The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Arabic Language Arts and Foreign Languages
Department of Foreign Languages
Division of English

Developing Note-Making Techniques as an Effective Factor to Better Learning Outcomes

Case Study: Third Year LMD Students at Mohamed Khider University of BISKRA

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in "Sciences of the Language".

Submitted by:
MESMOUDI Asma

Supervised by:
Mrs. HASSINA Nachoua

Board of Examiners:

Supervisor: Mrs. HASSINA Nachoua

Chairman: Mr. BASHAR Ahmed

Examiner: Mrs. RABEHI Salima

June, 2013

In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the following people:

To you: Devoted Mother; without your love, kindness and patience, I would not reach such or such a level.

To you: Father; I cannot express my gratitude, for your care and tenderness towards me.

To you: Dear Brothers and Sisters; without your support and assistance, I would not finish my work.

To you: Tender aunts, uncles, grandmother and grandfather.

Special Thanks to my Soul mate & Sweetheart: Rania.

Deep Thanks go also to all my dear friends without any exception.

This is too my opportunity to pass my sincere thanks & Faithfulness to all my teachers throughout the whole of my study career.

To Mrs. Graoui Hayat; Words never Relieve.

To all the Students & to all who wish to read my piece of work; I owe you all the pleasure.

And finally,

To all whom I love,

And to all who love me;

It is my Ultimate Duty towards You to Thank & Dedicate.

Acknowledgements

First of all, our great gratitude is to ALLAH, our source of power, our source of inspiration. Without His guidance, we are not capable of doing anything.

Being the Head of our department, all the opportunities and facilities we received are attributed to her: Mrs. Boudiaf. The fact that we had the chance for doing research is in itself a pleasure for which we are opted to thank the English staff.

Our deepest thanks go also to our kind supervisor: Mrs. Nachoua for her unbelievable effort and support throughout all the year; her trust in us to present a worthy work is also appreciated.

Again, we would not ever forget the help of Mr. Bashar who kindly accepted to provide all the room to accomplish such a work. His appreciation and encouragements to carry on my research have greatly stimulated my inner potentials. In addition, his acceptance to welcome me in his sessions; his generosity to give me time to accomplish my observation has significantly impacted my work. So, I shall not abandon such an opportunity to acknowledge him and his third year students for their voluntariness to work with me, especially Hiam and Nesma.

It is also our chance to thank both Mrs. Laadjali and Mrs. Guettal for the facilities they kindly offered to help me in administering my questionnaire. We would not also forget the help and support of the following teachers: Mr. Mezerdi & Mr. Chala in the first place; Mr. Turki, Mr. Meddour, and Mr. Segni, also for their continuous encouragements and help, we do acknowledge.

Because they have sustained me in every possible way, I would like to pass my sincere gratitude first to my parents and, then, to my brothers: Bilal, Imad and Islem. You have been too honest throughout; may ALLAH bless you all.

And Finally I would like to thank my colleagues for their everlasting kindness.

Abstract

Making efficient notes is a vital skill required at many higher educational studies. However, graduate students, as being the focus of this study, need to be made aware of such a skill in order to prove their real qualifiers which enable them to cope with further higher studies or job requirements. This current study, then, aims at spotting light on the positive effects which various kinds of note-making bring to academic success. It tackles and searches mainly for the strong relationship that occurs between using different techniques to make own notes and the qualified recapitulation of the learned material(s), especially in exams. The undergone research depicts the way graduate students at the department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra deal with the learned information, i. e. whether they just take it for granted and give it back to the teacher or they attempt to understand it, reformulate it in own words and style and try to find fruitful ways to reinforce it into memory. On the basis of the above arguments and purposes, this study concerns itself with confirming or rejecting the hypothesis that implementing various strategies of note-making will help in achieving higher and better learning outcomes. The entire research calls for a descriptive study looking for general methods of reviewing the notes through making notes. It also tries to depict the degree of adaptability of various note-making kinds among third year English students by means of a questionnaire administered to forty students, and an observation underwent with nine other students plus a test. Results obtained from the data gathering tools reveals for positive effects of adapting various kinds of making notes on students' ability to retain information, and consequently on their learning outcomes as a desired goal. Therefore, the overall research strongly calls for learning the rudiments such a significant process not only to achieve higher grades but also to persist learning awareness and decision-making capabilities.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. P. : Active Participants

