



Note-Taking 101

Why Bother Taking Notes?

Taking effective notes helps YOU to understand what is going on in a text or discussion. Writing things down helps your brain remember more effectively AND gives you a shorter document to review later instead of trying to read a text over and over. Notetaking saves time later, too; if you're writing a paper, your notes can also be the beginnings of your own thoughts on the topic.

Common Purposes for Note-Taking:

1. For Class Discussion: What sticks out to you? What does the content remind you of?
2. For Memorizing Content: Which pieces are important? Use indicators like subject headings, bolded info, italics to tell what matters
3. For Essay Writing/Planning: Which parts of the text are most relevant to your topic? How does this source differ from another source? How might you use this source to make a point or overall argument?

Overall Strategies for Taking Notes (Non-Comprehensive List):

- **Strategy 1**– Respond to the text as a reader with annotations in your own voice. Call out what you see, and even argue with the text if you disagree! It can be helpful to imagine yourself in conversation with a text, to begin understanding your own response to the text.

Example Annotation: "This writer is SO racist... this claim isn't even backed up by anything." *See example pages for more annotations!*

- **Strategy 2**– Simplify and summarize.
Think of this as trying to explain the text to another person. Try to pay attention only to the main points, like big ideas or terms that come up a lot. *For a more detailed example, check out the Cornell Notes example attached!*
- **Strategy 3**– Focus on your purpose.
Your purpose for reading the text can shape what you pay attention to and write down vs. what you skim over.

Possible Guiding Questions:

What do you want to respond to?
What do you already know and what is new information?
What is the author trying to say?
How does new information connect to what you might already know?
If you assume the author is right why does it matter?
If you doubt the author, what are they failing to consider?
How will this reading be used in class?
Did my professor give me questions?

Examples: Models to Try

In the following pages, you'll see one student trying out several different notetaking styles (Annotation, Narrative Notetaking, Two-Column Notes, Doodling, and Cornell Notes) on a short passage from Rosina Lippi-Green's article "English with an Accent." Check them out, but don't feel tethered to just one model! Adapt or combine parts of each style until they work for you, and Google models if you need more examples.

Annotations

"From the spoken to the written language is a large step; it is another significant step from the written language to the possession of literacy. However, the possession of a skill, and facility to use that skill to construct a product, are cultural resources not equally available to all persons, and are heavily endowed with social currencies. Generally, the public does not consider oral cultures as equal to literate ones, and there has been scholarly work in linguistics and education which would seem to provide evidence for the inherent validity of this position. Some scholars have argued with differing degrees of subtlety, that certain kinds or modes of thought cannot develop in oral cultures, and that for this reason literate cultures are superior. This type of argument has come under attack on both methodological and theoretical grounds. Most relevant here is Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes, which attempted (and failed) to establish that children who spoke "elaborated" languages at home (those more syntactically complex) were more capable of logical thought (among other cognitive advantages) and that children who heard only "restricted" codes in the home were at a disadvantage. While Bernstein never made explicit the connection between languages of oral cultures and "restricted" codes, or languages of literate cultures and "elaborated" codes, this reading of his work is not an unusual one."

important to consider

written language vs spoken vs literacy all different?

how come?

disagreement in field

seems questionable

seems to have an agenda

new info!

not true

Bernstein's theory isn't true, but used to support other messages

Narrative Notetaking

Focusing Question: What narratives do we have around oral and literate cultures and what has influenced them?

Source: Lippi-Green, Rosina. "English with an Accent." Routledge. 1997.

Rapid Summary (one minute):

What I understand this section to be saying is that although there has been plenty of people trying to argue that literate cultures have some superiority over oral ones, both inside and outside academia, the truth is more complicated than that. Access to literacy is defined by a lot of factors, including social status.

Narrative of Thought (six minutes):

This article helped me think through some of my own tendencies to mythologize literate cultures. As the article points out, that's a pretty typical point of view in dominant culture. I'm not immune to that kind of messaging. The fact that those messages actually aren't true, and that the supposed backing for those arguments doesn't actually hold water when examined. The connection between literacy and access to social capital is so often overlooked, especially when I'm at college, but isn't one I should forget out in the world.

Two column notes

Quote/Summary From Text

- Spoken to written language is different, also difference between written language and literacy

- Generally oral cultures are considered not equal to literate ones

- Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes

- holds that kids who had more complex language at home were more capable of logical thought
- didn't connect oral cultures with "restricted" language but lots of people connect them

My Commentary

- Seems like the main difference is in purpose/use

- context matters

- who decided this?

- implies cultural hierarchy

- important point for my paper ★

- Seems a little biased imo

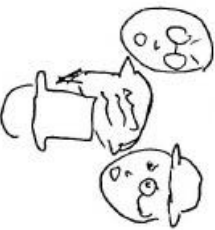
- connects back to lecture from last class, support my point

Doodling



SCHOLARS

Argue



that's not true!

Literate > Oral

BERNSTEIN'S THEORY OF RESTRICTED & ELABORATED CODES

1) Argument:

more "elaborated" codes at home = more logical children

2) Don't even

prove that

BUT

BERNSTEIN
Used to prop up argument that literate oral cultures

Goal: Identify and understand the main ideas presented in the article

Cornell Notes

Oral vs literate

- public considers oral cultures not equal to literate ones

- scholars argue literate cultures are superior because some thoughts "cannot develop" in oral cultures
- lots of disagreement within the scholars

Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes

- tries to argue children with more "complex" languages at home have cognitive advantages AND that kids with "restricted" language were at a disadvantage
- ultimately fails

- many interpret this theory to conflate oral cultures with restricted language/code, even though he didn't say that

Summary: When considering oral vs literate cultures, oral cultures are often thought to be at a disadvantage. Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes, which unsuccessfully argues that kids' cognitive abilities correlate with their language complexity is often used to uphold this idea.