

Effective Note-taking: the basics

This workshop will provide some guidelines for taking effective notes in lectures and from reading, give you an opportunity to explore some strategies for taking traditional notes, whilst introducing some less-traditional methods.

Teaching points:

1. Why take notes?
2. Note-taking dos & don'ts
3. Strategies - Linear notes
4. Strategies - Annotation and mapping

Activity 1 – In at the deep end

- Listen to the brief practice lecture
- Take notes exactly as you would normally do in a lecture
- Debrief your strategies with the person next to you.

Counselling Children

- ⌘ Child-Counsellor relationship and counsellor qualities and attributes.
- ⌘ The SPICC model.

Attributes of Child-Counsellor relationship:

- ⌘ A connecting link between the child's world and the counsellor.
- ⌘ Exclusive
- ⌘ safe
- ⌘ authentic
- ⌘ confidential
- ⌘ non-intrusive
- ⌘ purposeful

Attributes of a counsellor for children:

- ⌘ Out of these roles that may appear in a child's life which do you think is the most useful for a counsellor to adopt?
 - ⌘ Parent
 - ⌘ teacher
 - ⌘ aunt/uncle
 - ⌘ peer
 - ⌘ or perhaps even a 'blank sheet'.

The SPICC model - the process of child therapy.

Sequentially
Planned
Integrative
Counselling for
Children.

- Phase 1 - Client Centred Psychotherapy
- Phase 2 - Gestalt Therapy
- Phase 3 - Narrative Therapy
- Phase 4 - CBT
- Phase 5 - Behaviour Therapy (Egan-esque)

1. Why take notes?

Summary – notes give you an overview of a topic.

Memory – note-taking aids retention of the information.

double processing i.e. not only listening or reading but listening/reading and recording.

Revision – notes form the basis of revision or a guide for further reading, for essays, for example.

Concentration – note-taking is active, rather than passive. If you are not actively engaged you can be easily distracted.

ACTIVE Listening = Active LEARNING

- Notes are not just to remind you but good note making is an important part of the learning process
- Active listening and reading means that you are doing something with the information you are receiving.
- It involves putting yourself in the right conditions e.g. Sitting at a desk rather than lounging in an armchair etc. slouching makes your brain slouch!
- It involves making decisions and engaging in thought processes...

Whatever the purpose for note-taking, what is important is to be clear WHAT the notes will be used for:

- A supplement to detailed lecture materials?
- The basis of a revision 'pack' that must be learnt for an exam?
- To fuel critical thinking when researching assignments or essay questions?
- As evidence to back up arguments in assignments or essays
- An aide-mémoire when on a work placement?
- Purely a process to maintain concentration during learning activities?

2. Note-taking dos & don'ts

Do...

- Prepare - What questions are you trying to answer; what do you already know; check out the topic etc.
 - Main ideas/concepts
 - Line of argument
 - Some illustrative detail
 - Information about other sources of information/ideas
- Keep it **brief** and to the point – focus on what's important
- Use **symbols & abbreviations** – some are conventional but it's fine to use your own – as long as you remember what they are! (see below.)

- **Keywords** can come from your preparation and questions you have set for yourself
- **Signposts/ signal words**
 - Think about lecture plan, handout headings, contents page etc.
 - Summaries and conclusions are often indicated explicitly - Conclusions: "take-home message" "bumper sticker" "key aspects"
 - Definitions: "I'll first define the term..."
 - Examples: "Let's look at an example..."
 - Descriptions of sequences/processes: "The first step..."
 - Connections: "Therefore", "It can be seen that..."
 - "Critical" "Essential" "Crucial"
 - Stress and emphasis/ repetition
 - References: to text books or other sources – these will often provide a useful starting point when you come to research for essays etc.
- **Follow things up and flag this in your notes:**
 - Ideas, facts or concepts which you don't understand/ with which you agree or disagree.
 - The difference between facts and opinions.
 - Note any questions or comments that occur to you whilst listening/reading.
 - Note if there is a gap in your knowledge.

Don't...

