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Studying & Notetaking Hacks

Presented by the Academic Success Center

Studying & Notetaking Hacks: Overview

HACKS FOR TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

1. Choose your notetaking method
2. Be prepared
3. Outline method
4. The Cornell method
5. Mapping method
6. Ask for clarification
7. Summarize the information
8. Make it visual

HACKS FOR STUDYING YOUR NOTES

1. Organize your notes
2. Maximize your study environment
3. Maximize time & focus
4. Engage your senses

Hacks for Taking Notes in Class

Hack #1: Choose your Notetaking Method

(and stick to it)



1. Laptop

- a. Upside: faster to type (for some people), easier to make edits, insert graphics, and save documents in designated folders.
- b. Downside: more distractions and easier to type mindlessly without actually grasping the information.

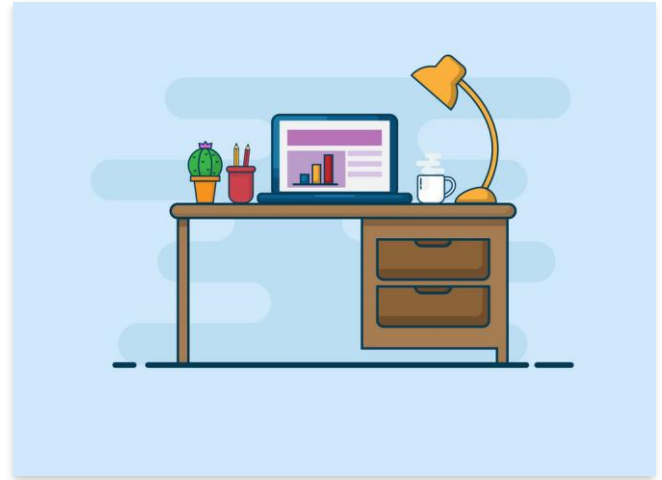
2. Handwritten Notes

- a. Upside: takes more focus and concentration to write things down, which helps with memory; easily customizable.
- b. Downside: can get sloppy and unorganized if you don't have a plan in place.

Tip: Choose the method that will get you to *think* about the information as you are recording it.

Hack #2: Be Prepared

1. Know what is going to be covered in class.
 - a. Read the chapter(s).
 - b. Review the PowerPoint.
 - c. Print necessary handouts.
2. Get to class early to set up.
3. Minimize distractions to MAXIMIZE focus.
 - a. Keep your phone out of sight.
 - b. Take out only what is necessary for the class.
 - c. Sit in the front of the class.



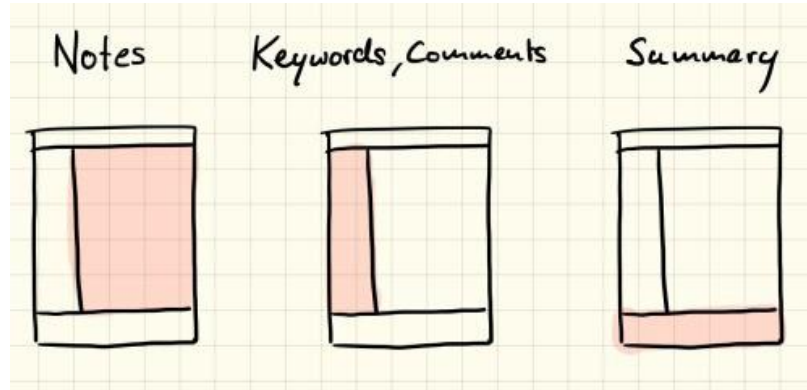
Hack #3: Outline Method

1. This is the most common form of note taking used by college students.
2. It involves putting information into bullets as demonstrated below.
3. Information follows a logical sequence and is quick and organized.

THE MAIN TOPIC

- a. Sub-Topic
 - i. Information to support the Sub-Topic
 - ii. Additional facts related to the Sub-Topic
- b. Sub-Topic #2
 - i. Relevant facts about Sub-Topic #2
 - ii. More information about the Sub-Topic #2

