

## LEARNING TECHNIQUES

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### LESSON 8-26 ▲ NOTE-TAKING: PARAPHRASING

#### LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES

- ▶ Demonstrate paraphrasing skills while taking notes from a reading or presentation.
- ▶ Demonstrate effective note editing skills after a reading or presentation.
- ▶ Identify personal strengths and weaknesses in note-taking skills.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

- ▶ **Student Handouts:**
  - Organizing Your Notes
  - Taking Notes from a Reading
  - Journal Page
- ▶ **Teacher Handout:**
  - Sample mini-lectures (each 2 minutes long)

#### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1. **Students use a memory game to see the value of note-taking.** Select five students to be Group A and 5 students to be Group B. Divide all remaining students into two groups (Group C and Group D). Ask Group C and Group D to get a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Then ask them to put their heads down on their desks. No peeking!

Follow this sequence for the remainder of the activity:

- Instruct Group A to collect 10 miscellaneous items (2 each) and make a pile in the back of the classroom (or put on a desk/table) and then return to their seats.
- Instruct Group B to collect 25 miscellaneous items (5 each) and make a different pile in back of classroom (or put on a desk/table) and then return to their seats.
- Have Group C line up and view the two piles of items for two minutes. When they return to their desk, they can write down everything they remember for another two minutes, then put papers face down.

- Have Group D, with pen and paper in hand, line up and walk past the items for two minutes. They can take notes of everything they see while looking at the items. When two minutes are up, they return to seats and put papers face down.
- Have Group C tally up all the items they remembered and wrote down.
- Have Group D gather together and tally up all the items they remembered and wrote down.

Most likely, the group that takes notes will have the most correct answers, imagine that! Tell students that note taking is really useful for helping us remember things, even if there is little information (ex: 10 items) or a lot of information (25 items) being presented to us.

2. **Students review the Two-Column method for note-taking.** Distribute a copy of *Organizing Your Notes* to each student. Review the note-taking steps outlined in the reading. Tell students that effective note-taking is a key to improving classroom comprehension and test scores.
3. **Students learn how to paraphrase from a mini-lecture.** Ask students why experts tell people to take notes ‘in their own words’, rather than writing word-for-word what a person says or what is in a reading. Tell students that, if you can put it into your own words, you understand it. This means you are more likely to remember it. Putting things into your own words is called ‘paraphrasing.’

Ask students to paraphrase what you just said about paraphrasing. Answers could include things like, “People remember things better if they put them in their own words” or “Experts recommend thinking first and choosing your own words, rather than just repeating what was said.”

Using a lecture format, ask students to paraphrase two more times. Two sample ‘mini-lectures’ are included at the end of the lesson, one on Flash Mobs and the other on Seat Fillers. As you deliver each one, ask students to paraphrase the notes they take. At the end of each, ask them to summarize in their own words the key points of your mini-lecture.

4. **Students learn how to paraphrase from a reading.** Distribute a copy of *Taking Notes from a Reading* to each student. Ask the students to read the passage in the handout, taking notes using the new method, and writing a summary of their notes at the end.
5. **Students compare reading summaries with other students.** Pair students up and have them compare summaries with their partner. What information did their partner think was important? What information did they both think was important? After reviewing each other’s work, have students pair with a different students and compare notes once more.
6. **Students reflect on their ability to paraphrase.** Ask students to answer the following questions in their Journal:



- Do you find paraphrasing easy or challenging? How could you improve your paraphrasing skills?
- Can you use this note-taking method in your other classes? Where could it help the most?
- How will improved note-taking help you in high school?

## STUDENT PRODUCTS

- ▶ **Completed *Organizing Your Notes***
- ▶ **Completed *Taking Notes from a Reading***
- ▶ **Completed *Journal Page*** on paraphrasing and note-taking skills



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### LESSON 8-26 TEACHER HANDOUT

#### SAMPLE MINI-LECTURES

##### FLASH MOBS

A flash mob is a large group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an unusual and pointless act for a brief time, then quickly disperse. The term flash mob is generally applied only to gatherings organized via telecommunications, social media, or viral emails. The term is generally not applied to events organized by public relations firms, protests, and publicity stunts.

The first flash mob was created in Manhattan in May 2003, by Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harper's Magazine. The origins of the flash mobs were unknown until Wasik published an article about his creation in the March 2006 edition of Harper's. The first attempt was unsuccessful after the targeted retail store was tipped off about the plan for people to gather. Wasik avoided such problems during the second flash mob, which occurred on June 3, 2003 at Macy's department store, by sending participants to preliminary staging areas – in four prearranged Manhattan bars – where they received further instructions about the ultimate event and location just before the event began.

