

## **TRANSCRIPTION PODCAST # 5**

Hello and welcome to our series of podcasts on Listening strategies for French Immersion students produced by from the faculty at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa.

This podcast is part of a series to help you improve your listening strategies and provide practical hints on note taking in the context of academic courses in your second language.

### **Podcast # 5: Advice and Good Practices for Note Taking**

This podcast will present some advice for effective note taking. You'll learn or review some of the many different strategies to help you take more effective notes. The goal is to be familiar with the many strategies that students like you have developed to learn course content, and then choose the techniques that suit your learning style the best.

**Student:** How can I make sure I take good notes? Where do I start?

**Prof:** Good note taking begins before your class when you reread your notes from the previous class and prepare the material that will be covered in the next lecture.

In the same way that the first class of each semester is the foundation of the entire semester, so the first few minutes of a lecture usually give the plan or framework of what is to come. Try not to arrive late because the opening moments of a class will give you ideas about what to pay close attention to during the class. Sometimes the beginning of a lecture may just be a review of the previous class – but it will be useful for you to compare the professor's summary with your own summary of that lecture.

Sit near the professor. In general, the closer a student sits to the front of the classroom, the better the notes. Essentially, there are fewer distractions up front, so it's easier to concentrate on the lecture and to ask questions if you do not understand.

**Student:** But I can't write everything the professor says!

**Prof:** Don't try to. It's impossible and it will only frustrate you. Concentrate on the main points and the examples used to explain the points.

**Student:** But how do I recognize the most important points?

**Prof:** When the professor returns to the same idea again and again, you can be sure that's a key point. Usually, the more time a professor spends on the point, the more important it is. Whatever is written on the board or is shown on the screen is probably important.

The professor will often repeat or reformulate the same point in different ways. It's probably not necessary to write down every example the professor mentions; instead, try to articulate in your own words the important points and meaning of what the professor tries to communicate. You

might not understand the point with the first example, but maybe with the second example you will. Try to focus on the point being communicated and write that down.

Be aware of different teaching styles. Some professors don't repeat much. Some of them just read from their notes. When you encounter a professor who likes to repeat a point using different examples, you should be able to recognize this and adjust your note taking to accommodate it.

**Student:** What if I still can't keep up with the lecture?

**Prof:** Leave blank spaces to be filled in later. Don't give up if the lecturer goes too quickly. Incomplete notes are better than none. Also, summaries at the end of the class often contain the main points in a condensed format. Rather than starting to pack up because it is close to the end of the class, pay special attention to summaries. They'll help you in synthesizing your notes.

**Student:** Any tips on how to write faster?

**Prof:** Use common abbreviations and symbols or develop your own. For example: the equal sign means equals. "E" "x" "colon" means an example. You can write "DEF" for a definition, etc...

**Student:** What's the best way to take notes on paper?

**Prof:** If you take your notes on paper, write neatly. If you are naturally a messy writer, make sure you tidy up your writing for your notes. Use lined paper and leave a blank line between each written line. Don't be cheap and try to save paper. Leave wide margins and space your notes out so they will be easier to read and study.

Only write on one side of the page. You can use the blank side of the page to write notes you have taken from your textbook, things you have forgotten to write down or things you have learned while studying. Use one binder for each subject—preferably a ring binder so it's easy to add pages and include handouts. Don't use spiral-bound notebooks because you can't insert the class handouts.

If you use your laptop to take notes, listen to the podcast on New Technology for Note-taking for more tips.

**Student:** What do I do with my notes after class?

**Prof:** As soon as you can, fill in the gaps with the points you remember. If you can't remember, ask friends to lend you their notes. Exchanging notes with your study partners and fellow students helps you learn different ways of taking notes. And, you can check whether you have both judged the same points to be important. Doing this also validates your ability to take notes and may also make you realize that your notes aren't so bad after all.

To conclude, in this podcast you have learned some good practices for effective note-taking. Again it is up to you to find out which of these techniques work best for you and to implement the most useful ones.

Thank you for listening to this podcast on effective listening strategies brought to you by the faculty at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa.

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