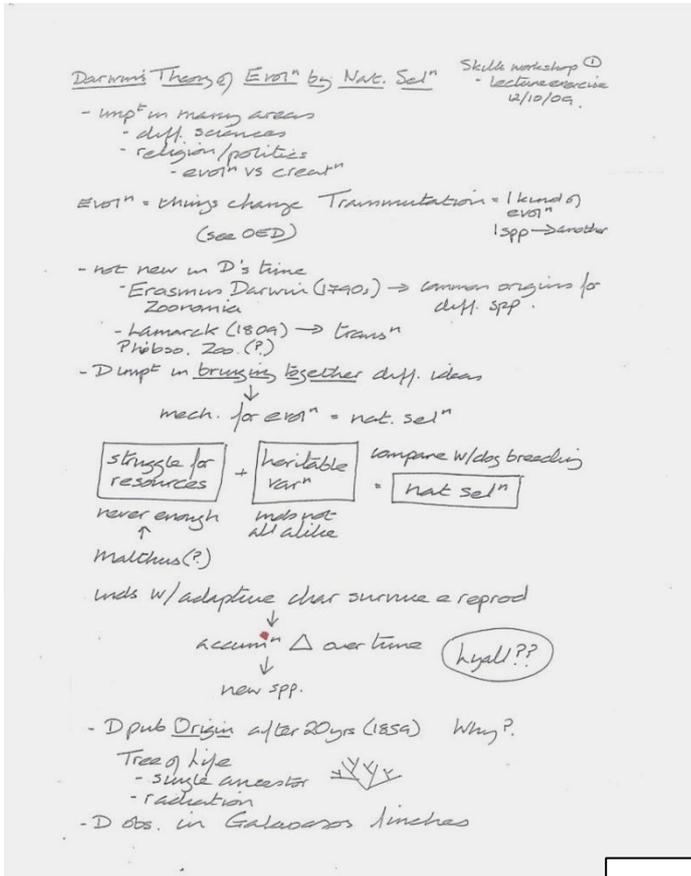
- Making a note of everything is impossible for most of us and not helpful, even if you are able (short-hand example) – similarly, don't copy large chunks of text from books etc. – you are not just recording information, you are processing it
- Hand-outs rarely contain everything you need – same goes for BlackBoard so don't rely on these in lieu of either lecture notes or proper reading for assignments etc.
- It's good to have a friend's notes if you have to miss a lecture, but make sure you go through them for yourself and review them. In relation to reading, it can sometimes be useful to share out a reading list for a first trawl but you will need to make notes on the most important sources for yourself

Useful abbreviations for note-taking

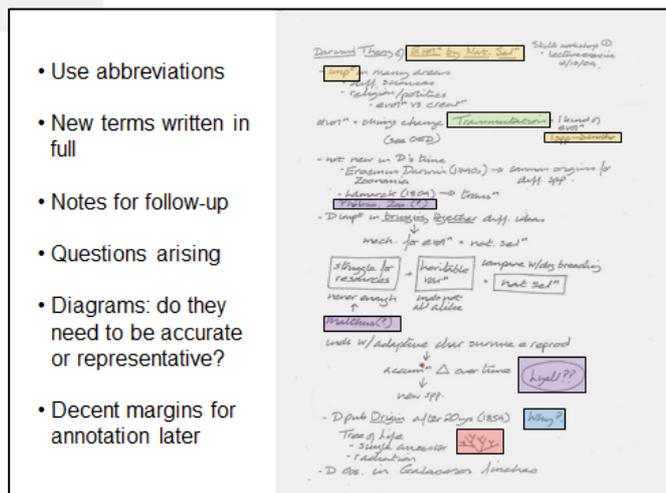
& or +	and/ in addition to	w/	with
>	greater/ more/ better than	wrt	with respect to
<	less/fewer/smaller than	e.g.	for example
=	equal to/ the same as	i.e.	that is, that means
≠	not the same as	etc.	and so on
δ	small change	p.	page, pp. = pages
Δ	large change	para.	paragraph
∴	therefore	info.	Information
∵	because	X	trans... e.g. transfer = Xfer, translate = Xlate
♂	male/ man	xxx ⁿ	xxx ⁿ tion e.g. education = educ ⁿ ,
♀	female/ woman		or combined with above transformation = Xform ⁿ
→	leads to/ produces/ causes	cd	could
↓	decreasing/ reducing etc.	wd	would
↑	increasing/ upwards trend etc.	xxx ^t	xxx ^t ment or xxx ^{ant} , so government = gov ^t , important = imp ^t
~ or c.	approximately, around	C	century
		i.e. 19C	= 19 th century

3. Strategies – linear notes

These are the notes most people are used to taking even if it does not appeal to their learning style (although possibly it is the best for most people). Linear notes tend to look like this (written or typed). They may be less neat and have bullets and relevant symbols but they use lots of words and are often done in phrases or sometimes in sentences.



