**Focused Note-Taking Overview**

*Taking notes and never looking at them again is obviously not useful. Yet, simply reading your notes is not a sufficient study strategy. You must interact with them* ***multiple times*** *to improve retention and understanding! Here is an overview.*

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| **Phase:** | **Goals** |
| **1.****Take Notes** | * Choose a format (Cornell Stye, 2 or 3 Column Notes, Consumable, Graphic Organizer, Interactive Notebook, Mind Maps, etc)
* **TOP**: Date, Title, **Essential Question**, Learning Objectives
* **RIGHT**: Record main ideas, phrases, important information, formulas, definitions, and examples. Sufficient space between main ideas (for later interaction).
* **LEFT**: Questions, diagrams, keywords, main ideas
* Paraphrase what you hear in your own words
* Organize notes using indentation, bullets, outlines, skipping lines, color coding
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| **2.****Process Notes** | * Revise your notes by adding or deleting information
* Exchange ideas by collaborating
* Chunk notes by numbering each new concept or “big idea”
* Circle key words and vocabulary
* Highlight main ideas (recommend a color scheme for added purpose)
* Use a ? to identify points of confusion, then clarify by asking another student or the teacher
* Use a \* to identify information likely to appear on a quiz or test
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| **3.****Connect Thinking** | * Write a (higher-level) study question about the main idea in each chunk (Bloom’s Levels 3-6, Costa’s Levels 2-3)
* Write a question addressing any points of confusion or things you don’t understand
* Write a conceptual question a teacher might ask on a test
* Add original thinking to your notes by making personal connections (e.g., connecting to prior knowledge, course content, life/world)
* Use a different color pen to indicate these additions
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| **4.****Summarize and Reflect** | * Reflect on how the notes address the essential questions and learning objectives
* Summarize notes by combining main ideas, using academic vocabulary, linking answers to your study questions, and ***answering the essential question***
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| **5.****Apply Learning** | * Save and revisit your notes as a resource or learning tool to help you apply or demonstrate what you have learned.
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**Test Review**

When working through a unit review, for each question, ask yourself:

1. What do I need to know and be able to do in order to answer this question? (Use a post-it note to summarize the main concept or skill needed for that question.)
2. What other questions might be asked that assess the same learning objective?
3. Where was this in the notes? Did we do an example like this in class? (Look over that section of the notes.)
4. What questions do I still have about this problem?
5. Do I need to find another similar problem to practice, or do I completely understand this one?