More than 100 people converged upon the ninth floor rug department of the store, gathering around an expensive rug. Anyone approached by a sales assistant was advised to say that the gatherers lived together in a warehouse on the outskirts of New York, that they were shopping for a "love rug", and that they made all their purchase decisions as a group.

Other flash mobs include: 200 people flooding the lobby and mezzanine of the Hyatt hotel in synchronized applause for about 15 seconds; hundreds dancing in an English train station; and 5,000 people in 27 cities having a flash pillow fight. YouTube has popularized various flash mob events, with the most popular being the more than 200 people who 'froze in place' in Grand Central Station for five minutes and then suddenly dispersed.

Wasik claimed that he created flash mobs as a social experiment designed to poke fun at hipsters and to highlight the cultural atmosphere of conformity and of wanting to be an insider or part of "the next big thing." His plan has backfired, as flash mobs are often exactly the next big thing that people will talk about and email to their friends.

### NOTE-TAKING: FLASH MOBS

<b>Definition</b>	Instant short-term public event. Social in nature, not advertising firm-driven.
<b>First One</b>	2003 - Bill Wasik – editor of Harpers 100+ people went to Macy's store to buy a 'love rug'
<b>Others</b>	15 seconds of applause in a hotel lobby Dancing, pillow fights, people frozen in place
<b>Intent/Effect</b>	Meant to make fun of people trying to be cool Instead, it has becomes something to be cool at

**Summary:** A new hobby activity called 'flash mobs' creates fun social events with hundreds of people.

## PROFESSIONAL SEAT FILLERS

A seat filler is a person who fills in an empty seat during an event. There are two types of Seat Fillers:

1. a person who subscribes to a seat-filling theatre club. Members of these clubs help fill in unsold seats for theatre, music, film, sporting events, dance performances and other live events. The producers of the event give complimentary tickets to the seat-filling organization, who pass them on to their members. The producers get a fuller audience and therefore a better experience for the paying patrons (and talent), while the seat-filler is able to see an event for a small service charge. Within the industry, this is also referred to as "papering the house"
2. a person who takes up spare seats when the person allocated the seat is elsewhere. An example of this is the Academy Awards in which many of the audience are either gaining awards, once they win the award the recipient needs to wait for an appropriate time to return to their seat, or because the member of the audience is involved in producing the show. Seat fillers are primarily employed so that when TV cameras show audience shots there are not empty seats.

You can't just show up expecting to get in, this is an actual job requiring an application and a resume. You won't get paid in any monetary sense, and travel expenses are not reimbursed. Payoff for this is derived solely from the value you place on such an experience.

Signing up to become a seat filler is not a guaranteed ticket to an awards show. As with most jobs you may need to work your way up. This is done by committing to smaller events, and following a few simple rules. You have to dress to the event. You can't wear your favorite sweater to a tux and tails event. Speak only when spoken to. You can't start a conversation with "the talent". Bring your patience and a thick skin. You may have to hang around in a back room waiting for a seat to empty. Occasionally too many fillers are chosen and you may not be needed. Finally, the whole point of seat filling is to make the home audience believe the seats are filled with "beautiful" people. You have to leave the autograph book and camera at home.

## NOTE-TAKING: SEAT FILLERS

<b>Definition</b>	People who sit in empty seats at a public event
<b>Two Types</b>	People GIVEN a seat to fill during an event, to make it look fuller People who BRIEFLY SIT in a seat, while another person is gone temporarily
<b>Requirements</b>	Application and resume Start at small events, work up Can't start a conversation with 'the talent' No income, pay for travel yourself, no cameras/autographs

**Summary:** People can attend events for free by being a seat filler to give the appearance of a full house.

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### LESSON 8-26 STUDENT HANDOUT

#### ORGANIZING YOUR NOTES

Effective note-taking helps us process and retain the information that is being taught to us every day. Here is an example of the “Two-Column” style of note taking.

- ▶ The notes for each lesson or reading are kept on a separate piece of paper.
- ▶ Divide the blank page into 4 sections, as described below.
- ▶ Top section – list the lecture topic and date.
- ▶ Left section – list the Key Points including main ideas, subjects, or thoughts being taught/presented.
- ▶ Right section – list the Supporting Information that further explains the Key Points. Organize this section using bullet points.
- ▶ Bottom section - summarize the lecture and your notes, using your own words. It is helpful to write a brief summary after every class to help you remember what you have learned.
  - Re-read your notes. Write at least one sentence for every key point you have.
  - Remember, a summary/paraphrase must be written in your OWN words, unless you are making a direct quote.

