

### **Aims**

- 1) Raise awareness of and practise:
- note-taking techniques
- lecture listening strategies

2) Highlight sources of further help and practice

Based on material from *Study Listening* by Tony Lynch (Cambridge University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2004)

### Difficulties in lectures

Have you ever had difficulty listening to lectures in your own / a foreign language?



### **Difficulties in lectures**

With a partner, list the things which might make it difficult to hear or understand what a lecturer is saying.

### Use the four headings below:

- Physical setting
- Speaker
- Subject
- Language

#### Physical setting

size / acoustics of room noise from outside / inside

#### Speaker

accent
poor delivery (e.g. too quiet, boring intonation)
speed of speaking – lack of adequate pauses
lecturing style (scripted / based on brief notes)
jokes

#### Subject

unfamiliarity
lack of interest / relevance
complexity / abstractness

#### Language

colloquial English technical vocabulary / familiar vocabulary used in an unfamiliar way foreign words and phrases (sine qua non, de rigueur)

### **Note-taking in lectures**

The listener has to decide...

- Step 1 what is being said
- Step 2 what it means (how it relates to what has been said)
- Step 3 whether it is important and whether to note it down
- Step 4 how to write it in note form

### **Note-taking in lectures**

### Q: which step is the most important?

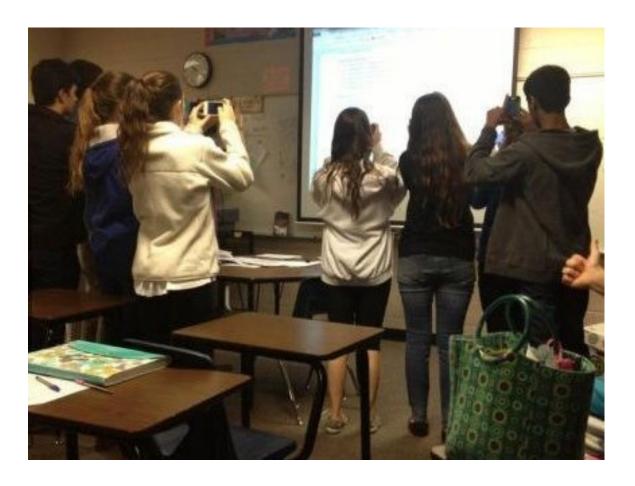
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### **Note-taking in lectures**

### A: the most important step:

- Step 1 what is being said
- Step 2 what it means (how it relates to what has been said)
- Step 3 whether it is important and whether to note it down
- Step 4 how to write it in note form

### **Note-taking techniques**



From "This is how modern students take notes" by Jeff Dunn (Edudemic, 2012).

### Note-taking techniques

Discuss in pairs:

How is note-taking different from dictation?

What is the purpose of making notes?

Who are notes written for?

### 3 basic rules

- Rule 1: Be selective decide what's important
- Rule 2: Be brief
   use abbreviations and symbols
- Rule 3: Be clear show the interrelationship between the speaker's points

### Rule 1: Be selective

A first-year undergraduate and a first-year postgraduate studying the same subject attend the same lecture.

What differences would you expect to see in their notes?

### Rule 2: Be brief

What **abbreviations**, **symbols** or **other techniques** do **you** use to represent

example

important point

causes / leads to

is caused by

more than

international

problem

solution

is the same as

goes up / raises

I don't understand

Is this right?

### Rule 3: Be clear

common formats:

linear

mind map

Cornell notes

### linear notes

first Irradiation

#### Lannuers

- · long-term consequences / health ?
- · irradiation breaks food molecules
- · madiation & untritional content

Risks > benefiti

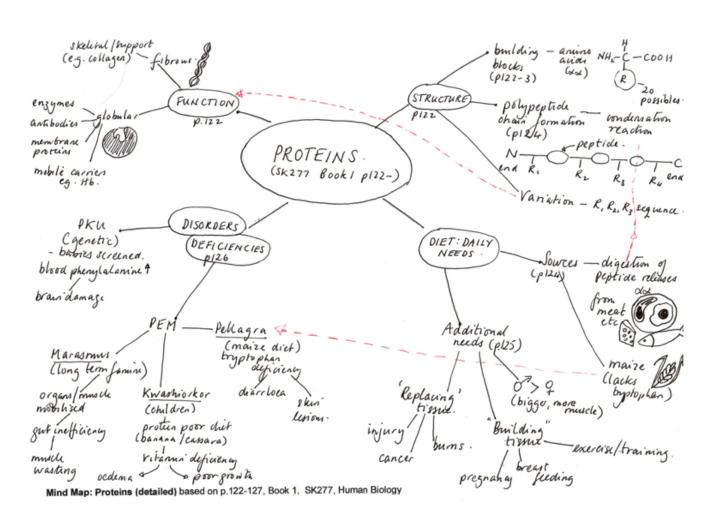
/ agriculture industry

- . shelf-life 1
  - · longer distances transport
  - · -> outsource production to charge countries