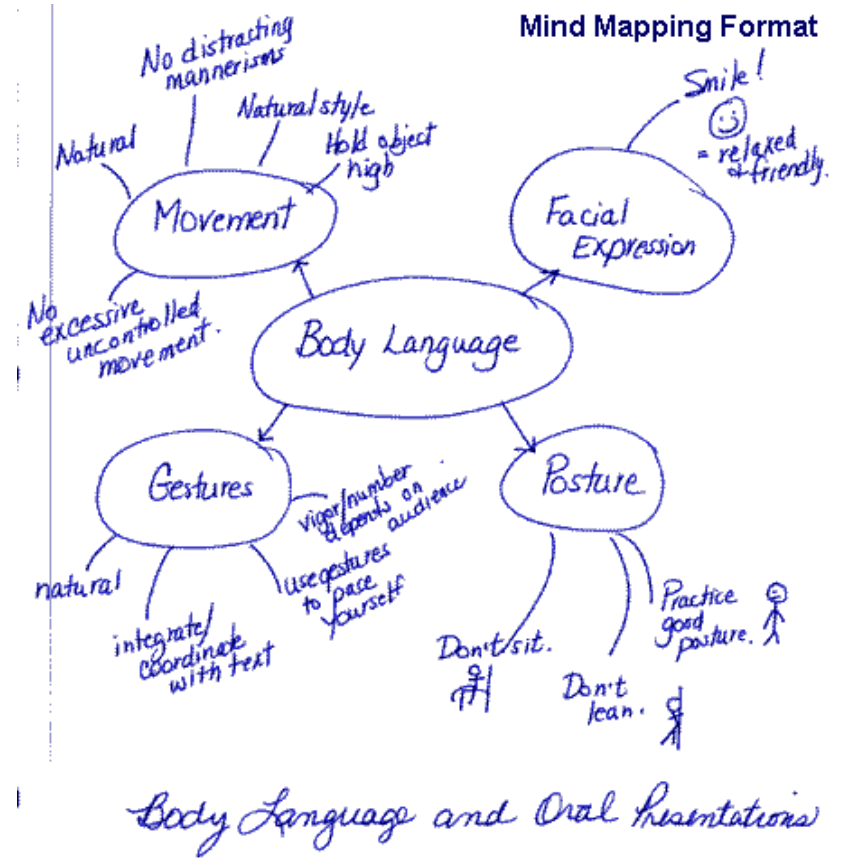
Hack #4: The Cornell Method



1. The *Notes* section is where you should take your notes during lecture.
2. The *Keywords, Comments* column is where you should write down keywords and questions that can be used for studying later. Fill this section in after class.
3. The *Summary* section should be filled in when you are reviewing after class. Fill this section with the main points.

Hack #5: Mapping Method

1. Mapping your notes creates a visual representation of the content.
2. It helps you connect one concept to another.
3. Mapping is a useful way to help you think about information and how to arrange it.



Hack #6: Ask for Clarification

1. If the professor moves on from a topic that you did not understand, ask for clarification on the spot.
2. Ask for examples.
3. Don't be afraid to ask the professor to *slow down*.
4. Reiterate what your professor has said.
 - a. "So what you are saying is..."
 - b. "From my understanding..."
 - c. "Is it correct to say that..."

Tip: Put a question mark or distinguishable symbol* next to topics that you are not 100% certain about and resolve the question that same day with your own research.

