



THE UTILITY OF NOTE-MAKING –A STUDY

N. Samuel Babu, Ph.D.

*Principal Government Mahabubia Girls Junior College, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad-1
Telangana State.*

Abstract

Note-making is one of the most important writing skills which any adult learner needs at the college level. The present investigation was to delineate the perceptions of teachers of English in imbibing the strategies of note-making. A self-made questionnaire was administered on thirty-two lecturers teaching English drawn from Government funded institutions of Hyderabad District in Telangana State. The results indicated that the sample had positive perceptions on the utility of making notes and could impart effective note-making strategies among the entry level students. Implications as well as suggestions for future research were portrayed.

Key words: *Note-taking; Note-making; salient points; passive process; active process; linear and non-linear.*



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Rationale for the Study

Notes are a permanent record of information prepared for seminars, presentations, assignments and examinations. Notes prepared by the method of '**note-making**' or 'note-taking' provide big chunks of knowledge in a clear and succinct way. Notes are an aid to memory. They are virtually a re-creation of main ideas in writer's and speaker's mind. Researchers found that if important information was contained in notes, it had a thirty four percent chance of being remembered. Information not found in notes had only a five percent chance of being remembered (Atkinson, 1999).

Note-making is one of the most important writing skills which any adult learner needs at the college level. It can be used as a basis or foundation for doing other writing exercises like précis writing, summarizing and essay writing (Sarada, 2006). In a nutshell, note making is an advanced writing skill which is acquiring increasing importance due to knowledge

explosion. There is a need to remember at least the main points of any given subject. Making notes is a complex activity which combines several skills.

Note making may be defined as ‘preparing a brief and organized written record of a given material without changing its original meaning and used as an aid to memory’. Note making requires both reading and writing skills (Koneru,2011) Effective note-making is a key academic skill; it is invaluable in helping you avoid plagiarism and study more efficiently.

Note making acts as a useful teaching aid. Relevant information is highlighted and condensed in good notes. Hence, good notes are helpful to pick out the key points on a particular subject. Other people's ideas can be translated in to our own words by making notes. Thus, notes provide a sound platform for better understanding and recall (Shahila, 2015).The dissimilarities can be sketched as follows:

Note-taking	Note-making
Brings no obvious improvement towards the study skills.	Making notes improve the skills in study
Only jotting down points. No interpretation is involved	Helps students to see each point clearly along with its connection with each other
Very less changes are required	Easier to change the notes made
Taking points from one source at a time	Involve taking points from different sources
Less understanding process is involved; the aim is to take notes.	Aimed at making note helps students to understand the topic in a better way
Points given by the source/lecture are taken straightly	Making notes involve summarizing all the information within the points studied.
Taking notes represent the configuration of the whole topic	Making notes help students to capture principal points.
Overall structure cannot be shown as it is still in complex form	Showing of overall structure of subject specific.
Notes are made by sources. Only handmade can be occurred due to time constraint.	Constructed by the learner, often in a most creative form, correlation to the brain ability in strong the facts become smooth.

*Table showing dissimilarities between note-taking and note-making.

Further, Raman (2010) emphatically states that the terms Note-making and Note-taking are used to refer to a process of summarizing information in the form of notes from a given text. When the text is written, the process is called Note-making and when the text is oral it is known as note-taking (Raman, 2010). According to Clara (1996), *note taking* is a passive process which is done at lectures, (copying the words of others word-for-word without thought and discrimination), whereas, *note making* is more active process (reading, questioning, evaluating, summarizing). Thus, note-making is a process of noting down systematically for future reference important information, ideas, facts, view-points, and

arguments contained in a written text. Cultivation of this skill demands from the reader qualities such as quick comprehension, identification of main ideas and their relevance to the occasion, beside the ability to record them quickly and concisely. Eventually, it can be stated that note-making and note-taking are the major storage and retrieval skills. Note-making is a more leisurely activity compared to note-taking.

Literature Review

According to many studies, students who take/make notes perform better than those who do not (Kiewra, 1985). Some researchers found that note taking/making is effective on recalling (Fisher and Harris, 1973; Kiewra et al., 1989; Rish and Kiewra 1990) and assists students' learning (Annis and Davis, 1975; DiVesta and Gray, 1972; Barnett et al., 1981; Kardash and Kroeker, 1989). Note taking/making assists student's learning during both encoding and storage stages (Hartley, 1983; Kiewra et al., 1991, 1995; Peper and Mayer, 1978, 1986).

On the other hand, a number of other studies have found no advantage of taking/making notes. These studies indicate that note taking/making has no significant effect on the general performance of students (Lipsky, 1984). Peper and Mayer (1978) show that while note taking has no effect on general performance, it does have an effect for low capacity students. Thus, the effect of note taking/making may depend on the level of students. Kiewra (1985) suggested that these different results are due to the type of note taking practice. Sometimes students record exactly everything what a teacher says with very little engagement. At other times, students employ "conceptual note taking" (Rickards and McCormick, 1988), summarizing (King, 1992) or self-questioning (Spires, 1993). All these latter types of note taking/making involve significant levels of engagement and are thus more effective (Trafton and Trickett, 2001) (Arsalan, 2006).

