

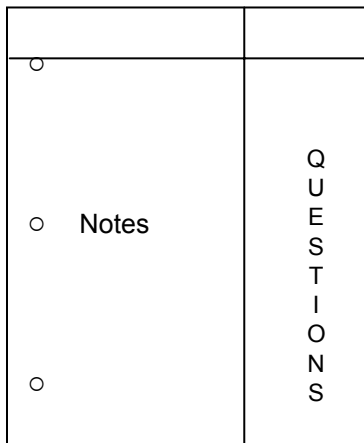
## **EFFECTIVE NOTETAKING: A Modified Version of the Cornell Notetaking System**

Effective notetaking is an essential skill for any successful college student. An effective notetaking system enables the student to quickly and easily review and study the material which has been covered in lecture.

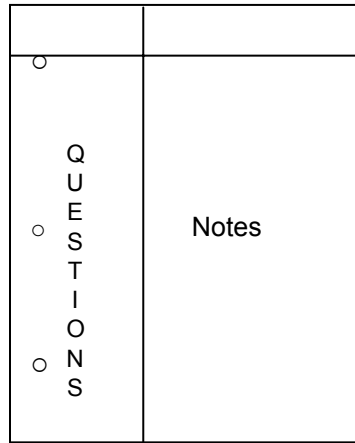
The Cornell Notetaking System has been taught to many college students; however, some students who are taking a full load of classes have found the Cornell Notetaking System to be too detailed to meet their study needs for all of their classes.

SLAC has designed a modified version of the Cornell Notetaking System which allows the student more flexibility in meeting his/her study requirements.

The basic idea is to leave approximately 1/3 of the page blank and to do all notetaking on the remaining 2/3 of the page. The purpose of the blank space is to allow you to write possible test questions, clarify and/or summarize key terms or general concepts. Most students will find it helpful to draw a line down the page separating the notetaking and question sections. Also, you may divide the page on either the right or left side according to whether you are right or left handed. (See example below)



Left-Handed



Right-Handed

The most important part of this notetaking method is what you actually do with the blank space left on your page. This space is for you to predict possible test questions and any necessary summarizing or clarification.

This method will be most beneficial if you know what **types** of tests will be given in each of your classes. Does your instructor give essay tests or multiple choice/objective exams? Does your instructor emphasize general concepts or concentrate on details and facts? In order for your predicted questions to be an effective study aid, you should approximate, as closely as possible, the types of questions you are likely to see on a test. (Easy questions with "snap" answers are a waste of your valuable study time.)

Here is a summary of the steps in our modified version of the Cornell Notetaking System:

1. Divide your paper into two sections by drawing a line vertically down the page. Draw your dividing line so that approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of your page is to be left blank on either the right- or left-hand side according to your preference. (Refer back to example.)
2. Take notes in class as usual, remembering not to intrude on your blank section of the page.
3. Sometime after class, (the sooner, the better) go back through your notes to predict possible test questions, summarize, and clarify any terms or ideas. Remember that your questions should closely approximate the questions you are likely to see on a test!
4. When it comes time to study for your exam, cover up the part of your page that has your notes and use the other part as a self-test or study guide. If you have done your work well, you should be prepared for almost anything that comes your way.

**Good Luck!**