



## Five Ways to Help Your Students Retain More from Your Presentations

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An effective presentation is a carefully planned progression of thoughts. Notes that identify main ideas, supporting points, contain adequate examples and promote reflection are a desired end result.

Students, who do not know how to record ideas effectively, find themselves at a clear disadvantage. You can take the mystery out of recording lectures and encourage more interactions with your ideas by providing a map of the basic structure in a presentation guide.



Note guides are adaptable for a variety of presentation media and methods. Structure can be provided for presentations making use of handouts, PowerPoint, slide, smart boards or website.

No matter which of the five approaches you use, questions can be added to stimulate interaction with the day's material and reflection on one's own life experiences. "When can you use this information?" and "Where, or under what circumstances, can you use this information?" are classic favorites of mine.

Here are five ways to create a presentation guide:

### 1. Outlines and listings

Outlines or simple listings of main ideas and supporting points for a lecture guide, whether handwritten on a board, projected or duplicated, will provide the framework to guide the recording of notes.

Space can be left for additional points. Since the structure is provided, I find that students can listen more carefully to application and example.

## **2. Mnemonic devices**

A departure from the more traditional outline or listing of key and supporting ideas for a lecture guide is the use of artificial memory devices. Creativity and a thesaurus make the approach easier to use. I have also encouraged my students to improve on my devices.

## **3. Acronyms**

Redesign main points in your lecture to form a memorable word that relates to the theme of your lecture and aid organization of notes and memory. Instead of identifying main points with Roman or Arabic numerals, devise an acronym whose letters relate to each main idea.

If you choose, you may provide additional points, listed numerically, under each letter in your guide, along with appropriate questions.

## **4. Acrostics**

A second approach I've used is a phrase or sentence to organize a lecture note guide. A memorable phrase related to the theme of the lecture is a useful aid for note taking and retention.

The first letter of each word in the phrase should be a reminder of the main idea, which should start with the same letter. A variation or extension of the approach is an acronym for the supporting or major points. I have found this to be less confusing than multiple levels of acrostics or phrases.

## **5. Idea Diagrams**

Finally, the use of diagrams, which present visual relationships between ideas, are useful for visual learners. Graphics, such as sketches, maps, graphs and charts are all highly visual. Charts may use a hierarchy of ideas to illustrate relationships and may also contain a variety of sizes and shapes for each box.