

Active Listening

To get the most benefit from a lecture or seminar, you must actively LISTEN and be engaged. In general, following these principles will help you learn in class:

LEAD, don't follow

- Do your readings ahead of time (if you are pressed for time, preview or skim your readings before class).
- Anticipate what will be discussed in class – recall key terms and theories from your readings.
- Identify questions that might be answered during class. Refer to the question section from the PQ4R/SQ3R handout to help you in this process.
- Review your notes from the last lecture before the class begins.

Find the main IDEAS in the lecture or seminar

- If your professor provides a lecture outline at the start of class, take note of the topics listed.
- Listen for the main ideas your professor is trying to get across during class.
- Underline key words and mark definitions with an asterisk in your notes.
- Take note of any terms the professor repeats or explains in detail.

Watch for SIGNALS indicating important information

- Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal cues. For example:
 - writing something on the board
 - repetition and pauses
 - hand gestures and tone of voice
 - verbal cues and phrases like “most importantly,” “for example,” “remember that,” or “first, second, third”
- If something has been said that has engaged other students in writing the idea down, consider whether this is something worth making note of yourself.

Take your TIME deciding what is worth writing down

- Pause to question and evaluate information before you write it down.
- Consider what information flows or links together before you start writing.
- Use the lecture outline as a guide to determining what's important to write down.

Practice EFFECTIVE listening

- Do not just receive the information, but question it as well. Does it make sense?
- Make sure you sit where you can understand your professor and see any visual aids.
- Don't be afraid to participate in class (if your professor is open to this). Ask questions, answer your professor's questions, and engage in group discussions.
- Stay away from other students who may distract you (for example, those who talk in the back of the class, students with computers, friends who like to talk, people reading newspapers, etc.).
- Write down questions or mark with an asterisk any theories, concepts, ideas or terms that you need to clarify later. Seek out this clarification by using your textbooks, talking to peers, or visiting your professor during office hours.

Create clear, legible NOTES

- Clearly define sections of your notes with headings and subheadings.
- Underline and highlight key points and theories.
- Leave room to add in additional information or visual aids later when you review your notes after the class.
- Review your notes after class and elaborate on any shorthand that you might not recognize in a few days or weeks. You can forget about 70% of what you have just learned quite quickly (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014, p.28).
- Review often and condense your notes. Revise your notes for clarity if they are messy.
- Using your notes to self-test is the best way to improve your learning (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014, p. 28).

Reference

Brown, P. C., Roediger III, H.L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make it stick: The science of successful learning*. Cambridge: Belknap Press.