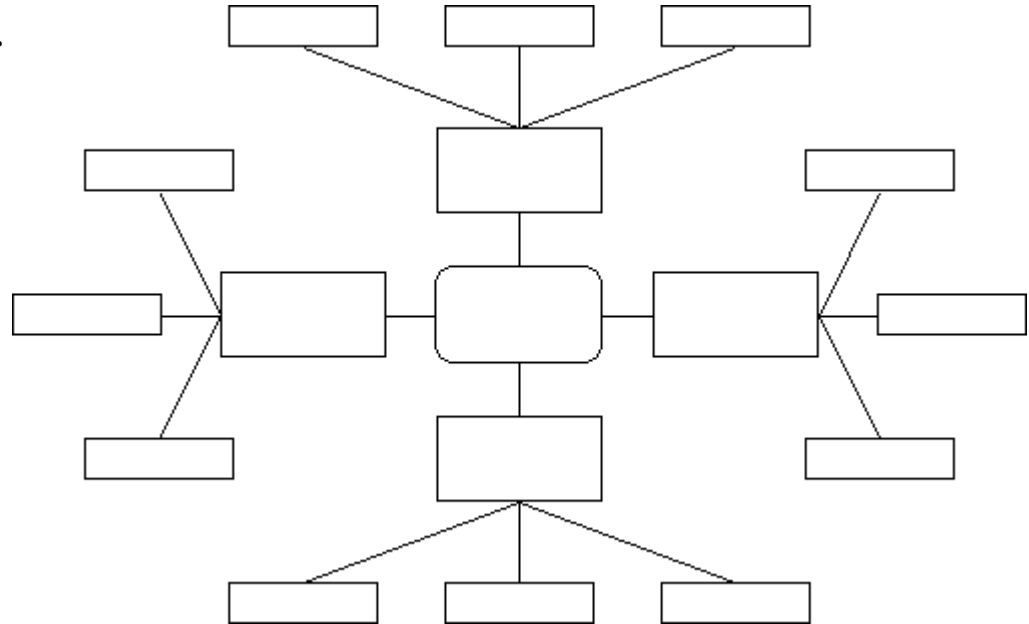
Hack #7: Summarize the Information

1. Look at the BIGGER picture.
2. Don't memorize little facts; work to c-o-n-n-e-c-t the dots.
3. Ask yourself: what's the main gist?
4. Simplify information into *your own words*.



Hack #8: Make it Visual

1. Supplement notes with graphs, charts, pictures, diagrams, drawings, etc.
2. **Highlight**, underline, **bold**, *italicize*, use **different colored pens**, or CAPITALIZE important terms.
3. Make a web.



Hack # 8: Make it Visual

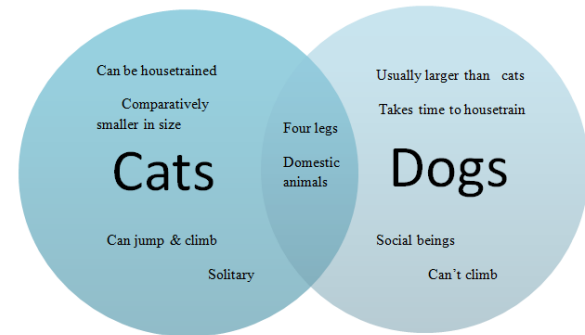
1. Use a challenging font versus an easy-to-read font.
 - a. An example of an easy-to-read font is Arial.
 - b. Easy-to-read fonts are likely to be skimmed over.
 - c. *Hard-to-read fonts take more concentration to read.*
 - d. *Research showed that using “hard-to-read” fonts increased focus and information retention.*

Please, do this instead!

Hacks for Studying your Notes

Hack #9: Organize your Notes

1. Rewrite notes that are hard to read or understand.
2. If you are using a binder, organize the pages in a logical manner that aligns with the lectures.
3. If there are concepts that are very relevant to one another make a chart/Venn diagram!
 - a. This makes similarities and differences between the concepts easily visualized.
4. Make sure notes for each class are in designated places.
 - a. In a labeled folder on your desktop.
 - b. In a folder or binder.



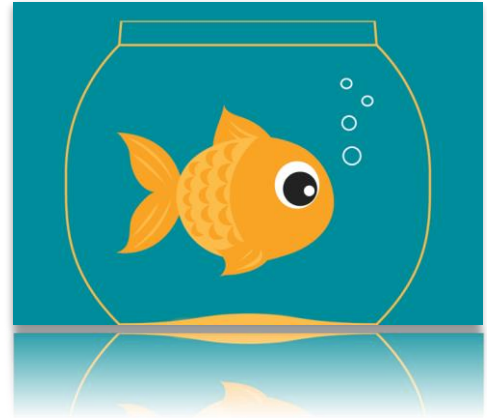
Hack #10: Maximize your Study Environment

1. Study in well-lit places (natural light is best).
2. Study away from places that remind you of sleep or naps (e.g., in view of your bed, in the dark, etc.).
3. Be aware of the noise level you can handle without getting distracted.
4. Eliminate clutter in your study space. That includes putting away your phone.
5. Try to create a designated study space.
 - a. Your brain will adapt to the space and kick start your study-mode every time you enter that space.



Hack #11: Maximize your Time & Focus

1. Don't forget to take breaks.
 - a. Use the Pomodoro method: set a timer and work wholeheartedly for that period of time, then take a break and time it, then repeat the process.
2. Focus on one subject at a time.
 - a. Slow down the reviewing process by going one concept at a time.
 - b. After reviewing at least 3 concepts, repeat ALL the information aloud.
3. Set realistic goals for reviewing your notes.
 - a. Work within your attention span.
 - b. Try to increase your attention span each time you study.
 - c. Don't be a goldfish.



Hack #12: Engage your Senses

1. Review the information out loud to engage your auditory memory.
2. Explain it to someone else.
3. Visualize the information.
4. Relate the information to concepts that you are very familiar with.
5. Move as you study.
 - a. Flex your toes.
 - b. Rub your fingers together.
 - c. Tap your finger (on a soft surface to avoid making noise).
 - d. Squeeze a stress ball.



Questions?