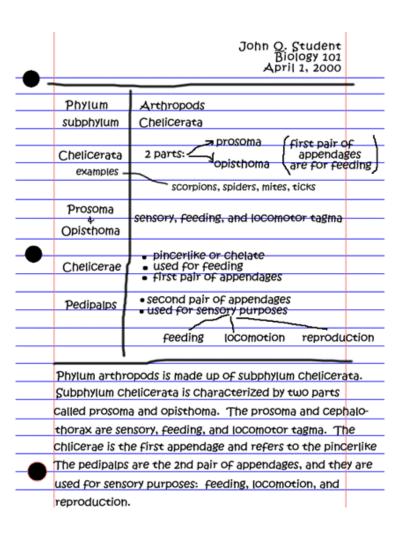
+ profit

### mind map

(a.k.a. spidergram, key word pattern, branching notes...)



### **Cornell notes**



### Discuss with a partner:

- What might be the advantages (or disadvantages) of these methods?
- What method(s) of note-taking do you normally use?
- Why?
- Have you tried any other methods?
- Do you make notes by hand or on a laptop / tablet? Have you used note-taking software?
- Do you ever record lectures? Is this helpful?

## Note-taking practice 1

You are going to practice taking notes from an audio-recording of a short (4 minute) talk:

### Two functions of listening

Tony Lynch

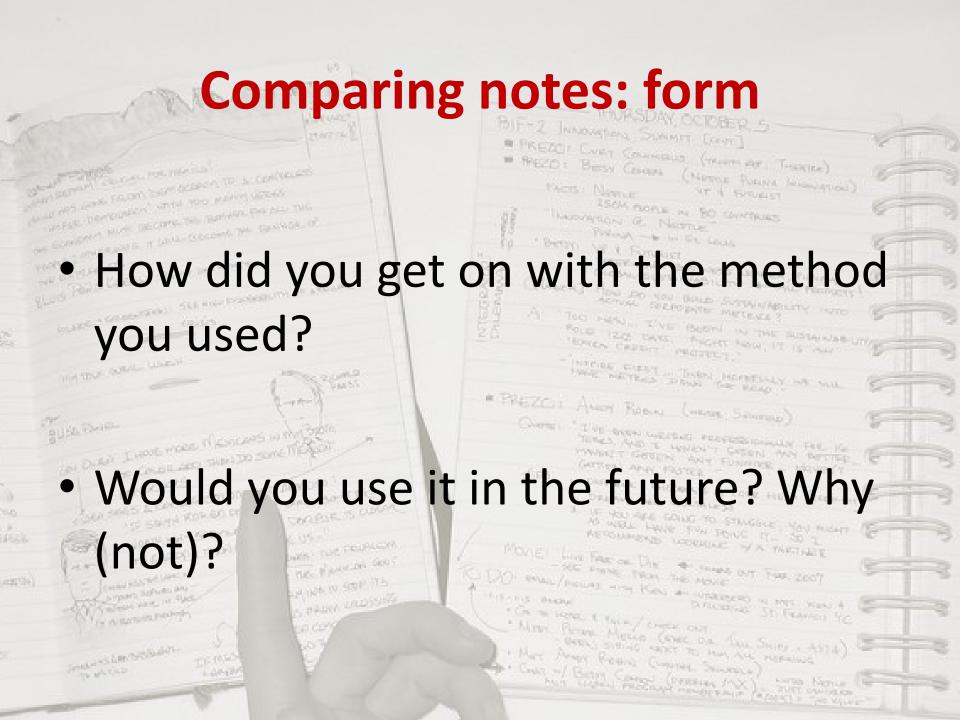
Emeritus Professor of Student Learning, University of Edinburgh

Try a note-taking method you don't normally use.

## **Comparing notes: content**

Compare your notes with another student's:

- Have you included the same information?
- If you missed any points, has your partner made notes on them?
- If there were points (or words, or sections) that neither of you could understand, see whether others in the class can help.



# Strategies for efficient listening

6 general 'macrostrategies' for successful listening:

#### Internal

- Predicting
- Monitoring
- Inferencing
- Evaluating

#### **Interactive**

- Responding
- Clarifying

### Internal strategies

# Predicting

Thinking about the possible content of the lecture **before** you listen

### **Predicting**

Use 2 types of information:

### **Background**

- general knowledge of the world
- knowledge of local culture
- specific subject knowledge

#### **Context**

- situation (who is speaking, where, when)
- the co-text what has been said so far

### Internal strategies

# Monitoring

Noticing your problems as you listen and identifying areas of uncertainty

### Monitoring

Involves asking yourself questions, e.g:

- Have I heard that correctly?
- Have I understood what was meant?
- Have I understood why s/he said it?
   (e.g. jokes, cultural references)
- Has the lecturer changed topic?
- Where is this leading to?

