



Strategies for Studying, Learning, and Researching
By David Alderoty © 2014

Chapter 18) Lectures and Note Taking,
With Active Learning Strategies
Over 1,600 words

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To Access Additional Information with Hyperlinks

After I complete a writing task, I select a number of websites
from other authors, to provide additional information, alternative
points of view, and to support the material I wrote. These
websites contain articles, videos, and other useful material. The
websites can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinks, which are
the **blue underlined words, presented at the end of some of**
the sections, subsections, and paragraphs.

If a link fails, use the blue underlined words as a search
phrase, with www.Google.com, or www.Bing.com The search will
usually bring up the original website, or one or more good
alternatives.

Active Learning for Lectures, with Note Taking

The Passive Learning, Associated with Lectures, Can be Converted to Active Learning, with Good Note Taking Strategies

Listening to a lecture is ineffective passive learning. However, you can convert this type of study to active learning, with the note taking techniques, listed under the following subheadings.

A Good Note Taking Strategy, Facilitates Active Learning

When you are taking notes, do **not** worry about spelling, grammar, and punctuation. You do not have to worry about the structure of your sentences. You can even use sentence fragments in your notes.

You can devise your own abbreviations, for note taking. You can even use one or two letters for an abbreviation, when words are frequently repeated in a lecture. You should define what your abbreviations mean, on top of your notes, if you think you might forget the meaning when you read back your notes.

You can create notes with diagrams and even mathematics, if you can do it quickly. You can create rough diagrams, which do not have to be perfect.

With the ideas presented in the previous four paragraphs, you can spend less time and effort on note taking, and focus on the lecture.

Reviewing and Rewriting Your Notes After Class

The notes you take during a lecture, should be reviewed, corrected, and rewritten after class, in a Microsoft Word document. During the rewriting process, you should try to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Add any additional material to clarify your notes. This can involve adding additional material from your textbook, or Internet searches.

If you are confused about any of the material in your notes, create a related set of questions. Then you can obtain clarifying answers from the assigned textbook, Internet searches, or from your instructor.

Your notes should have **a date on them**, and **all of your notes for a specific class, should be arranged by date, in one Microsoft Word document.** This will make it easy for you to review your notes, which should be done periodically throughout the semester, and before examinations.

Microsoft Word, 2010 or Later, for Rewriting Notes

I recommend Microsoft Word 2010, or later, for rewriting notes, because you can enter mathematical symbols and diagrams directly in a Word document, such as the following:

$$\int_4^{10} x dx = \frac{x^2}{2} = \frac{10^2 - 4^2}{2} = 42$$

$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$

Incidentally, Microsoft Word 2010, and later versions, can also solve math problems electronically, with a free download from Microsoft. See the following examples. (I change the color of the solutions calculated by the software to red type.)

$$x^2 + x - 6 = 0$$

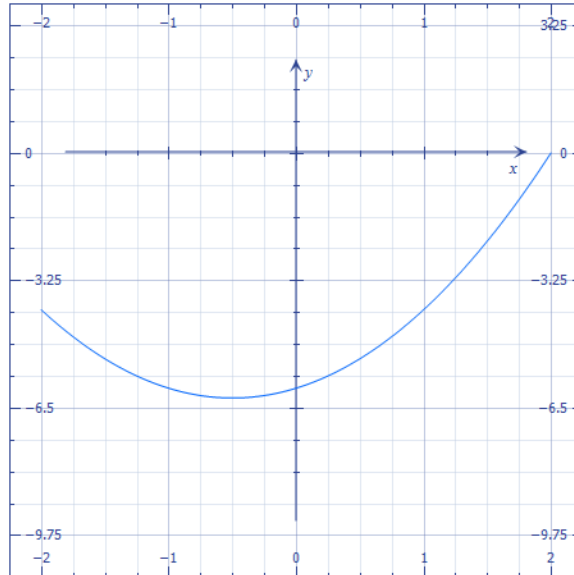
$$x = -3 \text{ or } x = 2$$

$$\int_{10}^{20} x^2 dx = \frac{7000}{3}$$

$$\text{Matrix } \begin{pmatrix} 3 & 1 \\ 5 & 6 \end{pmatrix} + \begin{pmatrix} 7 & 9 \\ 5 & 4 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 10 & 10 \\ 10 & 10 \end{pmatrix}$$

Microsoft 2010 can even graph equations electronically, such as the following:

$$x^2 + x - 6 = y$$



If you are not taking classes with mathematics, and you do not use diagrams in your notes, you might want to choose an easier to use and less expensive alternative to Microsoft Word. You might prefer the simplest software, which is usually inexpensive, or free. See the following website for additional information. [10 Free Minimalist Word Processors for Greater Productivity](#)

Preparation for Lectures, will Facilitate Learning and Better Note Taking

If you know what a lecture is going to involve, you can prepare yourself by reading related material. You can also listen to YouTube videos on the subject. This will make it easier to understand the lecture, and take good notes.

Alternative Strategies for Note Taking

Recording Class Lectures, and Taking Notes After Class from a Recording

Taking notes while listening to a lecture is a form of active learning. However, note taking can distract you from the lecture, especially if you are unfamiliar with the material. This difficulty can be compounded, when the instructor does **not** speak well, and/or has a heavy foreign accent.

For some students, note taking requires a considerable amount of effort and time, and severely distracts them from the lecture. For other students note taking may be only a minor distraction, but this will usually limit their ability to grasp **all** of the ideas presented in a lecture.

