NOTE TAKING

Note taking in a 3 step process:

Observe more carefully
Record more accurately
Review efficiently

1. Observe – to improve observation skills:
   a) Set the stage – complete outside assignments, bring the right materials, sit up front, conduct a short pre-class review, participate, ask questions, and relate class material to your goals.
   b) Watch for clues – ideas on how to catch possible test items:
      i. Repetition – may be a signal that the instructor feels this material is important.
      ii. Words that reveal the structure of lecture – “The following 3 factors,” “The most important consideration,” “On the other hand,” “In conclusion.” Such phrases signal important relationships, definition, and cause and effect can help structure and organize your notes.
      iii. Watch the board – if the instructor puts something on the board, consider the material important.
      iv. Watch the instructor’s interest level – if the instructor sounds excited or animated about something, that is a generally good indication that the material is important.
      v. Don’t ignore the obvious – if the instructor tells you it is important, it is important!

2. Recording
   a) Use a 3-ring binder – Pages can easily be removed and spread out for review.
   b) Write on only one side of the page.
   c) Leave lots of white space – notes are easier to read. It’s also easier to go back and revise, clarify, and correct if need be.
   d) Label, number and date all notes.
   e) Create a standard system of abbreviations.

3. Review
   a) Within 24 hours – short-term memory decays rapidly. You will lose approximately 80% of what you learned if do not review within an appropriate period of time.

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