how to look quickly over information and find what they need. Students will benefit from this greatly, especially when they are studying readings that they looked at before but need specifics from, or when they are preparing for a class and need to get answers to questions. Or when students don't need to read a whole article and only need some information, they can scan for it.

Keep in mind that scanning for specific information is different from skimming. When you skim a text, you are looking for an overview of what the text is about, what the main ideas are. Usually, you are looking at pictures or tables, reading headings, and reading the first sentence of each paragraph. That skill is also useful for students. If they need to get the overall main idea of a text quickly, skimming is another useful skill for them.

Ok, we have looked at specific ways that you can help students scan a text for specific information. And we talked briefly about how skimming and scanning are different. Now you can think to yourself if this might be useful for your students in your own courses.