



Using Collaborative Note-Taking to Promote an Inclusive Learning Environment

What is this Research About?

Many students use laptops to independently take notes which can lead to low class-engagement and unhelpful or inaccurate notes. Collaborative note-taking in a classroom has shown to positively influence student learning and comprehension, as well as promote class discussions. In this study, the researcher observed the benefits and disadvantages of the collaborative note-taking approach in a first-year American government class with students from different disciplinary backgrounds.

What did the Researchers Do?

In a first-year American government class, the instructor implemented a collaborative note-taking approach in the classroom. The instructor selected a section leader based on prior experience and qualifications. The section leader designated two different students to take notes during every class. These students could take notes by hand or laptop and were required to post the notes on a shared Google document within 24-hours. The researcher required the rest of the class to take notes by hand. The instructor observed the benefits and disadvantages of the collaborative note-taking method in the course.

What did the Researchers Find?

The instructor found that this collaborative approach helped students establish close relationships in the course. Also, the quality of class discussions improved, promoting student engagement. Students in the class formed a group chat in order to manage note-taking tasks. The students used the group chat to discuss difficult course material, encouraging class communication. The researcher also found that many students used the collaborative notes to cross-reference their personal notes and for missed material.



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Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

Collaborative note-taking can promote class discussion, learning and comprehension, and can provide equal opportunity to students with different disciplinary backgrounds. Instructors could consider using the collaborative note-taking as an effective pedagogical method to create an inclusive and collaborative environment and encourage class discussions.

Tips for Implementing Collaborative Note-Taking:

- Select 2 note-takers for each class period to post their notes to a shared document like Google Docs
 - Encourage the other students in the class to take notes by hand to reduce the distraction of using laptops
- Create a schedule for different note-takers – consider pairing note-takers with more experience or interest in the topic with students with less experience and interest
- Follow a consistent lecture format to help students structure the collaborative notes
 - Include slides like: “What We’re Doing Today” and “Question to Consider”
- Have discussions about the expectations and norms for note-taking

➔ Citation

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➔ Keywords

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