Note taking in lectures

Before the lecture

- Look over your last lecture notes for the module.

- Read the lecture notes (for the forthcoming lecture) and relevant information to provide a context, even if it is just for 10-15 minutes. You can then listen to the lecture more effectively and just top up your notes with important information and answers to questions you need to know.

- If you do not have time to read all the notes, try to identify the Learning Objectives and key issues (these are often on the second slide of the lecture). Google any terms you are unfamiliar with.

- If you have time, you could look up unfamiliar topics in a more basic textbook to gain a general overview, particularly if it is a difficult subject.

- There are a variety of ways of making notes in lectures: typing into the lecture notes directly, printing off lecture materials and writing in additional notes, or making your own notes based on the Cornell system of note taking (see the link below).
  http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/supportforyourstudies/academicsupport/studyresources/readingstrategiesandsupport.aspx.

- Think of questions that need to be answered in the lecture so that you are listening and recording information actively. If you are following The Cornell system of note taking, write these down in the first 1/3 of the page.

- There is also a range of software that assists with note taking, as well as time management and revision. See the link below:
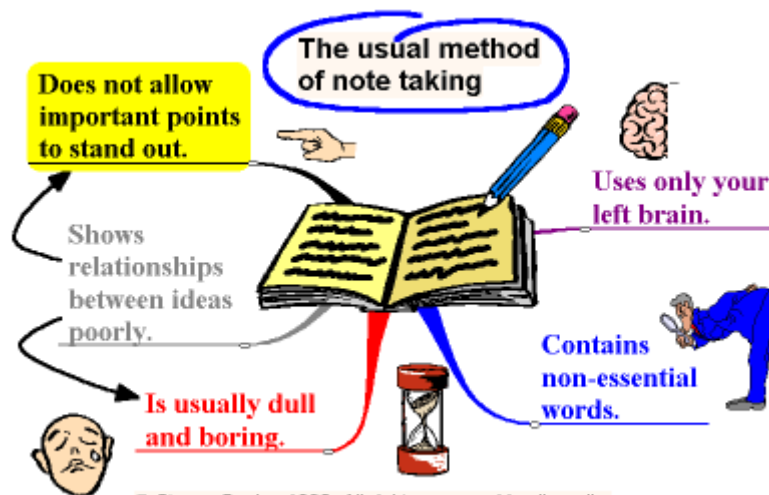 https://www.dnamatters.co.uk/resources/reviews/app-guide/

During the lecture

- Record the lecture to ensure that nothing is missed using your phone or Dictaphone (you can bookmark key points of the lecture on the Dictaphone). Even if the lecture is recorded via Echo, you may have to wait for it to be uploaded. This recording could also be useful for revision purposes later.

- In the lecture, write down main ideas under subheadings and details which support them.

- If the lecturer repeats, lists or summarises information it is likely to be important.

- Note the lecturers' introductions and conclusions as these will help you determine if they are important.

- Does the information relate or link to previous lectures?

- Leave spaces between each point so that you can add further information if you need to later.

- Use abbreviations which are consistent and understandable and have a key to refer to. Put question marks next to notes that require additional information or research.

- Don't worry if you miss something. Write down the information you need to find out and then listen carefully as you may be able to identify what it was. Put a question mark next to it if you don't find out the answer in the lecture.

- Note down your own thoughts as you listen, circle them so that you know that they are your ideas. Underline or highlight key ideas.

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After the lecture

- Check if any wrap up sessions are offered to follow up the lecture and attend these. Ask questions on Moodle discussion forums to get peer/ staff feedback. Practical, self-directed study sessions and group facilitation provide opportunities to explore and clarify information raised in lectures.

- Find the answers to any questions raised right away.

- Look at other people's notes and discuss the techniques they find most useful.

- Write/draw or type lecture notes as soon as possible afterwards while you can still remember the lecture. Do this in a way that will enable you to use them for revision (as you may not have much time to do this prior to your exams). In the Cornell system of note-taking, you can add key words and information to your notes in the left hand column and summarise the important aspects of the lecture at the bottom of the page. This is useful for revision purposes. You could also write predicted exam questions here.

- Working through your notes with a study buddy can be really helpful as you can clarify information and research questions raised together. It is a more active way of beginning the learning process.

- Print off power point slides and keep them next to your own notes so that they complement each other.

- Mind maps or flow diagrams with matching colours can provide a good overview of this information and be pinned up on the wall.

- Create Mind maps to help begin to revise topics in a multi-sensory way.

Does not allow important points to stand out.

The usual method of note taking

Uses only your left brain.

Shows relationships between ideas poorly.

Is usually dull and boring.

Contains non-essential words.

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See the following link for further advice on how to mind map:

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/hullunihowtomindmap.pdf

- Additional information on each sub topic of the mind map can be added to index cards. These can have a question on the front and a bullet point answer or diagram on the back and be used to test yourself and others.

- For vet or Health Science students, combine learning these flashcards with real anatomy, by using a skeleton or co- operative human or animal, so that the information is learnt in both a 3 dimensional and kinaesthetic way.

- Link new information to old, by using Post-it™ notes with important concise information that you need to learn. Stick them up around your room, e.g. next to your window, picture frame etc. Visualise the information on the post it notes according to where they are in the room.

See further useful information for note-taking and revision below:

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/teaching/lecture/takingnotes.aspx

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/vet-student-study-skills.pdf

http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/supportforyourstudies/academicsupport/studyresources/revisionandexaminations.aspx

The following link has a whole range of helpful free apps for note taking, revision and other study skills: https://www.dnamatters.co.uk/resources/reviews/app-guide/

The following resources may also be useful for revision:

http://www.medicalmnemonics.com/

https://ankiweb.net/shared/decks/anatomy

https://quizlet.com/18716941/flashcards