



Effective Note Taking

Session Aims

Taking effective notes is an essential skill for recording information for later use in assignments and for revision. This session aims to help your mentees critically review their own note-taking style and discuss strategies for improvement.

You will need:

To refer to the course handbook and select 3 recent lectures your mentees will have attended.



To ask your mentees to bring their lecture notes with them

Whiteboard/Flip Chart & Pens

Activity

- Divide into 3 groups and allocate each one a lecture to review. Ask them to compare their notes and discuss:
 - The overview/summary of the lecture
 - What they noted as the key points/theories/words
 - Are their notes clear & comprehensive?
 - What their note-taking style is (word for word, abbreviations, mindmaps, words, diagrams, use of colour, etc.)
 - The strengths and weaknesses of their notes & how they could improve them in the future

(30 minutes)
- Feedback strengths and weaknesses to group and ask one mentee to scribe the good strategies on a whiteboard/flipchart to create a note taking top tips list
(20 minutes)



Session Time:
50 mins
(Timings are approximate)

Useful Resources:

For more hints and advice see the on Transition Tip 'How do I learn?' available at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/transition/study-skills-resources/How_do_I_learn.pdf

Effective Note Taking Tips



Practical steps you can take to improve your note-making:

- Have an overview of the lecture/book/article beforehand (what do you know? what do you need to find out?)
- Select essentials – main ideas, key words and phrases, vital information.
- Capture headings and sub-headings, references, connections with other topics. Be alert to what the lecturer thinks is important.
- Use abbreviations for key terms but make sure you remember what they stand for!
- Use diagrams, coloured pens, linking notes, bullet points, sketches and diagrams to make your notes personal, original and memorable.
- Don't try to write down the lecture word for word – summarise the key points.
- Spare ten minutes the next day to reread your notes and change or amplify what you wrote – the lecture may make more sense to you by then.
- Compare notes with a friend afterwards.
- File your work systematically so that it is easy to find the work you have done for each subject.