

Effective Note Taking Strategies

Any college student can assure you that you need to take good notes during class, in order to capture the main ideas of the lecture and succeed on the exams. For some students this can be a difficult task for a variety of reasons, however with a few tips and some guidance you can take notes in your classes that will be helpful to your success in college and beyond.

Use your Text

While your professor is giving the lecture, have your textbook open to the chapter that is being discussed. This way you can refer to any important ideas quickly and efficiently. If your professor tells you that you need to know the definition of a certain word, you can jot the word and the chapter page numbers in your notes. Later when you are studying, this will make for easy reference.

Read Ahead

Most professors will distribute a syllabus at the beginning of the semester so that you know exactly what will be discussed in class and on which days that will be done. If you read ahead of time, then you will be more than prepared for the lecture, which in turn will make for easier note taking.

Don't Write Everything

Professors talk a lot and there is no way that you will be able to write down every single thing that is mentioned during class. Try to keep alert for important ideas or items that you may think are on upcoming tests. By doing this you will actually be alert during class and still be able to write down important subjects presented during class.

Compare Notes

Make friends with a few of the other students in your class and see if you can set up study sessions with them. This way you can compare your notes with your peers because chances are you may have missed an important note that the student next to you may have caught. This also helps reinforce the material for upcoming exams. If you cannot meet in person, then see if you can email or instant message someone for comparisons.

Take your Laptop

Take advantage of the technology in today's society and take your laptop to class. Of course you should double check with your professor ahead of time to be sure that this is alright with them. Most people type faster than they write; therefore you can probably take more notes via your laptop than you would with pen and paper.

Digital Recorders

Again, check with your professor to see if you would be allowed to use a digital audio recorder in class so that you can record the lecture. This way you can be 100% focused on the professor and you can listen to the lecture again later and take notes while studying. This will also help because you will have the ability to pause the lecture while you write down important terms and ideas.

Don't be intimidated by the whole note taking process. Every student learns differently so just because the girl next to you can sit and listen to the lecture without writing a thing down does not mean you will be able to do so as well. Try a few different techniques and use the one that works the best for you.