CMaps : Concept Maps

CORE : Collection-Organization-Rehearsal- Evaluation

Ef. L. : Effective Learning

F/B : Front/Back

FD : Field Dependence

FearNot : Fun with Empathic Agent to Reach Novel Outcomes in Teaching

FI : Field Independence

IPT : Information Processing Theory

IQ : Intelligence Quotient

LAB : Language Aptitude Test

LTM : Long Term Memory

MI : Multiple Intelligence(s)

MLAT : Modern Language Aptitude Test

M/O : Mixed/Organized

N. A. : No Answer

N. Ad. : Not Adapted

P. Ad. : Partially Adapted

PACT : Proficiency-Affective-Cognitive-Transfer

SM : Sensory Memory

SQ3R : Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Recall

SQ4P : Survey-Question-Predict-Plan-Prepare

STM : Short Term Memory

WM : Working Memory

% : Percent

LIST OF TABLES

Table: **Page**

LIST OF FIGURES AND CHARTS

Figure/Chart: **Page**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents **Page**

PART TWO: FIELD WORK

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

GENERAL
INTODUCTION

Introduction

Studying at university differs to a great extent from that of high school in the way lectures are delivered, methods of teaching as well as kinds of assessment. Moreover, as learners progress in levels, they tend to be more aware of their needs, characteristics and consequently strategies they adopt for each learning context. This may be due to the attitudes they have about their fields, their previous experiences and their cognitive abilities. Thus, learners must depend on themselves developing personal learning strategies.

Most learning procedures result in examinations presented generally in written forms. Hence, a significant process as revision should precede any exam, though it is thought to be done regularly after receiving any piece of information for the sake of reinforcing the memory, checking the understanding and eventually the adequacy of the information being recorded (Robertson & Smith, 1987). For doing so, learners are likely to refer back to own or dictated notes they have taken in lectures, handouts they have received from tutors, and possibly other resources as encyclopedias, dictionaries, and so on.

As a supporting aid to effective revision, note-making is one of the techniques a learner may adopt to remember and consolidate information. Making notes is then an active process in which creativity and other cognitive skills as critical thinking occur (Price & Maier, 2007); the learner hereby is free to choose his strategies dealing with the subject being revised. For example, a traditional way is to summarize the lectures in forms of paragraphs or essays. Another way is to have the notes in forms of tables, charts, diagrams, mind maps…etc. Furthermore, the skill of making efficient notes plays a big role in the retention of information as the learner is making his own synthesis of the lesson, creating mental images of concepts through mnemonics, key words and phrases and understanding the overall themes of the subject and their main ideas through mind maps or other forms of notes.

Statement of the Problem

As a matter of fact, each learner has his own way to revise; however, the worth of revision varies as learners vary in their styles, strategies and mental capacities. For example, one would follow an organized schedule to revise given tasks. For another, revision is a chaos process happening at any

time without selection of needed information. Moreover, a learner is able to memorize chunks of information just by reciting important ideas; another would find it difficult to recite without accompanying it with a written script of different forms and manners. Thus, coming to revise their lectures, some learners tend to write every piece of information; this is because they do not know what to revise and what to leave.

It was noticed from graduate learners' answers in written exams that they still use traditional ways to revise their lessons. For instance, they gave back the exact explanation of the teacher, what (s)he exactly dictated to them or what they have learnt by heart from handouts sometimes without even understanding the subject. This leads to bad consequences among learners adopting these techniques reflecting their failure to answer well in exams.

