

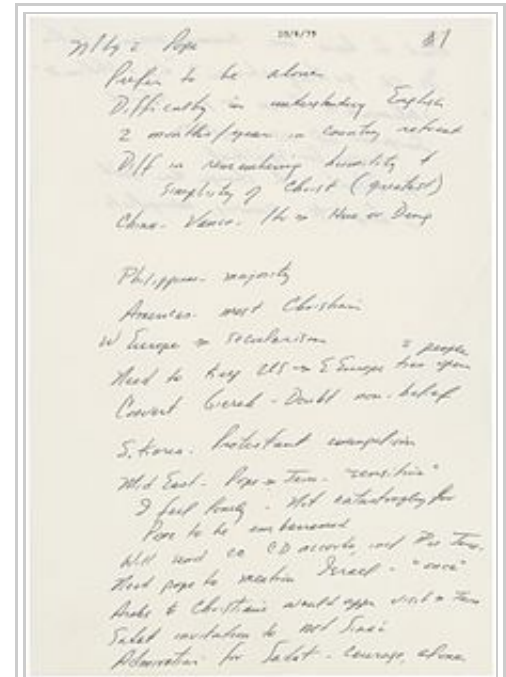
Note-taking

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Note-taking is the practice of recording information captured from another source. By taking notes, the writer records the essence of the information, freeing their mind from having to recall everything.^[1] Notes are commonly drawn from a transient source, such as an oral discussion at a meeting, or a lecture (notes of a meeting are usually called minutes), in which case the notes may be the only record of the event. Note taking is a form of self-discipline.

Contents

- 1 History
- 2 Cognitive psychology
- 3 Systems
- 4 Linear note-taking
 - 4.1 Outlining
- 5 Non-linear note-taking
 - 5.1 Charting
 - 5.2 Mapping
 - 5.3 Sentence method
 - 5.4 SQ3R
 - 5.5 Guided notes
- 6 Electronic note-taking methods
- 7 Professional services
- 8 See also
- 9 References
- 10 External links



President Jimmy Carter's Notes from his private meeting with Pope John Paul II, October 6, 1979.

History

Note-taking has been an important part of human history and scientific development. The Ancient Greeks developed hypomnema which were personal records on important subjects. In the Renaissance and early modern period commonplace books which served a similar function became popular.^[2] Philosopher John Locke

developed an indexing system^[3] which served as a model for commonplace books; for example, it inspired another book, *Bell's Common-Place Book, Formed generally upon the Principles Recommended and Practised by Mr Locke* nearly a century later.^[4]

Cognitive psychology

Note-taking is a central aspect of a complex human behavior related to information management involving a range of underlying mental processes and their interactions with other cognitive functions.^[5] The person taking notes must acquire and filter the incoming sources, organize and restructure existing knowledge structures, comprehend and write down their interpretation of the information, and ultimately store and integrate the freshly processed material. The result is a knowledge representation, and a memory storage.^[1]

Systems

Many different formats are used to structure information and make it easier to find and to understand, later. The format of the initial record may often be informal and/or unstructured. One common format for such notes is shorthand, which can allow large amounts of information to be put on paper very quickly. Note-taking is an important skill for students, especially at the college level. In some contexts, such as college lectures, the main purpose of taking notes may be to implant the material in the mind; the written notes themselves being of secondary importance. Historically, note-taking was an analog process, written in notebooks, or other paper methods like Post-It notes. In the digital age, computers, tablet PCs and personal digital assistants (PDAs) are common.

Note-taking is a race against time. The note taker typically is under severe time pressure, and different note-taking styles and techniques try to make the best use of time. The average rate of speech is 2–3 words per second, but the average handwriting speed is only 0.2–0.3 words per second.^[5]

Regardless of the medium (paper, computer), note-taking can be broadly divided into linear and nonlinear methods, which can be combined.

Linear note-taking

Outlining

Outlines tend to proceed down a page, using headings and bullets to structure information. A common system consists of headings that use Roman numerals, letters of the alphabet, and Arabic numerals at different levels. A typical structure would be:

I. First main topic

A. Subtopic

1. Detail

2. Detail

B. Subtopic

II. Second main topic

A. Subtopic

However, this sort of structure has limitations in written form since it is difficult to go back and insert more information. Adaptive systems are used for paper-and-pen insertions, such as using the reverse side of the preceding page in a spiral notebook to make insertions. Or one can simply leave large spaces in between items, to enable more material to be inserted. The above method is effective for most people, but you can be creative in making your own method. (See Category:Outliners for more about application software that supports outlining.)