You can eliminate all of the problems mentioned above, by recording class lectures, and after class, you can take notes from the recording. With this strategy, you can type your notes directly into a Microsoft Word document, while listening to the recording. It is easier, and far more efficient to take notes from a recording, especially if you are typing your notes directly into a Word document. This is because you can stop the recording, if you need more time to write your notes. You can also repeat sections of the recording, if you miss any of the important ideas from the lecture. You can check the quality of your notes, by replaying the entire recording if necessary.

You can record class lectures with portable tape recorders, digital voice recorders, laptop computers, and even some cell phones. For computers and cell phones, you must have the required software to record sound.

The recordings you make should have high quality sound. If this is not the case, you can usually improve sound quality by buying a high quality microphone. You can also improve sound quality by sitting in the first row, or placing your recorder, on the instructor's desk, if this is permissible.

Keep in mind, making recordings in class requires the permission of the instructor. Some instructors may **not** allow lectures to be recorded.

For additional information and alternative perspectives, from other authors, see the following websites: **1)** [How to Get the Most of Recording College Lectures](#), **2)** [The Pros and Cons of Recording Your Class Lectures](#). The following websites provide information about the equipment for recording lectures: **3)** [VOICE RECORDERS Reviews, from walmart](#), **4)** [Understanding and Buying Digital Voice Recorders](#), **5)** [2014 Best Digital Voice Recorder Reviews and Comparisons](#), **6)** [Audio Class Notes Free - Record and Tag Class Lectures, By BlackMuse Software](#).

Alternatives to Note Taking that You Should Avoid

Using a tape recording of a lecture, **without taking any notes** is

ineffective passive learning, which should be avoided. Some instructors provide handouts, which do **not** eliminate the need for taking notes.

Keep in mind, good note taking, whether in class, or from a tape recorder, is a form of active learning, which facilitates comprehension and memory retention.

If You are Not Taking Notes in Class, Use Alternative Strategies to Maintain Active Learning During a Lecture

If you are **not** taking notes during a lecture because you are recording it, or for any other reason, you can maintain active learning with one or more of the following:

- 1)** Try to associate the concepts and information in a lecture, with ideas and concepts that you previously mastered.

- 2)** If you find any portion of a lecture confusing, think of questions that would eliminate your confusion. You can find answers to these questions with Internet searches, consulting your textbook, or by asking the instructor. If the instructor is encouraging students to ask questions, you might be able to obtain the information you need before leaving class.

- 3)** If the instructor is asking the students questions, try to answer at least some of them. **Alternatively**, you can attempt

to answer the questions within your own mind. If you prefer, you can jot down your answer on paper. You will know if you are correct, when the instructor or a student provides the correct answer. With this strategy, no one will know when you are incorrect.

Improving Your Note Taking Skills

Practicing Note Taking with Videos, to Improve Your Skills

You can improve your note taking by practicing. You can practice by taking notes while you are listening to web-based videos from [YouTube](#), and other sources. You can repeat the video, to check the quality of your note taking. It is best to use videos that relate to courses that you are taking, or will be taking in the upcoming semesters.

If you are persistent with this practice, in a few months, you will become skillful at note taking. However, before you start practicing note taking, you should be certain that you are using the right technique. (Note taking techniques were described above, and there are a **large number** of additional techniques presented on the websites at the end of this chapter.) Keep in mind, that practicing incorrect techniques can be counterproductive. As you practice, try to improve the techniques that you are using, based on your experience during the practice sessions. The idea here is to improve the techniques you are using, so they work better for your individual abilities,

and inclinations.

Note, the ideas in the above paragraph applied to any type of practice. This includes skill development for any type of academic, vocational, or sports related activities.

An abundant source of videos to practice note taking, can be obtained from the following: **1)** www.Google.com/videohp, **2)** www.YouTube.com, **3)** www.20search.com/video.php, and **4)** www.Mashpedia.com, **5)** <https://video.search.Yahoo.com>
 Note, all of the above are useful for obtaining videos on almost any topic. The websites listed above, should be useful for all of your coursework.

See the Following Websites from other Authors for Additional Information, and for Alternative Perspectives on Note Taking, and Related Concepts

1) [Note Taking Systems](#), **2)** [FIVE NOTETAKING METHODS](#), **3)** [Back to Basics: Perfect Your Note-Taking Techniques](#), **4)** [Note Taking Techniques, Tips and Strategies](#), **5)** [Note Taking Techniques](#), **6)** [EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKING METHODS](#), **7)** [The Cornell Note-taking System](#), **8)** [Note-Taking Techniques for Academic Success](#), **9)** [Advice for Students: Taking Notes that Work](#), **10)** [Listening and Note Taking](#), **11)** [Video: How to take Cornell notes](#), **12)** [Video: LBCC - Taking Better Lecture Notes](#), **13)** [Video: Study Skills for Students: Mastering Note Taking](#), **14)** [Video: How to Take Great Notes](#), **15)** [How to Actively Learn During Lectures](#), **16)** [Learning From Lectures: A Guide to](#)

[University Learning](#) (The above is a 25 page e-book),
17) [MAKING THE MOST OF LECTURES](#), **18) [Op-Ed: Students Don't Learn From Lectures](#)**, **19) [Rethinking the Way College Students Are Taught](#)**.

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