### Internal strategies

# Inferencing

= guessing!

Making **hypotheses** when you aren't sure of something. e.g. the meaning of an unfamiliar word or expression

### Inferencing

### Helps us to cope with situations such as:

- the information we get is incomplete
- we don't know the expressions the speaker is using
- we hear a familiar word, but used in an unfamiliar way
- we can't hear what someone is saying

### Internal strategies

# **Evaluating**

Assessing **how well** you have understood the lecture

### **Evaluating**

# Evaluating your success in listening can help you to:

- identify which areas of knowledge you need to work on
- identify which listening skills to practise more
- compare your listening skills in different subject areas of your course
- assess your progress in listening over time

# Interactive strategies

# Responding

Giving your own opinion on the ideas presented by the lecturer

### Responding

Responding involves asking yourself questions such as:

- Do I accept that what the lecturer is saying is true and relevant?
- Can I think of other examples that support or don't support - what the lecturer has said?
- Do I think the lecturer's opinions are reasonable?

### **Interactive strategies**

# Clarifying

Preparing questions that you can ask the lecturer to get a clearer understanding

### Clarifying

When you ask a question, you can help the lecturer to give the information you need by making clear whether the problem was due to:

- not hearing what the lecturer said
- not understanding what the lecturer meant
- not seeing the connection between different parts of what was said

### More practice

Your opportunity to practice these strategies and your note-taking techniques.

You are going to watch a video recording of a TED talk by a psychologist about working memory:

How your working memory makes sense of the world by Peter Doolittle (professor of educational psychology in the School of Education at Virginia Tech).

The talk lasts about 10 minutes.

### **Predicting**

### Before you watch, discuss with a partner:

- Have you watched any TED talks before? In what ways might you expect this talk to differ from a normal university lecture?
- How much do you know about 'working memory'? If you don't know the term, guess what it could refer to. If you have studied psychology, you may be able to explain!
- How relevant do you expect the content of the talk to be to the task of listening and note-taking?
- Do you think it might offer advice that could be helpful to you in your academic studies?

## Note-taking practice 2

As you watch and listen, take notes on the talk using any method you like.

http://www.ted.com/talks/peter doolittle how your working memory makes sense of the world

### **Comparing notes**

Show another student your notes and compare:

- the content do you agree on what the main points were?
- the form what method did you use? How well did it work?

# Post-listening discussion: internal strategies

- **Predicting** How accurate were your predictions?
- Monitoring Were you aware of any difficulties as you listened?
- Inferencing Did you have to guess what the speaker said / meant at any stage? Did you understand why the audience laughed?
- Evaluating How much (%) would you say you understood? How does that compare with listening to your subject lectures – better / worse / the same?

# Post-listening discussion: interactive strategies

### Responding

- How effective was the presentation?
- How useful did you find the content?
- How did it relate to our advice on listening and note-taking?
- Did it give you any ideas on making your studying more effective?

# Post-listening discussion: interactive strategies

### **Clarifying**

- Write down one question you would have liked like to ask the lecturer.
- Discuss it with your partner. What would you predict the answer to be?

### Where next?

**TV** and **radio** are very useful resources for listening practice.

Which do find more useful? Explain your answer to another student.

Look at the list below and decide which types of TV / radio programme you think are (a) **most useful** and (b) **least useful** for improving your listening to English. Discuss the **reasons** for your choice.

local news international news

political discussion cartoon

quiz show American sitcom

science programme film

drama weather forecast

### **ELE** help

#### **ELSIS** (English Language Support for International Students)

http://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/students/current-students/elsis

 ELSIS course Lecture Listening and Note-taking (focus on Predicting, Monitoring & Responding) – Semester 1 dates

> From week beginning 23 October 2017: Mondays or Wednesdays 16.10-18.00 (4 weeks). Paterson's Land, Holyrood Road.

http://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/students/current-students/elsis/elsis-courses/listening-to-lectures-and-note-taking

• Independent Study materials (download):

Lecture Listening and Note-taking

Effective English Learning: unit on Listening

### Summary

Note-taking: 3 basic rules

- 1. Be selective
- 2. Be brief
- 3. Be clear

Try different methods

Strategies for efficient listening:

- Predicting
- Monitoring
- Inferencing
- Evaluating
- Responding
- Clarifying



# Feedback survey

https://edinburgh.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/english
 -language-education-student-workshops