Non-linear note-taking

There are many types of non-linear note-taking techniques, including: Clustering,^[6] Concept mapping,^{[7][8]} Cornell system,^[9] Idea mapping,^[10] Instant replays,^[11] Ishikawa diagrams,^[12] Knowledge maps,^[13] Learning maps,^[14] Mind mapping,^[15] Model maps,^[16] Pyramid principle,^[17] Semantic networks,^[18] SmartWisdom.^[19] and Jay's Notes.

The following are details about a few.

Charting

Mapping

Here, ideas are written in a tree structure, with lines connecting them together. Mind maps, also referred to as brain-storming are commonly drawn from a central point, purpose or goal in the center of the page and then branching outward to identify all the ideas connected to that goal. Colors, small graphics and symbols are often used to help to visualize the information more easily. This note-taking method is most common among visual learners and is a core practice of many accelerated learning techniques. It is also used for planning and writing essays.

Sentence method

Every new thought is written as a new line. Speed is the most desirable attribute of this method because not much thought about formatting is needed to form the layout and create enough space for more notes. When taking these notes, you can number them or bullet them. This method can allow the reader to tell where a new thought ends and begins. This strategy is short and helpful, especially when a professor or teacher may need to

read the notes.

SQ3R

SQ3R is a method of taking notes from written material, though it might be better classed as a method of reading and gaining understanding. Material is skimmed to produce a list of headings, that are then converted into questions. These questions are then considered whilst the text is read to provide motivation for what is being covered. Notes are written under sections headed by the questions as each of the material's sections is read. One then makes a summary from memory, and reviews the notes. (SQ3R -- Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review.)

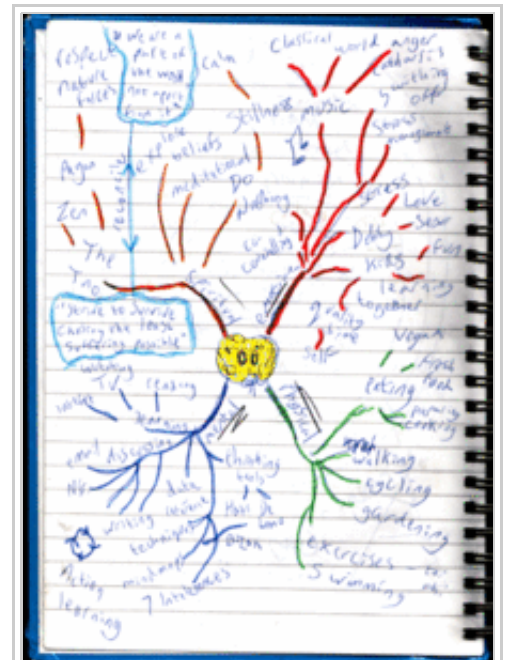
Guided notes

Sometimes lecturers may provide handouts of guided notes, which provide a "map" of the lecture content with key points or ideas missing. Students then fill in missing items as the lecture progresses. Guided notes may assist students in following lectures and identifying the most important ideas from a lecture. This format provides students with a framework, yet requires active listening (as opposed to providing copies of powerpoint slides in their entirety). Research has shown that guided notes improve students' recording of critical points in lecture as well as their quiz scores on related content.

Electronic note-taking methods

The growing ubiquity of laptops in universities and colleges has led to a rise in electronic note-taking. Many students write their notes in word processors. Online word processor applications are receiving growing attention from students who can forward notes using email, or otherwise make use of collaborative features in these applications and can also download the texts as a file (txt, rtf...) in a local computer.

Online note-taking has created problems for teachers who must balance educational freedom with copyright and intellectual property concerns regarding course content.



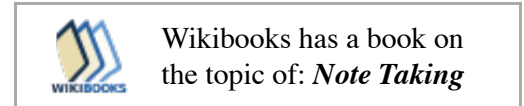
A mind map connects ideas together visually

Professional services

Professional notetakers provide access to information for people who cannot take their own notes, in particular the deaf and hearing impaired. Professional Notetakers most frequently work in colleges and universities, but are also used in workplace meetings, appointments, conferences, and training sessions. They are usually educated to degree level. In the UK they are increasingly expected to have a professional note-taking qualification, such as that offered by the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP).

See also

- Comparison of notetaking software
- Category:Notetaking software
- List of mind mapping software
- E-book
- Cornell Notes



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External links

- Taking notes on philosophical texts (<http://www.earlham.edu/~peters/courses/notes.htm>) by Peter Suber.

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Categories: Writing | Note-taking | Educational psychology

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