

The Proper Editing of Notes:

The Key to Successful Learning

Although the very act of taking notes does help a student learn the material being presented by the teacher, it certainly does not guarantee it being remembered come time for the final exam. In fact, if all a student does with his notes is to stick them in his notebook and forget about them until just before a test, he will find out that he will not be able to read half his notes. And the other half won't make any sense.

Actually, the act of taking notes is only the first step in learning from lectures. The second step is editing. This, very simply, is the deliberate re-writing of the notes taken. The notes are put into a form that will enable the student to properly study them and review them.

One technique is the outline technique. On the next page you will find the outline technique explained, using the outline technique.

THE OUTLINE TECHNIQUE

- I. MAIN POINTS ARE IN SOLID CAPS
 - A. EXAMPLES are listed underneath.
 - B. Lots of WHITE SPACE is used.
 - C. FACTS can be QUICKLY spotted.
 1. Especially important facts are underlined or **highlighted** with transparent coloring.
 2. Note the effect of:
 - a. CAPITALIZING
 - b. underlining
 - c. **highlighting**

The advantage of the outline technique is that to use it, the student must think in terms of what are main points and what are examples or secondary points.

The very act of THINKING and ORGANIZING helps to impress the information upon the mind.

In today's academic jargon, it is "instantiating schemata." It also provides a neat set of notes which the student can use and in which he can quickly find what he is looking for.

On the next page the DIVIDED PAGE TECHNIQUE is explained.

THE DIVIDED PAGE TECHNIQUE

I must remember that...

George Washington

Crispus Attucks

Dec. 7, 1941

Oct. 4, 1957

Names

Dates

Name the person who

1st President

1st man to die in Amer. Revolution—
Boston Massacre—African-Amer.

Pearl Harbor—WWII—Date?

Sputnik—awoke interest in
science and math education—Date?

Identification &

Reasons for Learning

The advantage of the divided page technique is that the student can use it to quiz himself DAILY on the material that s/he must master. All s/he has to do is to cover up one side of the sheet, read a name and then try to think of who the person is. If the student can't remember, then the student knows that more studying is in order.

With ordinary notes, the student would immediately see both the name and the identification and would not know for sure whether s/he actually can recall it in a test situation.

Actually, the divided page technique is simply a variation on the time-honored flash card method of studying.

The editing and studying of notes really boils down to TWO important elements: Quality of time spent studying and frequency of studying.