

Better Note Taking, Better Grades: A Student Workshop

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WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Goals for This Hour:

- 1. Assess your current form of note-taking**
- 2. Outline the benefits of personalized note-taking**
- 3. Learn the “best practices” for note-taking**
- 4. Practice the Cornell Method**

Intro Activity

- **Do you take notes during lectures?**
- **To what extent does your success in a class depend on note taking?**
- **For the following lecture, take notes as you normally would:**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/patrick lin the ethical dilemma of self driving cars#t-3576](https://www.ted.com/talks/patrick_lin_the_ethical_dilemma_of_self_driving_cars#t-3576)

Follow-up Discussion

- **Discuss with your neighbor how you took notes. What was your method/style?**
- **What were the key points of the lecture?**
- **How do you identify on your notes the “important” parts?**
- **Could you use these notes to plan a formal response?**

Thoughts on Note Taking

- Note taking is a cognitive skill, not dictation
 - “Encoding” vs. “external storage”
- Note taking is a form of writing/thinking for yourself
 - It is personal
 - It requires practice
 - Initial effort = improved results

Science Demonstrates the Power of Note Taking

- **Handwriting – in comparison to typing – is more interactive, engages more brain areas, and enhances learning (James & Englehardt 2012)**
- **Handwriting also improves conceptual understanding in the long-term because you summarize/ re-think on the spot (Mueller & Oppenheimer 2014)**
- **The “Cornell Method” leads to higher levels of understanding through interpretation (Jacobs 2008)**

Note taking “best practices”

- 1. Write it down!**
- 2. Question/Contextualize**
- 3. Reflect/Summarize**

1. Write it down

- **Differentiate between important and supporting materials**
- **Paraphrase/Use your own words**
 - **Don't write down everything! Simplify!**
- **Use symbols, abbreviations, arrows, lines**
 - **e.g., i.e., b/c, w/, w/o, texting language (b4, WTF, IMO)**
 - **These strategies may look different in your humanities classes versus your science / math classes.**

2. Question/Contextualize

- **Write down questions that you have**
- **Write your own thoughts about the material separate from lecture**
- **Indicate feelings/thoughts/events that occur during lecture to act as guideposts during review**

3. Reflect/Summarize

- **How does this fit in to what I already know?**
- **What is the main theme of this particular page of notes?**
- **What questions do I need clarified?**
- **What are the guiding questions for this material?**
- **This should be done AFTER the lecture, but before you go to sleep that night.**

Levine: Highbrow - Lowbrow

→ the sense that folk melodies needed to be used in art music in order to

"Americanist" works vs. American works / folk materials.

imaginative movement

if American music is hybrid → do we consider that the sources of hybridity are themselves hybrid?
→ i.e. Gaelic music is itself a hybrid, and not just a timeless, "history-less" music.

1920s question by Henderson: Why No Great American Music?
→ partly because they were searching for the "Great" word.
Morris: Yankee Blues

How is this done?

“CORNELL METHOD”

**QUESTIONS/
REFLECTIONS:
After Class**

**NOTES:
During
Class**

**SUMMARY:
After Class**

Tracking Ancient Diseases - Plague

History
Jake
2/10/15

- Evolutionary med extract
DNA from bones
 - ↳ look for changes
- genetic research.

Health challenges

- complex - connections
- strong evol component
- need to study health holistically

Challenges

- skeletons limited info - decay
- mummies limited geographically & time

- for 3k pop. Rese

dental calculus = tartar

- persist over time
- abundant - world wide

Previous studies - microscope - today

use genetic tech to analyze
calculus → more detail about

diet, disease + immunity - access to
lungs, gut bacteria. - learn

- benefit - Evolu Vulnerability dis^{es}
= improve health

Reminds me of
Studies ~~about~~ on
corn consumption
and dental
decay

- Examining dental calculus provides
a new avenue for understanding the
evolution of disease and human vulnerability
over time. This can lead to improved health.

Try it out!

- **Watch another lecture:**
- https://www.ted.com/talks/thelma_golden_how_art_gives_shape_to_cultural_change

Recap

- **Was this method easier or harder than your original note taking?**
- **Practice!! Start doing this in your classes...**
- **Don't worry about missing things out!**
- **If using your computer, write notes in your own words.**

*****But try to keep a notepad instead!**

Some Interesting Links

➤ Cornell Method of note taking

➤ <http://lsc.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Cornell-Note-Taking-System.pdf>

➤ <https://shp.utmb.edu/asa/Forms/cornell%20note%20taking%20system.pdf>

➤ Relevant studies

➤ [\(James & Engelhardt 2012\)](#)

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S221194931200038#>

➤ [\(Mueller & Oppenheimer 2014\)](#)

<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159.full>

Thank you

- Please visit the Writing Across the Curriculum website for student resources!
 - <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/writingacrossthecurriculum/student-resources/>
- WAC Fellow article on note-taking:
 - <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/writingacrossthecurriculum/2014/09/02/notetaking-by-hand-writing-to-learn/>