Academic Skills Center
at Dartmouth

Annotation

We annotate while reading to:
- Stay engaged and active while reading (not fall asleep or zone out)
- Improve comprehension
- Identify and highlight important concepts for future assessments
- Reduce the amount of notes you are taking

How to Annotate:

○ Box/Circle:
  ○ Isolate keywords/key concepts
  ○ Helps to visually organize the reading (useful for studying)

○ Underline/Highlight:
  ○ Most important quotes or information
  ○ Resist underlining/highlighting too much
    ■ Read the paragraph/section first, then go back to highlight/underline what's most important
  ○ Color-coding allows for differentiating highlighted parts
    ■ such as different colors for definitions, key points, quotes for essay, or whatever system you create

○ In the margins:
  ○ Summarize key points in your own words
  ○ Write your reactions — be in conversation with the text
  ○ Write your questions: both clarifying and probing questions

○ Use symbols
  ○ ? - question
  ○ ! - reaction/connection
  ○ → evidence for an essay
  ○ (summaries)
  ○ Create your own symbol system

See example on the back…

Note Taking, Review, Memory, and Comprehension

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(handwritten: Experiments ① Read text ② Video of text Read)

(handwritten: Hypothesis / Experiment / Conclusion)

In previous work assessing memory at various levels of representation, namely the surface form, textbase, and situation model levels, participants read texts but were otherwise not actively engaged with the texts. The current study tested the influence of active engagement with the material via note taking, along with the opportunity to review such notes, and the modality of presentation (text vs. spoken). The influence of these manipulations was assessed both immediately and 1 week later. In Experiment 1 participants read a text, whereas in Experiment 2 participants watched a video recording of the material being read as a lecture. For each experiment the opportunity to take notes was manipulated within participants, and the opportunity to review these notes before the test was manipulated between participants. Note taking improved performance at the situation model level in both experiments, although there was also some suggestion of benefit for the surface form. Thus, active engagement with material, such as note taking, appears to have the greatest benefit at the deeper levels of understanding.

(handwritten: Backgrd)

(handwritten: 3 types of form)

One of the dominant ideas about language comprehension and memory is that people represent information at multiple levels, namely the surface form, textbase, and situation model levels (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). In short, the surface form is a person's verbatim memory of the words and syntax used. The textbase is a representation of the abstract idea units conveyed by language apart from the surface form. Finally, the situation model is a person's referential understanding of the described events. This serves as a mental simulation and can include inferred knowledge as well as information that was explicitly presented (see also Johnson-Laird, 1983; Zwaan &

(handwritten: ↑ the level that had benefit)

Radvansky, 1998). These three levels of representation are important because they differentially contribute to memory and comprehension (Kintsch, Welsch, Schmalhofer, & Zimny, 1990; Radvansky, Zwaan, Curiel, & Copeland, 2001). The aim of the current study was to assess the influence of increased active engagement with a text via note taking, the opportunity to review such notes, and the influence of modality of presentation.

(handwritten: Study Aim)

The bulk of the work on processing at these levels of representation has focused on the reading of written texts. More recent work on cognition has taken a more functionalist approach, looking at how peo-

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