Study Skills Tips: Notetaking and Notemaking

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Note Taking Skills

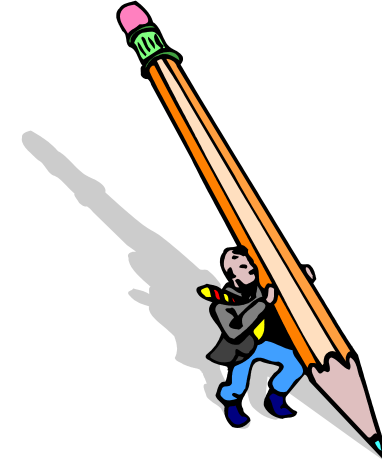**Wh___ Questions – applies to the content you are trying to capture:**

- **What is this about?**

- **Why is it important?**

- **When did it happen? –**

- **Where did it happen?**

- **Who was involved?**

- **How did it happen?**

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Notetaking skills

The '5 C Rule' – applies to the quality of the notes you have taken:

- CLEAR

- CONCISE

- COMPREHENSIVE

- COMPLETE

- CORRECT

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Notes from Listening

One particularly effective strategy when listening to new information is known as **TQLR.** It is an active learning strategy. The stages are broken down as follows:

- **TUNE – IN:** ask yourself what you already know about the subject

- **QUESTION:** develop questions, give yourself a focus for listening

- **LISTEN:** while listening, take notes and highlight key words on any handouts. It can also be effective to take notes in the form of spider plans or pattern notes, as not all information (for example in a lecture) is presented in a linear format

- **RECALL:** have you had your questions answered?

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Taking Notes from a Lecture

- Get access to the lecture notes prior to the lecture, where possible.

- Try to jot down key words only.

- Omit small words *e.g. the, is, to* (keep not, no!)

- Use abbreviations wherever possible, e.g. &, *etc., N.B.*

- Use symbols wherever possible, e.g. ♀ ♣ ☢

- Use the 'wh'- questions to structure your work (Who? When? Where? etc)

- Use a writing frame/table if at all possible

- Ask to record the lecture, to check notes later and complete missing items

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Taking Notes from a Book

Experiment with using different colours (e.g. to rank importance of information) and experiment with different formats:

- Linear notes
- Numbered points
- Concept maps/spidergrams
- Flowcharts
- Time-lines
- Tables
- Venn diagrams
- Summary shapes
- Revision cards

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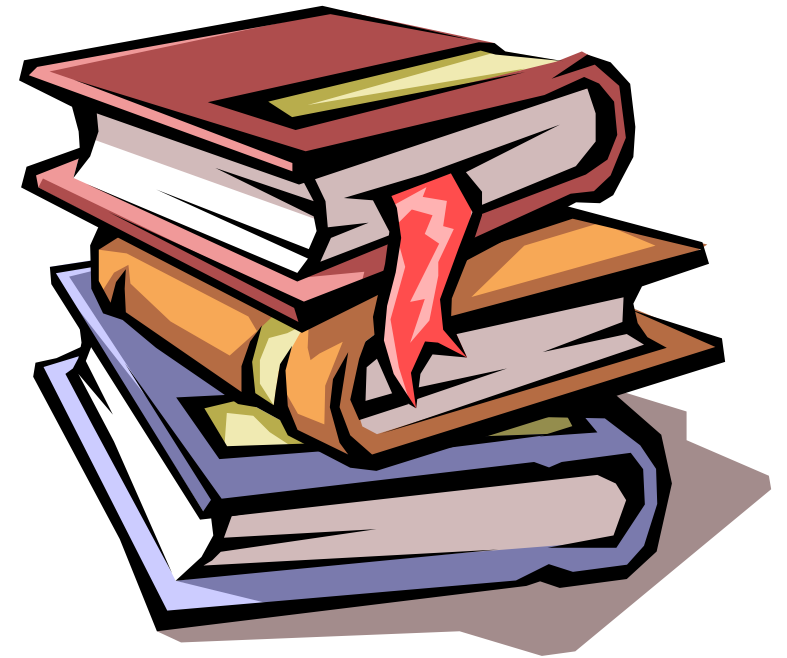
Assistive Technology

Assistive technology provides a wealth of useful strategies for notetaking. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Smart-pens that can save written text as digital notes in the memory of a smartphone or electronic tablet

- Recording devices for recording lectures, meetings, etc and to verbalise and record initial notes/thoughts

- Speech-to-text software for recording initial thoughts directly into print

- Audio notetaker programs, where it is possible to record a lecture whilst highlighting key points in a structured framework against lecture notes/slides

- Highlighting/annotating text in electronic reading materials e.g. PDFs

- Mind-mapping software

- Notetaking software and apps

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