

Effective Note Taking

Before the Lecture

1. Read assigned text before the lecture. You will...
 - a. have a better idea of what is important.
 - b. be more likely to engage in meaningful learning – not just rote learning.
 - c. be able to organize information better because you will have a framework for understanding the material.
 - d. Be able to use the information from the text to fill in details and elaborate on the information
2. Review notes from the previous class. This provides a foundation for learning new material.
3. Sit toward the front of the room to minimize distractions.
4. Date and number each days notes.
 - a. Match dates with assigned text reading
 - b. If absent, collect notes for the missing dates
5. Necessary materials
 - a. Have a separate binder for each class
 - b. 20 sheets of note paper... ..Cornell Method: Prepare paper by drawing a line down the pages 2-3 inches from left and across 3 inches from the bottom. (See Handout – Cornell Method of Note-taking)
 - c. Keep the syllabus in the binder to note any changes mentioned in class.
 - d. Bring text and use it for class discussion and to write pg. # in lecture notes.

During the Lecture

1. Take notes that focus on Main Idea and Supporting Details. (See Handout – Lecture Notes- the mental process)
2. Use abbreviations. You will be better able to pay attention to lecture by not spelling out each word. Ex: +, =, w/, w/out, intro, #, omit vowels-dvlpmnt, shorten word – assoc, dev , vs, Cap letter for frequently word. Be consistent.
3. Use indenting form for writing notes. (See Handout – Outline Method of Note-taking)
4. Skip 2-3 lines when a new topic (main idea) begins.
5. Take notes as if you were taking them for someone else. Use your own words when possible to enhance understanding.
6. Get involved in class discussions, but continue to take notes
7. Listen actively – ask question, think of examples, relate information to something you know, listen to other students' questions.

8. Put a ? by info you do not understand, but keep taking notes.
9. If you can't keep up, ask the professor to repeat or slow down, skip lines to insert info later, write a portion of each word, exchange photocopied notes from a classmate, go to the lecture again, read text first.
10. If you can't spell something, write it phonetically, correct it later.
11. Taking full detailed notes rather than just writing down main ideas does NOT interfere with listening and comprehension
12. If professor lectures from the text, take notes anyway.
 - a. The instructor will emphasize what she thinks is important
 - b. Write page number of the text in your notes for reference.

After the Lecture

1. Review your notes. Add info you remember but did not write down during lecture
2. Copying notes over is a rehearsal strategy that is time consuming, but not very effective for learning for understanding.
3. Listening to tape recorded lectures is time consuming and time can usually be spent better using another study strategy.
4. Locate info you do not understand and get clarification from text, instructor, or another student.
5. Generate and answer 2 types of questions
 - a. Mirror questions -reflect info from your notes. Write these on the left side of the page
 1. Lower level questions -dates, facts, terms, lists
 2. Higher level questions - solve problems, analyze, develop, judgments
 - b. Summary questions - reflects the major themes of the lecture. - write at the bottom of the page.
4. Read over notes and underline key words that answer your questions.
5. Cover notes and attempt to answer your questions
6. If appropriate construct a representation that depicts the organization of your material - map, hierarchy, sequence, diagram, matrix.
7. Review your notes for 10 minutes once per week. A student who takes good notes and studies them directly after the lecture and again before an exam stands a good chance of remembering 90 - 100 % of the material

Ideas adapted from:

Carter, C., Bishop, J., & Kravits, S.L. (2000). *Keys to effective learning* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Ellis, D. (2003). *Becoming a master student* (10th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Montgomery, R. J., Moody, P. G., & Sherfield, R. M. (1997). *Cornerstone building on your best*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Dembo, M. (2004) *Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success* (2nd ed.) Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.