

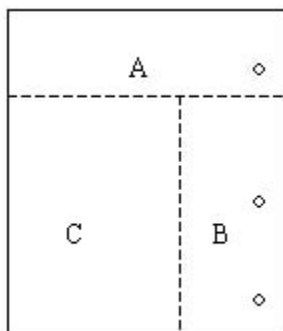
# EFFECTIVE NOTETAKING

## *A Modified Version of the Cornell Notetaking System*

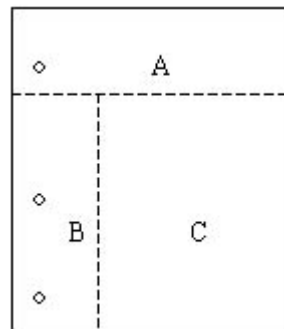
Effective notetaking is an essential skill for any successful college student. An effective notetaking system enables the student to quickly and easily study and review the material which has been covered in lecture.

The Cornell Notetaking System has been taught to many college students. However, some students who are taking a full load of classes have found the Cornell Notetaking System to be too detailed to meet their study needs for all of their classes. Consequently, SLAC has designed a modified version of the Cornell Notetaking System which allows the students more flexibility in meeting their study requirements.

The basic idea is to divide your notebook paper into areas for different studying activities at different times. First, divide the page into two parts with a horizontal line so that approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the page is above the  $\frac{3}{4}$  is below the line. Second, divide the portion below the line into two parts by means of a vertical line so that  $\frac{1}{3}$  is to the left and  $\frac{2}{3}$  to the right of the vertical line. (Note: a left handed person would reverse this last step. See diagram below.) Thus, the page is now divided into three major areas as indicated below.



Left-handed



Right-handed

Area C is where you actually take notes during class. Include the date of the lecture at the beginning of each day's notes: this will later allow you to determine how much time and/or emphasis the instructor spent on certain sections of the material.

The most important part of this notetaking system is what you do with areas A and B after class. Use space B as a working area in which you attempt to (a) define key terms, (b) predict possible test questions, (c) indicate things to be clarified or examined further, and/or (d) note relationships between things as you study. Instructors will frequently make comments in class such as "This would make a good essay question," or "You should explore these relationships further." Jot such comments in Area B. Obviously this will be most beneficial if you know what types of tests will be given in each of your classes. Does your instructor give essay or multiple

choice/objective exams? Does your instructor emphasize general concepts and their application, or concentrate on details and facts? In order for your predicted questions to be an effective study aid, you should approximate, as closely as possible, the types of questions you are likely to see on a test.

Area A is the last space to be used. Use it to outline your notes or to summarize in your own words the material on that particular page of notes.

As you can see, this system allows you to incorporate a variety of study techniques on a single page. It allows you to take notes (area C), to interrogate the material (area B), and to summarize the material (area A).

When it comes time to study for your exam, try covering up area C (the part of your page containing the actual lecture notes) and use the other part as a self-test/study guide. If you have done your work well you should be prepared for almost anything that comes your way.