

## **Reading & Note-Taking**

Students often find it challenging taking clear, detailed, and organized notes. Also, many will only record what the professor says, without thinking critically about the material being presented. Learning how to take effective notes can not only help you improve your marks, but become a more engaged learner in the classroom.

### **Before Class**

- Do your assigned readings before every class
  - Readings provide a foundation of knowledge before the lecture
  - When you complete a reading before class, you are better able to focus, understand, and contribute during the lecture.
  
- Before you begin your readings, review the chapter
  - Pay attention to any graphics, bold texts, and headings in the chapter.
  - Read the summary questions at the end of the chapter, to help you focus on the key areas in the chapter.
  - Ask yourself what you already know about the topic: Have you learned about it in a class before? Have you experienced it in your own life or watched it on television? Connecting new information to your own experiences and prior knowledge helps improve your learning.
  
- Use active, not passive reading
  - Try taking notes in your own words, not simply highlighting.
  - Come up with questions as you read
  - Cornell Notes and Concept Maps are both excellent active reading/learning strategies that are discussed on the next page.

### **In Class**

- Come prepared with all materials - pen, notebook/laptop, notes from textbook readings, printed slides (if provided), water, and snacks (if allowed).
- Choose a seat close to the front and in the centre of the room, which will help you eliminate noise and visual distractions in the room.
- Put away your cell phone, close any unrelated programs and tabs on your laptop, and sit up straight.

### **Cornell Notes**

- A technique that helps you organize your notes and improve your learning.

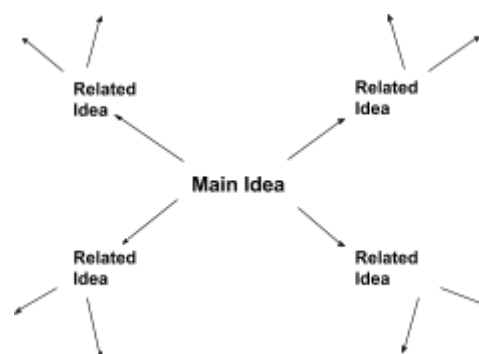
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- Involves more than just recording the professors words, but reflecting, summarizing, and contextualizing the material.

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| <p><b>2. Cue Column</b></p> <p>Key ideas, theories, names, dates, etc. that describes what is in the note taking column.</p> <p>Write down questions you have about material. i.e. How does it relate to other concepts, theories, formulas discussed?</p> | <p><b>1. Note-Taking Column</b></p> <p>Take clear, detailed notes on the lecture material here. Whenever possible, use short abbreviations for longer words.</p> <p>Try to highlight/underline any information that the professor emphasizes.</p> <p>Draw images and visuals to represent formulas, larger ideas and concepts.</p> |
| <p><b>3. Summary</b></p> <p>After class, write a summary of the material from the note-taking column and answer any questions that you came up with in the cue column.</p>   |  |

### After Class

- Review all of your textbook and class notes every week throughout the semester
- As you review, create a concept map for key course concepts. This helps you synthesize and reflect on the material you have learned.



### Final Thoughts

To be a strong note-taker, you must experiment until you find approaches that work best for you. Once you do, you'll see improvements in your focus, learning, enjoyment, and marks.

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