Throughout this study, we will attempt to investigate why graduate students fail in making efficient notes while revising, and use note taking as an alternative and how this traditional way still affects their final outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The current study examines the different techniques learners adopt to make efficient notes while revising. In other words, the way students select the most important information they think are relevant as well as the act of noting them down and organizing them in such a manner. Also, we attempt to see the significance of making notes in reinforcing the meaning, consuming time and effort to revise and in facilitating the recapitulation of what has been revised while examination as the visual picture of the lesson is stuck to learners' minds. Besides, we are seeking to encourage graduate students to develop this crucial skill not to be passive receiving information and reusing it in exams. It attempts to consider the learner as a dependent entity building his own thinking skills to summarize lectures in a meaningful form and being able to relate/make connections between the different parts of a given lecture. Making notes also help learners differentiate misleading terms through making mental associations with meaningful notes represented in mnemonics, acronyms. Another purpose of carrying

out this research is to see which kinds of notes works better for which subject. For instance, the forms of notes made to revise a linguistic lecture are different from those made to revise any other module.

Research Questions

In an attempt to discover how learners organize their revision, deal with the materials they have at hand and the techniques they apply for revising each lecture, a set of questions were raised in this research:

- Is there any relationship between the subject being revised and the choice of different note making techniques?

- How does the nature of lectures determine the kinds of notes learners make for their revision?

- How efficient are developed note-making techniques in the revision process?

- To what extent developed note-making techniques affect learners' memorization of lectures and consequently their outcomes?

Research Hypotheses

Making notes for learners who are unfamiliar with is a hard task to accomplish. They often copy the same wording of the teachers' dictation on lectures and paste them on the examination sheet as an easy and intelligent way to satisfy the teacher. However, this strategy does not work all the time since the learner may skip or forget a significant word or idea.

Trying to spot light on the effectiveness of different note making techniques on the retention of information and the well memorization of key concepts, we have proposed the assumed hypotheses that:

- If graduate learners integrate developed note-making techniques effectively in their revision procedures, then their outcomes will increase.
- If different techniques of making efficient notes are applied by graduate learners, then their capacity to memorize and recapitulate well the learned material will develop.

Research Methodology

Choice of the Method

The research seeks to see the effectiveness of making notes in the revision process for the sake of remembering information and consequently its impact on the outcomes of learners.

The method used to undertake this study is the descriptive one. It is used to describe problems related to teachers, students, administration…etc. and thought to be the best one because it combines both introducing what is going on and quantifying the variables using different means of data collection. Thus, we have chosen it for we are going to describe the various note making techniques learners use for revising different tasks, trying also to discover how learners use their materials to revise and how this affects their outcomes.

We have not applied the experimental method because the study does not suggest a new strategy or treatment to be applied and tested though it uses some kinds of quantitative tools such as the use of an observation checklist and a descriptive test.

Population and Sampling

Trying to treat the problem of note making and its impact on learning outcomes, we investigated third year students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra who share the same specialty (in our case: 'Sciences of the Language'). There are nine (09) groups in this specialty of an approximate number of students (38) in each group.

The sample is going to be chosen randomly forming groups of participants liking to contribute (that is to say; volunteer sampling). Yet, it is quite difficult to control the variables especially if the observation is to be made in a lecture where the whole population is present. So, we suggest to form a group of forty (40) participants as a representative of the whole population to which we distribute the questionnaire, and to form another group of nine (09) participants on which we observe their reactions towards the revision process and the strategies they apply in accordance with styles of recording notes during lectures.

Data Collection

As the study concerns itself with the effect of developed note making techniques on learning outcomes, we try to measure these two variables depending on students' ability to recall information and to respond effectively in exams.

Data Gathering tools

The data obtained to value the research, test the hypothesis and to answer the research questions will be gathered by means of a questionnaire distributed to third year students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra and an observation of the same sample during a revision session in the didactics course. We also tend to evaluate learners' performances according to the techniques they adopt in making notes while revising; this is done through comparing learners' achievement in the ‘didactics’ course in terms of the learning style to answer different tasks.

