Take Note!

One of the “notable” skills seen in successful students is the ability to be an active note-taker. There are a number of effective note-taking systems such as the Cornell and mind-mapping systems, and the following is another good one to consider. Take note of the L-STAR system:

L  Listening – Be an active listener by sitting close to the front of the lecture hall. This will allow you to not only see & hear the material, but to pick-up on important cues from the professor such as when he/she becomes excited or animated about the material.

S  Setting it down – You won’t be able to write down every word so develop your own system of notes and symbols to help get down what’s important. The Cornell system is helpful for this task.

T  Translating – Right after class, take some time to translate what was shared in lecture into words and phrasing that are in your own words. Re-write important terms and concepts while they are fresh (… translating a week or more later can be frustrating and confusing).

A  Analyzing – While translating, ask yourself these 2 important questions: 1. what does this mean, and 2. why is it important? Your ability to answer these questions will help you in organizing information in your own mind, in making the material personally meaningful, and in identifying areas of confusion that can be clarified by a professor. Doing this step with another student in your class can also be an effective way to retain information and consider other ways of understanding it.

R  Remembering – Study time … when it’s time to study your notes, you will appreciate the hard work you’ve put in already as you find material to be familiar to you and more easily remembered for tests.