# Taking Notes

## Tips for Success

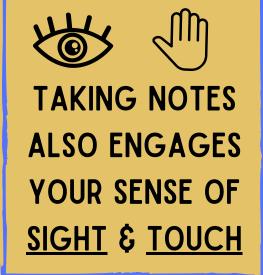**EBBINGHAUS' "FORGETTING CURVE":** Your ability to recall learned information drops to below 50% within the first hour, and down to 25% in 48 hours (Dembo & Seli, 2013, p. 224)

### TAKING NOTES ALSO ENGAGES YOUR SENSE OF SIGHT & TOUCH

## HEARING VS. LISTENING

Passively registering sound

Actively processing information

## handwritten VS. digital

### PROS:

- Actively process content to select main ideas to write down
- Requires more focus = less distraction
- Increased ability to transfer charts, graphs, diagrams, pictures, etc.

### CONS:

- May miss important details because you cannot capture content as quickly
- Writing can become illegible
- Edits and any changes can be harder to incorporate

### PROS:

- Captures more content
- Easily combine content from multiple lectures on same topic
- Quickly search for information

### CONS:

- Tendency to take verbatim notes and will not process content as effectively
- Access to internet makes it easier to become distracted
- Limited to features on device (ex: tough to write in margins and integrate visuals quickly)

**Loyola Marymount University Academic Resource Center**

**Source (all pages):** Dembo, M. H., & Seli, H. (2013). *Motivation and learning strategies for college success: A focus on self-regulated learning* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.

# NOTE TAKING   VS.   NOTE MAKING

(rehearsal: what you do during class)   (active engagement: how you create meaning)

## Before Lecture

**COMPLETE ASSIGNED READINGS BEFORE CLASS**
- Introduce yourself to the content before class, even if knowledge retained is general
- Allows you to direct your attention to what is important during lecture and engage in meaningful learning processes rather than focus on taking verbatim, or recall, notes
- Ability to organize information more effectively when framework of content is known

**REVIEW NOTES FROM PREVIOUS CLASS**
- Provides a foundation to learn new material and connect it to pre-requisite knowledge

**DATE & NUMBER YOUR NOTES EACH CLASS**
- Cross reference lecture notes with assigned textbook readings to supplement notes

## During Lecture

**FOCUS ON MAIN IDEAS AND SUPPORTING DETAILS**
- Note when the professor repeats or emphasizes a point or makes comments such as "Pay special attention to…", "Don't forget that…", "This is important because…", etc.
- Copy anything written on the board that may not be included in the PowerPoint
- Always write any definitions and when things and/or steps are listed

**USE ABBREVIATIONS WHEN POSSIBLE**
- Examples (ex) include: number (#), equal (=), continued (cont'd), point (pt.), and (&), etc.

**STRUCTURE NOTES USING OUTLINE METHOD**
- Write the main points in the margins and then indent to indicate secondary ideas or supporting details in order to organize content and relate ideas to one another

## After Lecture

**PROCESS OF NOTE MAKING**
- Review your notes shortly after class while the lecture is still fresh in your mind
- Add content that you remember learning, but did not write down
- Clarify any misunderstandings or locate missing information by asking a peer, asking the professor, or consulting the textbook
- Start designing questions in the margins or writing summaries in order to begin processing the information that you learned
- Annotate your notes by underlining or highlighting key words, points, ideas, etc. to support main points based on the questions and summaries that you have created