In recent decades, studies have shown that when students receive complete lecture notes from their instructors, they achieve higher test scores than when they rely only on their own notes (Kiewra, 1985c; Maqsd, 1980). Ornstein (1994) believes that all students would benefit if teachers deliberately trained their students in note-taking techniques, especially the lower-achieving students. Bakunas and Holley (2001) suggest that note-taking skills should be taught to students in the same manner that they are taught writing or computer skills.

From the above perspective, it is evident that research in India on *note-making* is in its nascent level. Moreover, research done on utility of note-making as an aid to teaching is in embryonic stage and none of the studies could focus on note-making at the entry level and it

seems to be a distant dream. Hence, the present study is undertaken to probe into the usefulness of making notes effectively at the entry level.

Objectives

1. To appraise the perceptions of the teachers of English on note-making at the entry level.
2. To delineate the utility of making notes as an aid to learning English writing at the entry level.

Limitations

1. This study is confined to the perceptions of Lecturers of English working in Government funded institutions at entry level in Hyderabad District of Telangana State.
2. This study is limited to study the techniques pertaining to note-making in English language at entry level in Hyderabad District of Telangana State.

Methodology

The accessible participants in this study were (32) **thirty two** lecturers (male and female) teaching English from Government funded institutions in Hyderabad District. A self-made questionnaire was developed which consist of **ten statements** with due emphasis on note-making.

Discussion and Conclusion

Table.No.2 Questionnaire

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Making notes is a complex activity which combines several skills.	19 59.0	11 35.0	02 6.0	32 100.0
Note-making is a time-consuming activity.	21 65.0	10 32.0	01 3.0	32 100.0
Note -making demands reading comprehension skills.	17 53.0	12 37.5	03 9.5	32 100.0
Note-making is capturing salient points.	23 72.0	07 22.0	02 6.0	32 100.0
Cohesion is the hallmark of note-making	13 40.5	16 50.0	03 9.5	32 100.0
Proper indentation is not necessary	11 35.0	16 50.0	05 15.0	32 100.0
Linear methods are used for easy retrieval.	10 31.5	19 59.0	03 9.5	32 100.0
Non-linear methods make notes strikingly visual	16 50.0	14 44.0	02 6.0	32 100.0
Abbreviations used for brevity	12 37.5	14 44.0	06 03	32 100.0
Reviewing enhances the efficacy of note-making	19 59.0	09 28.5	04 12.5	32 100.0

1. It is evident from the table that a great number of respondents (59.0%) agreed to make notes as a complex activity which combines several skills; the same tone was articulated through the findings of Hartley (1976); Kiewra (1989); Kiewra & Frank (1988); Kiewra, DuBois, Christensen, Kim, & Lindberg (1989).
2. A majority of (65.0%) agreed to the statement that note-making is a time-consuming activity; this corroborates the findings of Cary & Calson (1999).
3. More than half of the sample (53.0%) agreed that note -making demands reading comprehension skills. Van Dijk & Kintsch (1983); A. Piolat et al (2005) have supported this finding, while; Vigner (1991) reported a contradictory result.
4. A good majority (72.0%) of the sample agreed to making notes is capturing salient points. Cary & Calson, (1999) emphasized the same in their findings.
5. Half of the sample (50.0%) agreed to non-linear methods make notes strikingly visual. This supports the findings of Dye, 2000; Fisher & Harris, 1974; Frank, 1984; Gruneberg & Mathieson, 1997; Robinson & Kiewra, 1995; Robinson, Katayama, DuBois, & DeVaney, 1998; Slotte & Lonka, 2000; Titsworth & Kiewra, 2004.
6. More than half of the sample (59.0%) agreed that reviewing enhances the efficacy of note-making. This finding echoes with Friedman, Michael C.(2014).
7. On the contrary, a good majority of the sample (50.0%) disagreed to the statement that cohesion is the hallmark of note-making, but (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) disagrees with this finding. Another (50.0%) opined proper indentation is unnecessary; but Stewart, P. (2007) found a contradictory statement. Further, another, (59.0%) disagreed usage of linear methods for easy retrieval. The works of Robinson, Katayama, DuBois, & DeVaney, 1998; Ruhl & Suritky, 1995; Smith & Tompkins, 1998), amply demonstrated that linear methods are a *sine qua non*. Eventually, (44.0%) disagreed that abbreviations are used for brevity. The works of Boch, 1999; Branca-Rosoff & Doggen, 2003 reflect the contradictory features on this finding.

The findings of the investigation amply demonstrated that has shown a set of consistent findings that the lecturers of English from Government funded institutions from Hyderabad district could imbibe some of the strategies in note-making among the students at the entry level. Further, it was found that the lecturers of English could possess positive attitudes in teaching note-making at the entry level.

These findings have an important implication for lecturers of English in instructional design, particularly because this research study targeted English lecturers who are to instruct their

students to use effective strategies in note-making. An important contribution from this research study is that English language lecturers can raise their professional expertise in note-making strategies although they may have already internalized using some strategies in their mind before.

The present study is not much comprehensive and exhaustive. Hence, it is suggested that further investigations may be focused on self-reflective or meta-cognitive components of note-making, by both teacher and taught, especially in view of the rapid advances in technology and reforms in English education.

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