University of Guelma Teacher:BRAHMIA.

Department of English

Study Skills

**NOTETAKING SKILLS**

1. **Textbook Notetaking Skills:**

Taking notes on textbook information moves you into *active learning mode* that promotes thinking carefully about information and selecting what is important to learn and what is not. Taking textbook notes involves encoding information kinesthetically and visually, which together create stronger mental impressions of information.

**Essential Strategies for Textbook Notetaking**

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| ***Understand what you read before taking notes.*** | ***Be selective.*** |
| ***Include textbook reminders in your notes.*** | ***Paraphrase or reword.*** |
| ***Label your notes.*** | ***Use spaced practice.*** |
| ***Use feedback strategies.*** | ***Review your notes.*** |

**Notetaking Systems**

1. **Annotation:**

**Annotating** is the process of highlighting, underlining, making marginal notes, or marking specific information in printed materials.

**Annotating Important Information**

**Figure 01** shows five annotation strategies for marking or annotating your textbooks.

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| **Figure 1: Annotation Strategies for Marking Textbooks** |
| * Highlight the **complete topic sentence**, which states the main idea. * Selectively highlight **key words or phrases** that support the topic sentence. * **Circle terminology** and **highlight key words** in the definitions. * **Enumerate steps** or lists of information. * Make **marginal notes** to emphasize important ideas and integrate information. |

***Example*: Marking a Paragraph, Enumerating, and Making Marginal Notes**

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| **Earth System**  1.atmosphere  2.hydrosphere  3.lithosphere  4.biosphere | The earth system contains a number of interconnected subsystems, often described as “environmental spheres.” The four major subsystems are the atmosphere, 1or the ocean of air that overlies the entire earth’s surface; the hydrosphere 2or the water of the surface and near-surface regions of the earth; the lithosphere 3or the massive accumulation of rock and metal that forms the solid body of the planet itself; and the biosphere4 or the layer of living organisms of which we are a part. All four respond in various ways to the flow of energy and materials through the earth system.  From Holt Atkinson, *Reading Enhancement and Development*, 5e, pp. 218- 219. 1995 Houghton Mifflin Co. |

1. **The Cornell Notetaking System:**

The **Cornell Notetaking System** is a five-step notetaking process used to take notes from textbooks or from lectures. Dr. Walter Pauk at Cornell UniversityThe **Five R’s of Cornell** are record, reduce, recite, reflect, and review. To avoid weakening this powerful system, use all five R’s shown in **Figure 2** to record and study your notes.

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| **Figure 2: The Five R’s of Cornell** |
| 1. **Record** your notes in the right column. 2. **Reduce** your notes into the recall column on the left. 3. **Recite** out loud from the recall column. 4. **Reflect** on the information that you are studying. 5. **Review** your notes immediately and regularly. |

**Step One: Recording**

The **record step** in the Cornell system involves taking notes in the right column. Read each paragraph carefully, decide what information is important, and then record that information on your paper. Your notes should be a *reduced version* of the textbook. Be selective. Carefully read the information in **Figure 3** to learn techniques for recording information in your notes.

**Step Two: Reducing**

After you have finished taking notes for the chapter, you are ready to close the book and reduce your notes one step further. The **reduce step** in the Cornell system involves condensing notes into the recall column. See **Figure 4** for an example of reduced notes in the recall column.

**Figure 3:**

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**Step Three: Reciting**

The **recite step** in the Cornell system involves using information in the recall column to explain information out loud in your own words without referring to detailed notes. To avoid the tendency to look at your notes as you recite, use a blank piece of paper to cover your notes on the right side of your paper. **Figure 4** shows headings, study questions, and key words used to trigger reciting as well as suggestions for reciting.

**Figure 4**

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**Step Four: Reflecting**

The **reflect step** in the Cornell system involves thinking seriously, comprehending, and using elaborative rehearsal strategies to work with information in new ways. The reflect step is a creative and highly individualized step, so no two students will create identical study tools or use the same rehearsal activities. This is the time for you to decide *what will work best for you*. Use the following tips for reflecting on your notes.

* *Think and Ponder*
* *Line Up Your Recall Columns*
* *Write a Summary*
* *Write on the Back Side of Your Notes*
* *Make Study*

**Step Five: Reviewing**

The **review step** in the Cornell system involves using immediate and ongoing review. Use immediate review with your notes after you finish the reflect step. **Immediate review** is the process of rehearsing information before you end a learning task. **Ongoing review** is the process of practicing information days and even weeks after the initial learning occurred.

**The Cornell Notetaking System**

You can use the Five R’s of the Cornell system for many of your lecture courses. This system works most effectively when the instructor presents information in an organized, logical sequence.

**The Books Notes System**

**The Book Notes System** is a form of notetaking that involves marking your textbook as the lecturer moves systematically through a chapter (or in your case a handout). When an instructor moves systematically through the handout, discussing various headings, emphasizing certain details, demonstrating how to solve problems, or working exercises with you in class, you can take notes directly in the handout (or textbook). Use the following strategies to take notes:

(1)Use a specific colored marker to highlight the information the instructor discusses.

