

Effective Listening

The Basics

- Desire to become a better listener.
- Stop talking.
- Look at the speaker.
- Leave your emotions outside of class.
- Get rid of distractions.
- Get the main points.
- Don't argue mentally.
- Listen for what is not said.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions.
- Avoid hasty judgments.
- Recognize your own prejudice.

The Five R's of Note Taking

- ◆ **RECORDING.** Get down the main ideas and facts. Don't try to write down everything that is said.
- ◆ **REDUCING.** To reduce means to summarize. Listen for key terms and concepts. After class, make an outline from your notes. Use the key ideas as *cues* for reciting the details of your notes. On each page of notes you take, allow room to write down these cues.
- ◆ **RECITING.** Review lecture notes as soon after the lecture as possible, while the lecture is still fresh in your mind. Review all your notes every other week and before exams. Recite the information in your own words, so you know you understand it.
- ◆ **REFLECTING.** Many students don't grasp the concept that ideas from college courses are meant to be thought about. It is easy to fall into the trap of reciting ideas by memory. One of the main purposes of a college education is to help you *think*. Take time to think about what you learn, so you won't be surprised when ideas turn up on exams in an unexpected form.
- ◆ **REVIEWING.** One of the real secrets of successful studying is knowing when, how, and what to review. However you do it, reviewing is essential. Even the accomplished performer—the pianist or stage performer—knows that a review, no matter how well he or she may know the material, is key to a successful and professional performance.



Adapted from Gregory Wells, Coordinator, William James Center, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV, NACADA Conference, 1987. Professor Walter Pauk of the Study Center at Cornell University described the five aspects of note taking.