Four Methods of Note Taking

Split-Page Notes- This method mirror’s most students’ current note taking techniques and can be used with the majority of class type lectures. In split-page notes you will draw a line vertically down the page creating a 2-3 inch margin. During note-taking, take all your notes on the larger portion of the page. After class, use the margin to pull out main ideas, this allows for self testing. You should be prepared with several sheets of paper that are numbered and dated prior to class.

Parallel Notes- Instructors use a variety of methods to assist in the delivery of a lecture….i.e.…web notes, power point presentations, graphs, or any type of visual aid. Students may often find it very difficult to takes notes due to their attention being divided between the instructors lecture and presentation. Sometimes there is too much information in the presentation to copy down, or students have trouble differentiating between main ideas. Parallel note taking can assist the student that has these troubles. First you will want to print off a copy of the instructor’s notes, power point …etc. Then set up your note taking page the same way you would for the split-page method. This will allow you to fill in any added information and/ or denote important points from the lecture. After the class lecture, annotate any key points in the 2-3 inch column; this will allow for self testing.

Discussion Columns- This method is suggested for discussion style classes. Rather than dividing the page with a 2-3 inch margin, we will split the page into three even columns. The first column will be labeled as “Question Posed.” In this section you will state the question, theory, or topic being posed for the group/class discussion. The second column is made for the “Instructors Comment.” Here you can note statements made by the instructors and the third column is for the “Student Comments.” In these two sections you can note any important points or statements that relate to the posed topic. This method can also be modified by annotating notes on the reverse side to allow for self testing.

The T-Method- Courses that require you to summarize and string pieces of information together, this method may be quite effective. To use this method apply good ethics of note taking discussed in “Successful Strategies for College & Beyond”, then at the bottom of the last page (or on the reverse side if more room is required) draw a large T creating two boxed off sections. Use the left section to summarize any main ideas from the given lecture and any information that must be drawn together. On the right side create predictive test questions that can be used for self testing during study sessions.