

# ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTER

## STUDY SKILLS LIBRARY

### *Note Taking Tips*

#### **Discussion**

As you get involved with the complexities of note taking, you may tend to forget the simple things that can make it a lot easier. These tips are little hints that we all know but sometimes forget. They can be summarized by four directives:

1. Be Alert: so you are aware of and prepared for the lecture content and situation.
2. Be Orderly: so you can process the lecture now and for review later.
3. Be Systematic: so you can establish a habit and pattern so you won't miss anything important.
4. Be Up To Date: so that your well designed note taking system gets done.

Below is a list of tips which may help you be alert, orderly, systematic, and up to date:

- Attend lectures regularly. Once you miss one, it will be easier to miss more.
  - Use a standard 8 ½" x 11" loose leaf notebook, for continued organization and review. Spiral notebooks do not allow reshuffling your notes for review.
  - Keep the notes for one class separate from other classes. If possible, keep each class in a separate binder.
  - Write on one side of the paper for easier organization. It's possible to overlook material written on the back of a sheet.
  - Leave your notebook at home and carry with you only enough pages to keep track of the lecture. This way you won't lose your entire set of notes should you misplace them.
  - Carry extra pens and pencils for editing and unforeseen obstacles (UFO's).
  - Don't doodle because it distracts. Keep eye contact when not writing.
  - Make notes as complete as needed and as clear as possible so they can be used meaningfully later.
  - Leave blanks where information is missed or not understood. Fill in gaps after lecture or as soon after as possible with the aid of the instructor or classmates.
  - Develop your own system of enumerating and indenting.
  - Use symbols such as asterisks for emphasis.
  - Mark or separate assignments given in class in a space apart from the lecture notes.
  - Separate your thoughts from those of the lecture; record your own items after the lecture.
  - Be alert for cues, postural, visual, etc.
  - Record examples where helpful.
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- Listen especially at the end of the lecture. If the instructor has not paced his lecture well, he may cram half of the content into the last 5 – 10 minutes.
  - Get into the five-minute technique of reviewing your notes right after class. At this time you can change, organize, add, delete, summarize, or clarify misunderstandings.

- Recopying by itself is a debatable advantage but the five-minute technique is not.
- Have study sessions once or twice a week to learn omissions, clear up misinterpretations and get other students opinions about interpretations.

### **Bibliography**

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