



# Essex County Vocational Schools

## Essex County North 13<sup>th</sup> Street Tech Center

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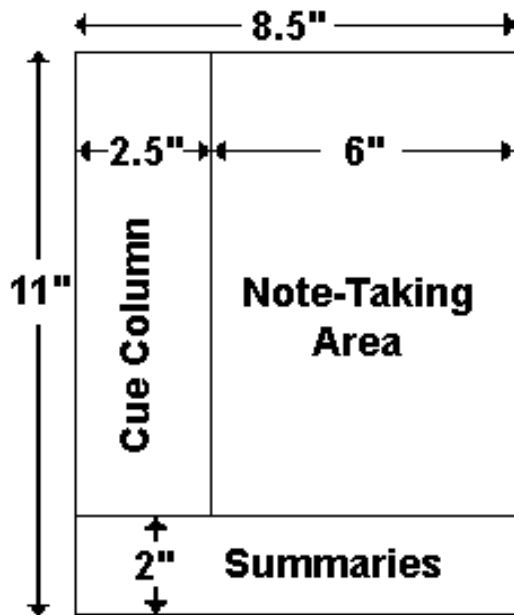
2017-2018

### Cornell Note-Taking Strategy

The Cornell Note-Taking System was designed by Walter Pauk, emeritus, at Cornell University. The Cornell method provides a systematic format for condensing and organizing notes. The student divides the paper into two columns: the note-taking column (usually on the right) is twice the size of the questions/key word column (on the left). The student should leave five to seven lines, or about two inches, at the bottom of the page as shown below to summarize their notes either at the end of class (if time allows) or for homework. The Cornell system helps prepare students for note-taking in college. **All students at North 13<sup>th</sup> Street Tech are required to take notes in the form of Cornell notes.** Students will receive notebook checks which will constitute 15% of their Cycle grade in each academic class.

#### Page Layout:

The distinguishing feature of the Cornell system is the layout of the page on which you take your notes. The page layout includes large margins on the left and bottom of the page. A picture of this layout (not to scale), with dimensions, is shown below



**Cue (Recall) Column:** The space to the left of the vertical margin should be reserved for a cue (or recall) column. You should not write in this area during the lecture, while you are taking notes. The cue column is not created until you review your notes (which, ideally, you do as soon after the lecture as possible, and certainly before the next lecture). As you study the material in your notes, you should devise questions which the notes answer (think "Jeopardy"). These questions are the "cues" that should be written in the cue column. By writing questions, you are forced to think about the lecture material in a way that clarifies meaning, reveals relationships, establishes continuity, strengthens memory, and attempts to predict test and exam items.

**The Summaries:** The area below the horizontal margin near the bottom of the page should be reserved for a summary of the notes on that page. A summary is brief -- at most, only a few sentences. The page summary provides a concise review of the important material on the page. More importantly, in writing a summary, you are forced to view the material in a way that allows

you to see how it all fits together, in a general sense. The summary should be written in your own words... helping you to **own** the information.

**Note-Taking Area:** The space to the right of the vertical margin is where you actually record your notes during the lecture. Pick a note-taking format with which you are comfortable -- there are no hard-and-fast rules for this aspect of the Cornell system. However, you should not attempt to transcribe verbatim every word spoken by the instructor. It is usually not difficult to separate the essential material from the non-essential. For instance, if information is written on the blackboard, it is probably important enough to include in your notes. To avoid missing information during the lecture, you should develop a system of abbreviations you understand, and you should write in telegraphic sentences (where you only include enough words to carry the essential meaning) or similar shorthand that is often used in cell phone text messages. As you take notes, realize that your emphasis should be on the key ideas, rather than the actual words used to convey those ideas.

## Steps for Taking Cornell Notes:

### 1. First Step – PREPARATION BEFORE THE LECTURE

Use a large, loose-leaf notebook. Use only one side of the paper. (You then can lay your notes out to see the direction of a lecture.) Draw a vertical line 2 1/2 inches from the left side of you paper. This is the recall column. Notes will be taken to the right of this margin. Later key words or phrases can be written in the recall column.

### 2. Second Step - DURING THE LECTURE

Record notes in paragraph form. Capture general ideas, not illustrative ideas. Skip lines to show end of ideas or thoughts. Using abbreviations will save time. Write legibly.

### 3. Third Step - AFTER THE LECTURE

Read through your notes and make it more legible if necessary. Now use the column. Jot down ideas or key words which give you the idea of the lecture. (REDUCE) You will have to reread the lecturer's ideas and reflect in your own words. Cover up the right-hand portion of your notes and recite the general ideas and concepts of the lecture. Overlap your notes showing only recall columns and you have your review.

### The Cornell Note-taking System

