Note Taking:

Adapted from Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success, Dembo (2008).

The human brain is an active creature, and it will wander if it is not being used appropriately; therefore, taking notes in class gives the brain something to focus on and will keep it from daydreaming. Using the steps below to improve your note taking strategy.

Step 1: Read before class – Reading before class helps with retention and note-taking. It's harder to comprehend something if there is no prior connection to the material. Reading beforehand creates connections and makes it easier to listen and take notes.

Step 2: Keep notes organized:

- Put the lecture date at the top of each page to coordinate with class readings and handouts.
- Use a three-ring binder and loose leaf paper. Add handouts and notes from readings to corresponding lecture notes.
- Only write on one side of the paper.
- Leave lots of space in your notes.
- Write questions in the margins.

Step 3: Format your notes:

- Main point
    - Subpoint
        - Supporting facts or thoughts

Step 4: Listen for verbal cues – Not all instructors will write information on the board and even fewer will tell their students exactly what concepts to know for tests; therefore, students need to listen for tone, emphasis and repetition to determine importance.

Step 5: Think about what you're writing – Names, dates, theories/theorist, processes and steps should be written as you hear them. Otherwise, think about what you're hearing and then summarize concepts in your notes in your own words.

Step 6: Review and edit notes after class – Reviewing notes while information is still fresh allows for increased retention of the material. It also gives you an opportunity to make corrections and seek assistance when something in your notes doesn't make sense.

Step 7: Rewrite notes – Rewriting notes and/or putting specific information on notecards or into Quizlets (www.quizlet.com) helps you retain information and produces study materials for tests.

Use abbreviations to take more efficient notes:

=	same or equal	<	less than
≠	not equal	~	approximately
>	greater than	*	Important
eg	for example	ie	that is....
w/	with	w/o	without
w/in	within	b/c	Because
v	very	esp	especially