INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Cornell Notes System

This note-taking system encourages students to read through their notes multiple times, picking out key information to condense their thoughts more each time.

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CORNELL NOTES SYSTEM

Summary

This note-taking strategy has students take notes as they read or listen to new information. Main ideas or essential questions are identified in the left column, then students create notes to support or summarize the main ideas. Finally, the content of the columns is reviewed and ideas are synthesized into a simple statement in the bottom row.

Procedure

1. Have students draw a page-size, upside-down T about 1/3 of the page from the left of their paper, leaving some space at the bottom of the page. This makes a simple table with two columns (the left one smaller than the right) and an undivided bottom row.
2. While going through a reading or lecture, students should first look for the big idea of each section of text and write this in the right-hand column. The teacher often supplies the main ideas as a guide to the text.
3. After the reading or lecture, have students review their notes, pull out key concepts, and write them in the left-hand column. Traditionally, these are written in question form, but whatever works for the students is best.
4. After class, students should review their notes and summarize their ideas into a sentence or two to write in the remaining empty row. This serves as a summary area. If done as an assignment or as a way of teaching note taking, this summary can be filled out in class after students have finished taking notes.

Pauk, W., & Owens, R. J. Q. (2013). How to study in college (11th ed., pp. 262-267). Boston, MA: Wadsworth Publishing.