- Pros:
 - Conventional – a format we are all used to
 - Relatively easy
 - Maintains chronology/ order (reflects the order of the argument)
- Cons:
 - Doesn't suit all learning styles
 - "Wordy"
- Don't just make a list... organise!
 - Use indentations/ subsections
 - Use bullet points or numbering
 - Underline, circle etc.
 - Leave good margins



Activity 2 - Cornell Note-taking (& note-making) template

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

THIS COVERS MOST OF YOUR PAGE OR WORD TEMPLATE

1. Record the Module, Lecture Title, Lecturer and Date

3. After lecture go through notes –
extract key concepts
and questions and
write them here.

2. Make notes during lecture here.

After writing down key concepts/questions
in the column to the left (3), cover up this
column (2) with a sheet of paper.

Now try to recall the detail of your notes,
using the words in the visible column to
the left as cues – vocalise this detail in
your own words.

4. Summarise the content of this page of your notes in three or four sentences here.

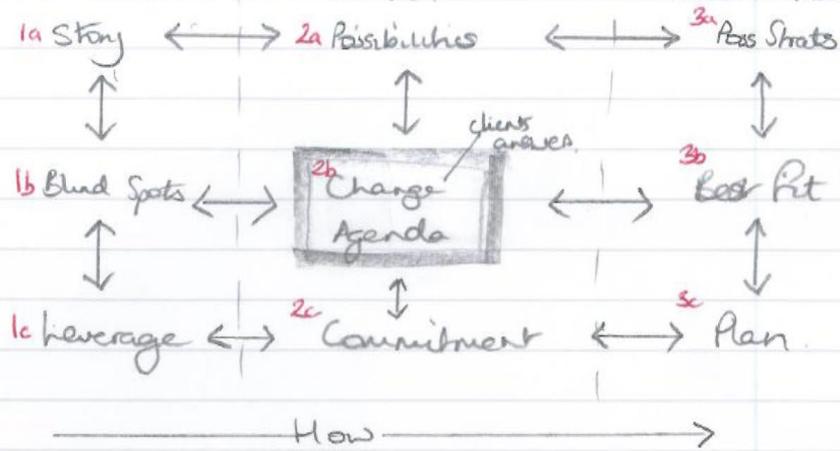
① Decision Making

Egan, Gerard (2002) 7th Ed Thomson Learning, Books/Cole

Skilled Helper Model

32

① What's Going On? ② What Solutions Make Sense for Me? ③ How Do I Get What I Need or Want?



! = stages

Stage 1

27
26
27

Double headed arrows: "not sequential + 'interactive'"

① - What's the present state of affairs.

1a - help clients tell their 'stories' (details of missed opportunity this section = renewing).

1b - Challenging the client + reveal unexplored opps. → new perspectives + adds reality check.

1c - "Helping clients choose the right problems... to work on" i.e. work on those issues that will make a difference.

Stage 2

28
"
29
29

② - "What do you want this future to look like?"

