Note Taking: Strategies and Tips
Starting the Conversation

- How often do you take notes in class?
- Do you find note taking to be simple or difficult?
- Which method of note taking do you use?
LET’S LOOK AT 4 NOTE TAKING STRATEGIES AND SOME TIPS TO HELP YOU DEVELOP GREAT NOTE TAKING SKILLS
Reading Strategies & Tips

- Strategies
  - Cornell Notes
  - Outlines
  - Webs
  - Charts

- Tips
  - Staying Organized
  - Additional Tips

(Note, 2015)
Cornell Notes

• How To
  ◦ Take notes on the body of the paper
  ◦ Review your notes and write main points/questions on the left margin
  ◦ Write a summary at the bottom

• Pros
  ◦ Keeps your notes organized
  ◦ Makes grouping notes an easy task

• Cons
  ◦ Takes a bit longer
  ◦ Need to review your notes to come up with questions and main ideas

(Cornell, 2015)
(Note, 2015)
Outlines

• **How To**
  ◦ Write down important facts by grouping them by topic
  ◦ Facts that are related fall under a topic and are indented
  ◦ You can use bullet points, dashes, numbers, etc.

• **Pros**
  ◦ Keeps your notes organized
  ◦ Easy to review notes

• **Cons**
  ◦ Requires more thinking when taking notes to group them correctly
  ◦ Does not allow for easy reflection as Cornell Notes

(Original text by Lindafay, 2012)
Webs (Mapping)

- **How to**
  - Organize notes under topics
  - Place the main idea or topic in the middle and draw lines to details
  - Also draw lines between details to connect related ideas

- **Pros**
  - Great for visual learners
  - Easy to review notes
  - Easy to add color, highlighting, etc. to make notes more reader friendly

- **Cons**
  - Hard to differentiate between main points and supporting details
  - Takes up space

*Figure 1: Example of the concept map.*

(Sharifi, Rahmati, & Saber, 2013)
Charts

- **How to**
  - Make a table to insert information that is presented as cause and effect, in chronological order, numerical order, etc.
  - Make categories and label your paper before the lecture to be able to take notes effectively

- **Pros**
  - Reduces writing
  - Easy to review notes
  - Keeps information organized

- **Cons**
  - Identifying categories
  - Preparing notes paper before class

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<th>What They Eat</th>
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(Kaplan, 2011)
Staying Organized

- Plan ahead of time
- Prepare your note paper when necessary
- Use the above note taking strategies wisely
  - For math or science class, the making an outline is good to take notes during class and making a chart or diagram off your notes will keep you organized
  - For humanities and social science classes, Cornell notes and outlines might be more effective
- Find your strengths and the type of note taking process that best fits your needs
Additional Tips

- **Prepare before class** by reading assigned materials
  - After you have done your reading, decide what note taking method will be most effective for the class

- **Be an active listener** by identifying important information during a lecture or class and write down the most important ideas

- **Do NOT write everything** a speaker says

- **Condense information**
  - Ex. “The American Revolutionary War took place from 1775 thru 1783” can be condensed to “Amer. Rev. War = 1775-1783”

- If you miss something you think is important, **ask your professor** during or right after class

- **Review your notes** after class
  - When reviewing your notes, have a pen of a different ink or a highlighter handy so you can make adjustments and organize your notes
Reviewing Note Taking Strategies and Tips

- Which method of taking notes is best for your academic discipline?
- Can you use note taking strategies in your math and science courses?
- Is it possible to develop your own version of taking notes by merging some of the suggested strategies?

Find the best method of note taking that works for you in each course!
References