(2)Write notes in the margins to reflect any additional information or explanations.

(3)Use symbols, such as arrows or stars, to draw your attention to sections discussed.

(4)After class, use the textbook markings and marginal notes to develop separate set of follow-up or summary notes on notebook paper if you wish.

1. **Effective Notetaking Strategies:**

The major difference between taking textbook notes and taking lecture notes is the rapidity with which you need to respond to stimuli, understand words and ideas, organize information in meaningful ways, and transfer it into notes- while at the same time taking in new information presented by the speaker. When taking lecture notes, keeping up with the speaker replaces the comfortable pace you use when taking textbook notes. Working memory is challenged.

**Speaking, Thinking, and Writing Rates**

Taking lecture notes requires you to adjust to your instructor’s *rate of speech*. The **rate of speech** indicates an average number of words a speaker says per minutes. The average rate of speech during a lecture is 100-125 words per minute- a rate that provides a little more time to create basic understanding and to take notes.

You will likely encounter three general speaking rates instructors use during lectures: too slow, comfortable, or too fast. When an instructor speaks too slowly, you may have difficulty staying focused. Your *rate of thinking* far outpaces the instructor’s rate of speech, so your mind tends to wander off the subject. The **rate of thinking** indicates an average number of words or small units of information a person thinks per minute. The average is 400 words per minute. When an instructor speaks too fast, your *rate of writing* is too slow to capture the instructor’s ideas on paper. The **rate of writing** indicates the average number of words a person writes per minute. An average rate of writing is thirty words per minute. When an instructor speaks at a comfortable pace, taking notes will still be demanding, but the discrepancies among speaking, writing, and thinking rates will not create as many notetaking difficulties. **Figure 6** summaries average speaking, writing, and thinking rates.

**Figure 6: Speaking, Writing, and Thinking Rates**

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| **Average Rates** | **Words per Minute (wpm)** |
| **Average Rate of Speech During Lectures** | 100 – 125 wpm |
| **Average Rate of Writing** | 30 wpm |
| **Average Rate of Thinking** | 400 wpm |

**Rate Discrepancies**

Dealing with the discrepancies among the rate of speech in lectures, rate of writing, and rate of thinking requires flexibility and familiarity on your part with a variety of strategies you can use to adjust to specific lecture situations.

**Maintain Undivided Attention**

When your mind wanders, you start daydreaming, or you start doodling or tending to other tasks because of the large discrepancy between the speaker’s slow rate of speech and your much faster rate of thinking, you may miss important information and find switching back into the listening mode more difficult to do. Your listening goal is to use strategies to keepyour mind focused on the speaker and to maintain undivided attention, even though the presentation of information is not demanding. Use the following three strategies to deal with the discrepancy between a slow speech rate and a fast thinking rate:

* **Strategy 1: Keep Writing**.
* **Strategy 2: Mentally Summarize**.
* **Strategy 3: Predict the Next Point or Answer to a Question**.

**Increase Your Writing Rate**

More often than not, notetaking problems occur because the rate of speech during a lecture is faster than your rate of writing. Your notetaking goal is to develop a writing fluency or speed that is fast enough to write important information in your notes. The following three time-saving strategies can improve your writing rate and fluency:

* **Strategy 4: Paraphrase**. ***Paraphrasing*** is the process of using your own words to rephrase or shorten a speaker’s verbal information. Paraphrasing begins as a mental process that must be done quickly. As soon as you capture the speaker’s words, interpret the information quickly, condense it using your own words, and write the shortened form.
* **Strategy 5: Use Abbreviations and Symbols**. You can write faster by using abbreviations and symbols. When you find content-related words that you use frequently, create your own abbreviations for the terms or use common abbreviations, such as the following: **BC.** for *because*  / **EX.** for *example* / **IMP.** for *important.* **W/OUT.** for *without* / **POL.** for *politics* / **SOL.** for *solutions*

Symbols are another form of abbreviations you can use to increase your writing speed. Following are common symbols you can use in your notes:

= equals +/- positive/negative ∴ therefore & and

**Do Not Stop When You Fall Behind**

Try using the following three strategies when you fall behind.

* **Strategy 7: Leave a Gap and Start Writing Again**.
* **Strategy 8: Shift to a Paragraph Form**.
* **Strategy 9: Tape the Lecture.**

**Note: Working With Your Notes**

Taking lecture notes helps you stay focused on the lecture and keeps your mind from wandering. The most significant purpose of taking notes, however, is to create study tools to use *after* the class has ended. Use the following five strategies as soon after class as possible.

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| * *Complete Your Notes* | * *Rewrite Your Notes When necessary* |
| * *Add More Structure to Your Notes* | * *Recite, Reflect, and Review Your Notes* |
| * *Supplement Your Notes* |  |