EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKING METHODS
Student Success Workshop Series
Sauk Valley Community College
Studies show that people may forget:

50% of a lecture within 24 hours
80% in two weeks
95% within one month

If they do not take notes.
Go back to the notes that you took yesterday in one of your classes and read them. Do they make sense to you? Do you feel as though you are sitting in the lecture and hearing your professor talk about the topic?

Now go back to the notes that you took at the beginning of the semester. Do they still make sense? Do you feel as though you are sitting in the lecture and hearing your professor talk about the topic?
Getting ready to take effective notes

• Set the goal to be able to record enough information to reconstruct the lecture.

Before Class

• Read assigned material and highlight important information.
• Review notes from previous session.
• Sit near the front of the class in the center of the room.
• Begin notes for each lecture on a new page.
• Date each page of your notebook as well as date and number each handout.
• Identify the chapter being covered at the top of the page.
During Class
- Don’t let your mind wander and stay focused.
- Participate in class.
- Watch for clues to identify important information.
- Highlight information that the instructor states is important or on the test.
- Use symbols or abbreviations when possible.
- Form abbreviations for commonly used words by writing the first few letters.

After Class
- Review, revise, or edit your notes as soon as possible after the lecture by filling in the gaps, clarify words or ideas, adding any missing information, or add any details to clarify a point.
- Use your textbook or a friend’s notes to clarify points.
- Rewrite notes if necessary.
## NOTE-TAKING METHODS

**Cornell Method** - This method allows you to listen, think, and then create your lecture notes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue Column (or Questions)</th>
<th>Note-taking Column</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Record: During the lecture in the note-taking column.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Questions: As soon after class as possible, formulate questions based on the notes in the right-hand column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, establish continuity, and strengthen memory. This will also help when reviewing the information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Recite: Cover the note-taking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the question and cue column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to the questions, facts, or ideas indicated by the cue-words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Reflect: Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: “What’s the significance of these facts? What principle are they based on? How can I apply them? How do they fit in with what I already know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Review: Spend at least ten minutes every week reviewing all your previous notes. If you do, you’ll retain a great deal for current use, as well as, for the exam.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

After class, use this space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.
## Example of Cornell Note Taking Method

| How can I prepare for lecture? | Preparation – read the assignment  
| How can I take more effective notes? | Attendance is important!!!  
| | Participate in the class discussion.  
| | Ask questions.  
| | Go over the notes when I get home so I understand the information and it makes sense to me.  

### Summary

It is important to read the assignment before class so I am able to participate in the class discussion as well as get any questions I may have answered.  
It is also important to review my notes for clarity and understanding as soon as possible after a lecture.
PARR Method –

Prepare-Abbreviate-Revise-Review

Prepare – be prepared for the lecture, sit close to the front of the room, write down main ideas as well as examples, and note important details and unfamiliar terms.

Abbreviate – create abbreviations to increase writing speed,

Revise – revise notes within 24 hours while the information is fresh in your mind

Review – Review your notes after the lecture as well as before the next lecture
**T Chart**

After you have taken your notes, a possible tool to use to organize your notes is a T Chart. T charts are useful when information needs to be compared or contrasted.

*Example:*
**Taping Lectures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Advantages:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Disadvantages:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have a complete record of the lecture.</td>
<td>Reviewing with a taped lecture is very time consuming. It would take 50 minutes to review a 50 minute lecture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can review the information multiple times.</td>
<td>A recording does not give you the visual messages times that are so important to communication and the memory process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can develop a strong auditory memory record by listening to the recording.</td>
<td>By taping lectures, you are not challenging yourself to improve your note-taking skills. You cannot quiz by listening to a taped lecture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two Column Notes

This method may be used if you are taking notes while reading your text.

You divide your paper into two columns. The left side is the main idea or topic. The right side is where you would list the details of the idea or topic.
### Example of Two Column Notes

#### Main Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solids, liquids, gases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solids have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquids have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No definite shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definite volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gases have:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No definite shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No definite volume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTE TAKING FORMATS

Indent Note-taking Format

Example -

Goals of psychology
1. describe
gather data
2. explain
generate theories
3. predict
use theories
4. influence
generate change
Abbreviated Note-taking Format

Example -

Thales – first western philosopher – search for first principles of metaphysics – reductionist who thought everything was made of water.

Plato – Greek philosopher – pupil of Socrates – lived 427-347 B.C. – believed in the separation of the mind and sense perceived world – in early dialogues believed in anamnesis (we forgot all that we once knew as souls) – knowledge is gained through power of reasoning.
Math Note-taking Format

Example:
The order of operations:

Perform operations within parentheses

Simplify any numbers with exponents

Perform the operations of multiplication and division from left to right

Add and subtract from left to right
COPING WITH POOR LECTURERS

The Expert
Forgets material that is elementary for him or her BUT the information is difficult for students. Mentions things rather than explaining them. Leaves out connections between ideas.
*Coping Strategy* – Ask questions.

The Rambler
Consistently goes off track
*Coping Strategy* - Ask carefully worded questions related to the last main point when the teacher rambles

The Mumbler
Speaks too softly. Talks into notes or board and does not face the class. Does not enunciate well.
*Coping Strategy* – sit up front, listen closely, ask lecturer to repeat information, compare your notes with others.
The Tortoise and The Hare
Speaks too quickly or too slowly.

*Coping strategy tortoise* – Ask to repeat or clarify.

*Coping strategy hare* – Step up your internal dialogue, review what has been said, anticipate what is to come and make connections – active listening.

The Star of the Show
More interested in the impression he or she makes than conveying information.

*Coping Strategy* – Focus on what is said; try not to be distracted.
Keep pace with your instructor – Write brief phrases and use abbreviations. When using abbreviations limit an abbreviation to just one meaning to avoid confusion. When using an abbreviation for a name, write the full name just once, and then indicate the abbreviation.

Review and practice your notes – You can lose large amounts of information if you do not review it quickly. Schedule time to review your notes in your daily schedule. Also take time to clarify your notes. This will help fill in the gaps where you may have become lost. Always make sure this is done before the next class.
Go back the exercise we began this workshop with –

• Go back to the notes that you took yesterday in one of your classes and read them. Do they make sense to you? Do you feel as though you are sitting in the lecture and hearing your professor talk about the topic?

• Now go back to the notes that you took at the beginning of the semester. Do they still make sense? Do you feel as though you are sitting in the lecture and hearing your professor talk about the topic?
What changes do you need to make in order to have more effective notes and increase your academic success?
INFORMATION RETRIEVED FROM:

http://www.eiu.edu/~lrnasst/notes.htm
http://www.westshore.edu/webs/ltc/cornell_note_taking_method.htm
http://printables.familyeducation.com8%2C33953%2C28212%2C28213%2C28214%2C9211%2C28719

Cornell Method information adapted from How to Study in College 7/e by Walter Pauk, 2001 Houghton Mifflin Company