

Stage 2 – Lecture and Note-Taking

Slides 1-2: Let's turn our attention to Stage 2: Lecture and Note-taking – and we will assume a focus on lecture-based courses for now. Stage 2 generally takes place in class and involves listening, class-participation when appropriate, and note-taking. *As with stage 1, it is important to think about one's goals and expectations for this pass. Too often anxiety about “missing something,” or about not understanding something, or about not knowing what to focus on leads to note-taking strategies that try to “get everything down” - or possibly to re-listening to a recorded version of the lecture in its entirety which can be too time-consuming. The goal really is to listen and see the slides and try to understand the material, and, again, to prepare for next stages and future study – and to take notes that will best aid that study.

Slide 3: Depending upon the course and the lecturer and the nature of the material or course resources there might be a number of effective listening and note-taking strategies. Best strategies also depend upon personal preference to some extent. That said, generally speaking, written notes are better than typed – in part because they require some decision-making about what to write and where, and tend less often to lead to efforts to record everything for later review. Adopt practices that encourage listening and thoughtfully annotating slides or taking notes that will help with future study. Note-taking methods like the Cornell Method also help encourage effective review of notes. It is not often that one needs to take down a lot of information that is not to be found in course resources. Focus on what is emphasized, or added, or suggests good resources to use, or provides examples, questions or problems – focus as well on where you have questions and areas you know you need to review.

Please make an appointment to discuss best note-taking strategies for you if this is an area you'd like to improve.

Slide 4: Some of the best advice for good listening and note-taking is to be patient and persistent – stick with it, and if you feel lost for a moment, make a note of where and when it happens and find a way to get back into the lecture. Concentration will sometimes lag, or questions will arise. It is Ok. Prepare for lecture by previewing, thinking about how you'd like to take notes, and thinking about questions you have or information you are listening for. The goals for this pass are to get closer to a good foundation of understanding and to get ready for next stages of study – it is not your last time working with the material, so don't worry if you do not leave lecture with full comprehension and great memory of the material. It will come with more work, review, practice and study.