2a - imaginative use to generate possibilities, brainstorming

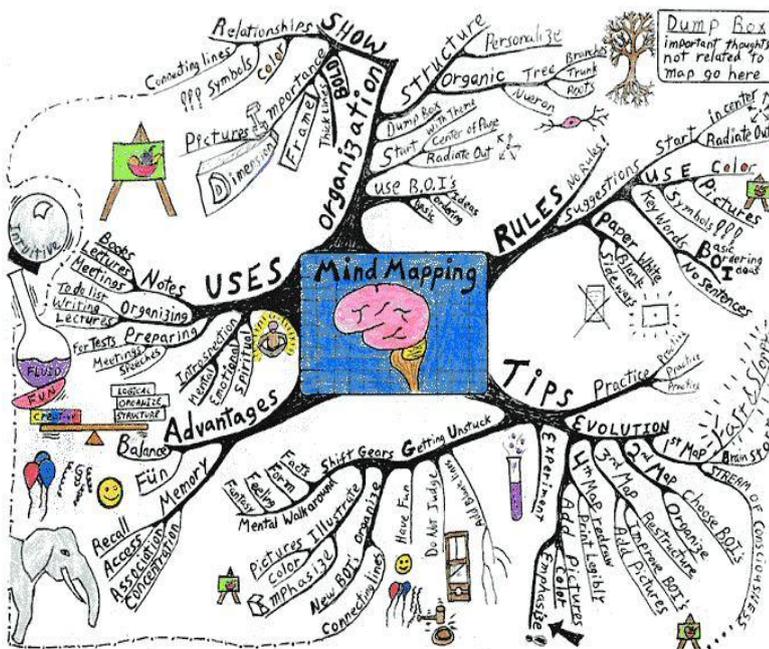
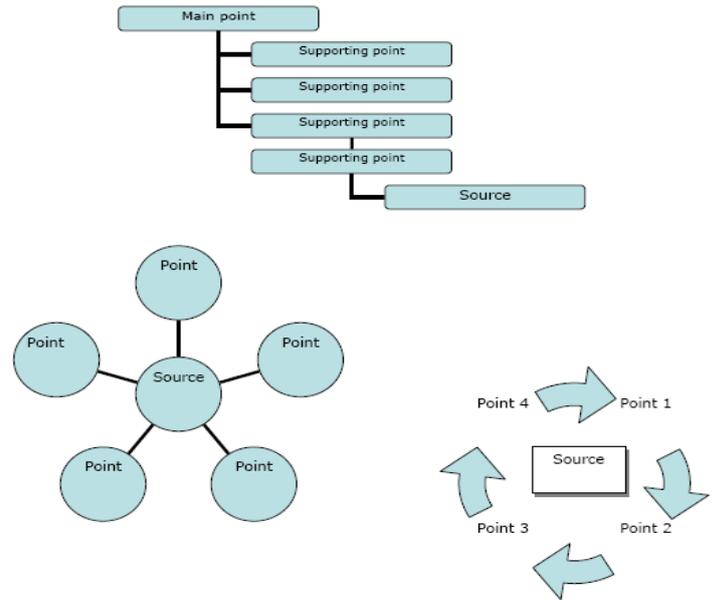
2b - "Realistic + challenging Goals" Reframe elements of 1a-c/2a into GOALS should be "substantive, realistic, prudent, sustainable, flexible, consistent with the client's values and sets in a reasonable time-frame."

2c - Looking for the "incentives" to motivate committing to agenda for change: "What are I willing to pay?" The helper commitment test their clients - "how much/badly do you want it."

How to work, prompts + questions for stages 1-2 of Egan's model.

4. Strategies – Annotation & Mapping

- This includes anything that appeals to more visual learners.
- Use colours and size to make things stand out.
- Rather than working in linear format you record the information on plain paper in any way that appeals to you – in bubbles, for instance.
- Use doodles and sketches to help you remember what you have heard or read.
- Turn lengthy text explanations or arguments into diagrams and charts.



MindMapping can be an extremely powerful visual tool.

Aim to colour code and link information.

You can include small graphics/doodles to stimulate memory.

Pros:

- Appeals to people who are visual thinkers/ active learners
- Creative – releases ideas
- Good in exams – as a way to plan your answers
- Good for exam revision - Helps you to see what you know and also what the gaps are

Cons:

- Does not suit everyone – the process can be difficult if you are not a visual thinker
- Hard to do 'on the spot' as a way of actually recording 'live' information in a lecture.

Annotation is a form of note-taking. It involves using pre-existing material and working **on** to it or around it.

- Again colours can be crucial here:
- Black = original jottings during the session
- Red = questions arising or understanding to be checked.
- Green = answers to the questions or additional detail after...
 - Talking to a lecturer
 - Reading a key text/researching to increase depth.



4. Strategies – Annotation and mapping

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