



Session

NOTE-TAKING STRATEGIES FOR LECTURES AND SEMINARS

At the end of this session, international students will:

- Have developed effective strategies for taking notes during lectures
- Be aware of the value of good notes for assisting their preparation for and participation in seminars

How and when to use this material

This session introduces students to note-taking skills for lectures, and then, through a note-taking exercise, draws students' attention to the value of note-taking as preparation for participation in seminars.

This session connects with the session on **Preparing to participate in lectures and seminars**, and precedes the various sessions on reading.

A useful Briefing Note for this session is: **Why Chinese postgraduate students struggle with listening, reading, writing and speaking in English.**

Introduction

In the session, students are required to watch two YouTube videos; the first instructs them on a particular note-taking method, and the second provides an opportunity to practice the method, and use their notes as the basis for participating in group discussions.

Although Chinese students will be accustomed to the delivery of information through lectures, they tend to be less familiar with note-taking. In China, most will have been taught to rely on powerpoint slides handed out at the end of lectures, or they will have taken photos in class of their lecturers' slides, and then memorised the content during their exam preparation. Because of this, most will

not be conversant with the intrinsic connection between effective note-taking in lectures and successful participation in seminars.

Student activity 1: Video on how to make notes (Video: 5.26 minutes)

To begin the exercise, the Lecturer might explain that note-taking is a way of turning a Lecturer's words into a student's own learning, a point which is emphasised in the following video.

Watch the YouTube Video 'How to Take Cornell Notes' and ask students to make notes as they watch. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtW9lyE04OQ>.

Note to lecturer

Advise students that a Cornell Notes App is available through the I-Tunes Store and Google Play Store.

Lecturer input

Following the Video: Talk through with students the content of the video which presents an effective way of making lecture notes using the Cornell Method. Students may find it useful to copy this template.

It is worth checking with students that they have picked up on the following points:

- Mark their topic and date at the top of the page.
- Draw a wide margin on the left hand side where key points and connections can be added.
- Leave a space at the bottom of each page so that a summary can be made later.
- Review lecture notes shortly after each lecture and also re-read them after you have done your readings.
- See if you can make connections between the readings and lecture notes.
- Jot down the connections (in the left hand margins) and also note any questions you now have.
- Bring these questions and connections to the seminar and raise them in class.

Student activity 2: Taking notes from watching a video on individual privacy and Internet tracking

Note to Lecturer

Video is 6 minutes long. For a shortened exercise, stop half way through.

Ask students to watch the following video and try out their note-taking skills using the Cornell template:

http://www.ted.com/talks/gary_kovacs_tracking_the_trackers.html

After viewing, get students to exchange their notes with a partner and discuss the differences between the two sets.

Then, in the broader class, invite selected students to share how the two sets of notes differ.

Afterwards, lecturers might wish to provide the Handout **Example of note-taking: Caroline's Notes** to show students an example of how one student used the Cornell Method to take notes from the above video.

Lecturer input: Tips for students

Lecturers might draw students' attention to the following points:

- Listen actively to the speaker: try to identify where the focus of the lecture is, what you think is important and what should be included in your notes. Not everything needs to be written down.
- It is fine to use your own words, and it is fine to do this in the language you are most comfortable with. But remember that you need to be conscious of your need to continue to develop your English language skills.
- Watch for the speaker's verbal clues like 'First ... second ...' or 'Note that ...' which indicate important points.
- If certain phrases or terms are repeated, this indicates that they are important.
- Circle or highlight key terms and phrases.
- Draw arrows or concept maps to show connections between items.
- Use white space and headings to set out topics.
- Sometimes for speed, it's helpful to write on the powerpoint handouts that the Lecturer has provided.

Summary

Remind students that effective participation in both lectures and seminars depends on good note-taking. In preparing for a seminar, students should review their lecture notes, go over the main points, and see what connections they can find between the lecture notes and their readings. In advance of the seminar, think about the questions they would like to raise and any examples or comments they would like to share with the class.



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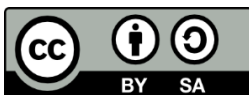
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Additional materials and resources are available from
<http://chinapostgraduates.murdoch.edu.au>

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