Taking Useful Class Notes

Academic Learning Centre
201 Tier
480-1481
Overview

• Why Take Notes?
• How to Take Notes?
• Special Considerations
Why Take Notes?

- Note-taking keeps a student involved in the lecture
- Notes are a means of external information storage
- Info in lectures often signals what will be tested in exams
- Notes are a multi-sensory activity (visual, aural, kinetic)
Before Class

• **Read** assigned material to help you understand and remember the info more easily.

• **Review** lecture notes from previous classes to help create a context for new info.

• **Be prepared** by bringing needed materials.
The “T” Zone
Know What is Important

Listen for verbal cues:

- Pausing
- Repeating
- Slowing lecture
- Speaking louder or more softly
- Changing tone and inflection
- Professor stating importance
Know What is Important

Look for non-verbal cues:

• Writing on board
• Making eye contact
• Using dramatic gestures

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Psychology 101

July 12, 2009

Sensory Memory is the first type. It is the most temporal. If it is not processed further we will lose it in a second or two. If you are driving in a car, and your friend asks "What color was that car we just passed?" you can remember only if he asks you right away.

Short-term Memory is the second kind. It stores memory for up to 30 seconds. It must be processed in order to enter short-term memory. An example would be remembering a phone number long enough to make a call. Memory that lasts a long time is called Long-term Memory. Childhood memories are good examples.

This model of memory is known as the Information Processing Model:

1. Sensory Memory
   temp. (1-2 secs.)
   ex: colour of a passing car

2. Short-term
   30 secs.
   ex: phone # to make call

3. Long-term
   perm.
   ex: child. mems.
Symbols and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>(equals)</td>
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<tr>
<td>≠</td>
<td>(does not equal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;</td>
<td>(more than)</td>
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<td>&lt;</td>
<td>(less than)</td>
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<td>(goes down)</td>
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<td>@</td>
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<td>&amp;</td>
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<td>w/</td>
<td>(with)</td>
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<td>w/o</td>
<td>(without)</td>
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= (equals)      w/ (with)
≠ (does not equal)   w/o (without)
> (more than)     @ (at)
< (less than)     & (and)
↑ (goes up)       / (per)
↓ (goes down)     ~ (approximately)
1) Alarm reaction or fight or flight response
   - Immediate (CNS)
     ▼
     CNS (sensory input - detect change)
     ▼
     hypothal CTHAS: ↑ alertness
     ▼
     SNS → adrenal medulla
     ▼
     organs ← EPI - prolongs fight or flight response
   effects:
   ▲ Blood glucose (energy)
   ▼ SNS inhibits insulin release.

Glycogen → Glucose (Liver)

6) ↑ HR + force of contraction
   ▲ respiration rate + depth
   ↑ blood flow to skin + abdominal viscera
   ▲ more available to skel. muscles near brain
   → Glucose to working organs (Brain)
   ▲ digestion + urine formation
Take Good Notes

Be organized
– Pay attention to the structure of the lecture
– Look for patterns
– Copy diagrams and graphs
– Make relationship between points clear
– Leave blank space to add things later
– Use headings, subheadings and indentations to keep notes organized

2) Sympathetic Nervous System

(a) Lower motor neuron - E (skelet muscle)

3) types of movement
1) reflexes
   a) spinal - least complex, need sensory input
   b) postural - balance, posture
   c) coordinated by cerebellum

2) voluntary - most complex, no sensory input required

3) Rhythmic - walking, running
   - reflex + voluntary
   - initiated + ended by cerebellum
   - sustained by cerebellum (without input)

Input goes to motor neurons from
a) different neurons - spinal reflexes
b) primary motor cortex
   - e.g. corticospinal pathway
   - pyramidal (direct)
   c) brainstem, basal nuclei, cerebellum
   - eg. indirect pathways

Levels of motor control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premotor</th>
<th>Supplementary Motor</th>
<th>Association Areas</th>
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Patterns - Types of Main Ideas

• Key Terms and Definitions
  - Describe central concepts
  - Often in bold type or italics

• Academic Arguments
  - Evidence and assumptions that lead to a conclusion

• Theories and Laws
  - Core rules that are used to solve problems

• Relationships
  - How things interact
Graphic Organizers
Immediately After Class

• Reread notes as soon as possible after class
• Add material while info is still fresh to make your notes complete
• Complete any diagrams or examples you did not finish in class
• Highlight anything you think will be on the exam
Be Active!

• Use any method necessary to remember the information
  – Highlight your textbook
  – Take notes
  – Use flashcards
  – Make mind maps
  – Diagrams
  – Mnemonics
  – Try a study group

Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve

SQ3R: Review

• “What have I learned?”
• “Did I understand the difficult sections?”
• “Can I verbalize an understanding of the text?”
• “Could I teach the ideas to someone else?”
• “Did I try the questions at the end of the section?”
• “Can I answer the practice test questions I predicted earlier?”
Parallel Note-Taking

- Print out webnotes
- Write parallel notes on the back
- Elaborate with new information
- Take notes in class and annotate webnotes later

The Difficult Lecture

• Pre-read
• Use shorter phrases and pull out main ideas
• Abbreviate
• Share notes
• Check to see if you are getting the main ideas correctly
• Tape the lecture and listen again
Tape Recording

- A recognized accommodation for students who are diagnosed with certain kinds of learning disabilities
- Can be helpful as a supplement to written notes when material is difficult
- Must ask for the professor’s permission
- **But**
  - Can encourage not paying attention
  - Not active
  - Time consuming
If You Have to Borrow Notes

• Be selective about whom you ask for notes
• Photocopy them and return them promptly
• Rewrite them; use your own words
• Read and review them frequently
Resources – Web Based

- Note Taking (University of Victoria)
  http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/notetake.html
- Lecture Note Taking (St. John’s University)
  http://www.csbsju.edu/academicadvising/help/lec-note.html
- Note Taking Systems (California Polytechnic State University)
  http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/ssl/notetaking.systems.html
- Note Taking at University (York University)
  http://www.yorku.ca/cdc/lsp/notesonline/note1.htm
- Taking Lecture and Class Notes (Dartmouth University)
  http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/notes.html
Resources - Books