<b>Topic</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____	
<b>Key Points:</b>  1. First Key Point (subject/idea)  2. Second Key Point	<b>Supporting Information:</b>  1. First Key Point's Supporting Information – additional information /how to/why/when/where  2. Second Key Point's Supporting Information – additional information /how to/why/when/where
<b>Summarization of day's information:</b>  <div style="height: 40px; border: 1px solid black;"></div>	





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### LESSON 8-26 STUDENT HANDOUT

#### TAKING NOTES FROM A READING

Read the story and take organized notes!

##### MRS. WINCHESTER WAS RIGHT

When I was a kid, my parents took my sister and I on a dream trip to Disneyland. On the drive there, we stopped at the Winchester Mystery House - a tourist attraction in San Jose, California. Although I was only 10 years old at the time, I have never forgotten the story of Sarah Winchester, the heir to the Winchester fortune.

After the death of her husband in 1881, Sarah inherited more than \$20 million and drew an income of \$1,000/day from her share holdings in the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. This meant nothing to Sarah, as she grieved deeply over the loss of her husband and an earlier loss of an infant daughter. She consulted a 'medium' to deal with her grief and was told that both her husband and her child had died as a result of a curse on the Winchester family. The curse was placed on them by the thousands who had died from bullets fired from the devastating weapon the Winchester family had created.

The next piece of advice from the medium would guide Sarah for the rest of her life. She said, "You must start a new life and build a home for yourself and for the spirits who have fallen.....You can never stop building the house. If you continue building, you will live. Stop and you will die."

Nice medium. As a result of this experience, Sarah moved from New Haven, Connecticut to San Jose in 1884 and began building a home. She employed more than 20 carpenters who continued construction of the home, 24 hours a day seven days a week for 38 years, until her death in 1922. In the end, Sarah built a residence with over 10,000 window panes, 950 doors, 160 rooms (40 bedrooms), 47 fireplaces, 40 staircases, 52 skylights and three elevators! The maze-like house was intentionally designed to confuse the angry spirits with whom Sarah shared her home. Once a seven story house, much of it was destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The house is a fascinating study of a person dedicated to a spirited mission for life.

Most regard Sarah Winchester as a 'quack'. However, in an abstract sort of way, she was right. We should never stop constructing our own 'house'.

Mrs. Winchester mistook metaphor for reality, poetry for prose, the figurative for the literal. She thought she REALLY had to build a house to serve the human spirit. Perhaps the medium was telling her that the

## TAKING NOTES FROM A READING cont.

pathway from personal grief to health is to use her personal vitality in a constructive manner. Each of us is happiest when we are building new things – friendships, better grades, better skills, better understanding, or new achievements. It is wise to pursue interesting new knowledge and fresh new life experiences. It keeps our spirit alive and vital.

I wonder if Mrs. Winchester's fabulous project enriched her life. Did she ever understand the metaphor in the message of the medium? Did she get a bounce in her step from constantly creating a new blueprint for her home? Did her sadness fade away to be replaced with the pride and vitality associated with a life of constant development? I hope she was proud of what she accomplished.

I also hope that all of us see the metaphor in the message that was Sarah Winchester's life. Nothing that is alive can remain 'the same'. Our inner vitality has to move. If we do not proactively pursue life activities and relationships that foster personal growth, our own energy will eat us up inside. Mrs. Winchester's house and life demonstrates the fabulous things that can be constructed when someone takes the time to honor their own personal spirit. In this most metaphorical manner, she is a blueprint for us all to follow.

## TAKING NOTES FROM A READING cont.

Topic \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Points:**

**Supporting Information:**

**Summary/Paraphrase of day's information:**

### IMPORTANT THINGS TO BE EFFECTIVE IN NOTE TAKING:

- ▶ Figure out the main topic of the lecture.
- ▶ Listen for key words or phrases such as facts and figures, dates, quantities, and explicit instructions.
- ▶ Realize that if you get lost in a lecture, it is okay to ask to back up, if there is no time for this, write a note in the margin where you get confused and ask the teacher after class.



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### LESSON 8-26 STUDENT HANDOUT

#### JOURNAL PAGE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Lesson 8-26 | **NOTE-TAKING: PARAPHRASING**

**Q1:** Do you find paraphrasing easy or challenging? How could you improve your paraphrasing skills?

**Q2:** Can you use this note-taking method in your other classes? Where could it help the most?

**Q3:** How will improved note-taking help you in high school?

**Answers:**

