

# The CORNELL WAY

## Ten Steps in the Cornell Note Taking System

### Part I: Note-Taking

#### **C – Step One: Create Format**

Leave 1/3 of the paper on the left for questions, 2/3 on the right for notes

Leave 2 inches on the bottom of each page for summary

Write name, class, date, topic, and objective in heading

Create an essential question based on the objective to be addressed in the notes and in the summary

#### **O – Step Two: Organize Notes on the Right Side of Your Note Paper**

Take notes while listening to a lecture, reading a textbook, solving a math problem, etc.

Listen and take notes in your own words – paraphrase what you hear

Leave spaces for revisions by skipping lines between ideas

Abbreviate words and use symbols

Write in phrases, not complete sentences

Know what to write – differentiate between important information vs. trivial information

### Part II: Note-Making

#### **R – Step 3: Review and Revise Notes**

Distinguish main ideas from details

Categorize information by highlighting or color coding

Delete unimportant information

Add your own thinking – fill in details to clarify, complete, or create greater meaning and understanding

Identify unclear information by using a question mark

Add references from other materials as they come to mind or make connections to other concept/content

Review for possible paper topics or test questions

#### **N – Step 4: Note Key Ideas to Create Questions**

Write questions on the left side of your notes page that connect to key ideas

Review the main ideas highlighter on the right side

Determine the purpose of the lecture, reading, or activity

Read the highlighted main ideas and create higher level questions

#### **E – Step 5: Exchange Ideas by Collaborating**

Collaborate with a peer(s), as a small group, as a whole class, outside of class, etc. to compare, enhance, and revise your notes

Fill in any gaps and clarify points of confusion

Brainstorm a list of key terminology from the lesson to be included in the summary

### **Part III: Note-Interacting**

#### **L – Step 6: Link Learning to Create a Summary**

Identify the main ideas to be used in the summary by reviewing your notes, questions written on the left side, and prior knowledge

Address the essential question of the lesson in the summary

Use the notes on the right side for support as you write the summary

Combine main ideas by synthesizing; internalize learning from the questions/notes

Answer the higher level questions on the left side in the summary to tie together the main ideas

#### **L – Step 7: Learning Tool – Use Completed Notes as a Learning Tool**

Review notes taken, questions developed, and the summary, individually or with a study group  
Apply new learning to increase performance in the class by using notes to study for a test, write an essay, prepare for a presentation, etc.

Interact with material by taking notes, writing questions, and summarizing to internalize the information and increase subsequent learning

Use the notes to transfer knowledge to long-term memory by forming connections with and making meaning of the notes

### **Part IV: Note-Reflecting**

#### **W – Step 8: Written Feedback**

Review, revise, and improve notes, questions, and summary based on feedback by a peer or instructor

Use the feedback to check for quality

#### **A – Step 9: Address Written Feedback**

Create a goal for improving future note-taking

Use the feedback provided to identify an aspect of note taking that challenges you

Identify specific actions to address this challenge in future note taking

#### **Y – Step 10: Your Reflection**

Review your notes, questions and summaries, then reflect on your learning by completing a reflective log to show how you mastered and/or applied your new knowledge