Reflections and Notes:

1. How do you take notes for reading you do for coursework or research?
Do you have a particular process you follow for reading and taking notes? How well do you think it’s working? How long does it take for you to read/take notes on an article/chapter?

2. What strategies do you want to try for your own research process?
What kind of notes might help you for your own research process? When does it make sense for you to do low-stakes writing as part of your notes/reflection? What questions do you have?
Example 1: Make a spreadsheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>TYPE OF PUBLICATION (journal, thesis, report, other)</th>
<th>STUDY SITE (US vs. OTHER)</th>
<th>STUDY AIMS/ PURPOSE</th>
<th>FOCUS (concepts, measures, intervention, prevention, problem description)</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS Language</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>STUDY DESIGN</th>
<th>METHODS</th>
<th>Health Literacy Measure</th>
<th>PRIMARY VARIABLES</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>LIMITATIONS</th>
<th>INCLUDE Y or N</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low caregiver health literacy is associated with higher odds of emergency department usage and hospital visits. Morrison AK, Broussard DC, Brazauskas R, Levins MN. (2014).</td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>US Midwest</td>
<td>Link low caregiver health literacy to ED visits.</td>
<td>Problem prevalence. Description</td>
<td>Parents of children to age 12 using ER. English and Spanish speakers (n=620)</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>Cross-sectional</td>
<td>Verbal consent and prior ED visits logistic regression</td>
<td>NIVS</td>
<td>Parent NIVS score, ED visit rate for patients with low health literacy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>US Midwest</td>
<td>Effect of race on receipt of radiology services varies by HLI level.</td>
<td>Problem description</td>
<td>Parents of children presenting in ER.</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>Secondary analysis of cross sectional data</td>
<td>Chart review, regression</td>
<td>NIVS</td>
<td>Parent HLI, NIVS score, race/ethnicity, child radiology use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Possible things to include in your template:

**Key Information:**
- Citation
- Type of publication

**Purpose/Design of Study:**
- Study aims/purpose
- Focus of study
- Type of participants
- Study Design

**Methods/Tools:**
- Methods
- Tools/Instrument
- Relevant Variables

**Findings:**
- Results

**Evaluation/Synthesis**
- Limitations
- Notes/Reactions

Workshop: Writing Through the Research Process | April 5, 2017
Commonwealth Honors College & UMass Writing Center
Example 2: Make an outline

Citation: Ding, Huiling. "Genre Analysis of Personal Statements: Analysis of Moves in Application Essays to Medical and Dental Schools." English for Specific Purposes 26 (2007): 368-392.

Summary: Although personal statements serve a vital function within graduate school applications, there is a relative lack of research within ESP research, and writing teachers do not have enough resources to teach this genre effectively. Ding proposes a genre moves analysis differentiate the features of successful or exemplary personal statements to help English teachers share these conventions with students.

Outline:

- **Introduction**: Ding adopts a socio-rhetorical orientation in framing genre and moves, primarily working from John Swales. Moves are a functional unit particular to the purpose and context of a given genre. Put another way, moves are semantic and functional, and can be identified by communicative and linguistic boundaries. (370)
- **Ding’s research questions** focus on what are the moves of successful personal statements for medical and dental schools, and whether there are features that differentiate less-edited personal statements from successful ones.
- **Description of study**: The corpus consisted of 30 online personal statements for medical/dental school collected from public websites, 20 were marked as successful or examples, 10 were unedited.
- Moves were demarcated by "discourse markers" including changes in theme, modality, tense, and introduction of new lexical terms. Text divisions such as headings were also used to mark boundaries between moves. Within sections, T-units were also counted (main clause + subordinate clauses) (374).
- **Results & findings**: Ding identifies five key moves: "Explaining the reason to pursue the proposed study, Establishing credentials related to medicine/dentistry, Discussing relevant life experiences, Stating career goals, and Describing personality" (376).
- In comparing the frequency of moves between the exemplar essays and unedited essays, Ding finds that the unedited essays tend to have less content that fall into the top five moves coded within the exemplar essays, meaning writers are including other information. Broken down by T-units, 75% of units in the unedited corpus were relevant to moves, compared to 100% in the exemplar corpus (382).
- **Discussion**: Because this genre has many features that are occluded, as in, they’re often highly context dependent, and there’s little guidance provided for how to write them, these factors “present extra barriers for writers when they have to cross cultural, disciplinary, and linguistic boundaries” (387).

Connection to my work:
I read this study because I was looking for a good example of someone doing a moves analysis, and how they break down the steps of working with texts. What I found helpful was that Ding is very transparent about first how she distinguishes sections in texts, and then next, how she goes through a descriptive process moving from identifying strategies (what's being talked about) to then identifying moves (the functional or rhetorical purpose behind those strategies). Although Ding is taking a pragmatic approach, because her goal is to support teaching prospective graduate students about how to write this genre, she also identifies how the function of the discourse community has been to occlude these genre moves, making it more difficult for people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds to have access to these genres. It would be interesting to me to extend this kind of social critique to a specific institutional context, such as how a specific program advises/selects students, and whether access to the resources necessary in writing this genre are stratified based on background.

Questions:

- Does a moves analysis help us better interpret the social dimensions of personal statement writing (and how they do or do not get taught to students)?
- How is access to these conventions stratified across social categories?
- Does teaching these conventions directly offer a meaningful kind of intervention in this social stratification?
Creating a Research Space:

One of the biggest challenges in writing a research project is figuring out where it fits in relation to other scholars. Research writers frequently use three rhetorical moves to create a context for their work. These moves can happen both in the introduction of a piece, as well as on a larger scale, throughout the research paper/proposal/document:

**MOVE 1: Mapping the Research Landscape (Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review)**

Writers demonstrate an understanding of the field of research and the relevance or importance of their research topic (exigency).

- **Example phrases:**
  - “In recent years, researchers have become increasingly interested in...” “A central issue in ______ is...”
  - “Many recent studies have focused on...”

Writers selectively synthesize and review previous work in a literature review

- Imagine that all past research on your topic is an ongoing academic conversation that you need to understand fully before joining in; then, to structure your synthesis, ask yourself:
  - “What would X author say to Y author? Does X author extend Y author’s research, or does she critique it, etc.?”
- **Example phrase:** “Much research has examined ______, though different conclusions have been made.”

**MOVE 2: Identifying a Gap or Opportunity (Analysis/Synthesis)**

Writers show there is 1) some kind of gap, shortcoming, limitation, or opportunity in existing work, and/or 2) that some extension or verification is needed

- Imagine that you now understand the conversation, and you see some limitation or place where extension is needed; join the conversation to make the limitation or need for more research clear.
- **Example phrases:**
  - (limitation) “However, these studies have failed to recognize the...”
  - (extension) “X...has been well-studied. However, less attention has been paid to...”

**MOVE 3: Occupying the Niche (Argument)**

Writers show how their work resolves (or, in the case of a proposal, will resolve) the gap, shortcoming, or limitation in existing work or that it successfully extends or verifies past research.

- Imagine that you now have everyone’s attention, and that you must explain to fellow scholars how your ideas will add or move the conversation forward.
- **Example phrases:**
  - for proposal: “The purpose of this investigation is to...” or “To focus my research, I will ask the following questions...”
  - for introduction: “The remainder of this paper is divided into five sections. Section 1 describes...”

**Works Consulted:**

- Swales, John M. Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings (1990)