Academic Advising and Career Education

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The Cornell System for Note Taking

The Cornell system for taking notes is designed to save time but yet be highly efficient. There is no rewriting or retyping of your notes. It is a "DO IT RIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE" system.

1. First Step - PREPARATION

Use a large, loose-leaf notebook. Use only one side of the paper. (you then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture.) Draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches from the left side of you paper. This is the recall column. Notes will be taken to the right of this margin. Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column.

2. Second Step - DURING THE LECTURE

Record notes in paragraph form. Capture general ideas, not illustrative ideas. Skip lines to show end of ideas or thoughts. Using abbreviations will save time. Write legibly.

3. Third Step - AFTER THE LECTURE

Read through your notes and make it more legible if necessary. Now use the column. Jot down ideas or key words which give you the idea of the lecture. (REDUCE) You will