- The Questionnaire

A questionnaire will be administered to 40 students, third year graduate level, seeking to know their attitudes towards their learning strategies, their methods of revision, techniques of making notes they adopt for each learning context, effective factors for academic success and other related questions. The questionnaire will be prepared only for students since the focus is on learning strategies and no longer on teachers'. Questions will vary between close-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions are used to guide learners and obtain specific information; however, open-ended questions are to have opinions and attitudes towards a phenomenon.

- The Observation

In order to see how learning outcomes are affected by the various techniques of note making used in revision, an observation will be done in order to examine the real situation and to support the data obtained from the questionnaire. Observation is a more vivid data gathering tool as the problem can be easily noticed. The researcher may, indeed, face a problem of artificiality given that participants feel a sense of being investigated and consequently would not obtain the expected results. To avoid this problem, we will use different ways to observe the materials and techniques used by learners to make

notes, either with the help of the teacher asking his students to prepare for a revision session and/or asking learners indirectly to bring some of the materials from which they revise. Also, an observation of students' marks is required comparing those who make efficient notes in a developed way and those who take random notes revising their lectures.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from learners' questionnaire and the observation will be analyzed through percentages, tables and graphs.

Significance of the Study

Making efficient notes is one of the significant methods adopted within the revision process. For instance, having a kind of developed note making techniques will help learners get a clear idea about the lectures when coming to undertake any examination for it provides them with a well understanding of the material, a well mental organization of the lecture and a guaranteed retention of information. Moreover, adapting the suitable techniques of note making for revising each task is effective depending on the nature of the lecture, the materials to be used for revision, the probable type of questions asked in exams and the expected type of answers required for each task.

General Limitations

This Study tackles mainly the effect of developed note making techniques on learning outcomes. Thus, the focus will be on the importance of such techniques during revision since learners have much time and opportunity to do so rather than during lectures when learners are confined to the teacher's style of delivering the lecture and time limits that make it difficult sometimes to record the lesson and write the notes in an organized manner.

Choosing as a case study third year LMD students was due to their mid position in advanced studies. That is to say that they approach a certain level of maturity which enables them to make decisions and to establish cognitive strategies unlike either the two previous levels (first and second year), not yet able to make own notes, or Master students expected to be skillful in doing so.

Organization of the Work

Trying to see the impact of integrating developed note making techniques within revision procedures on learning outcomes, the research is divided into two parts: The theoretical part and the practical one. The first part is a review of the literature containing two chapters. Chapter one discusses mainly the issue of note making: its purposes, techniques and relation to other skills. Chapter two tackles the different factors leading to academic success, learners' differences and revision procedures and strategies. The second part consists of one chapter in which we use two data gathering tools. The first sub-part is the analysis of students' questionnaire including the design and procedure; whereas the second sub-part is the analysis of data obtained from the observation after introducing its steps and materials. The study concludes by answering the questions, confirming or rejecting the hypothesis and providing some suggestions and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCING THE NOTE-MAKING TECHNIQUE

Introduction

Coming to realize the different processes a writer might follow is a significant task that should be designed carefully. One of the most important steps in the writing process is note making which encompasses higher cognitive skills as well as good summarizing strategies, which is again combined of both: listing the main points of the material being noted down and having speed writing skills. Making effective use of notes is governed by some principles so as for the new formation of data to be more organized, meaningful and more interesting. Moreover, having the characteristic that the note maker should be actively involved has made it different from the process of note taking; such involvement may have its impact either on the learning process in general or, in particular, on getting the valuable use of the information provided. Maintaining the brevity, the clarity and readability of the notes are the most important features of good notes; this has made it stand out from any recording process of information besides the creative and personal choice of the type, the presentation style and the materials to be used in doing so.

Furthermore, the note maker should be made aware of the purpose behind his writing; otherwise, (s)he may be lost being unable to define what sort(s) of notes shall (s)he use or even what style of presentation to be required in some situations. Determining the objectives behind making notes is essential for shaping the kind and form of the notes being used; this becomes clear from doing a sort of comparison between the notes taken by a student in a lecture and that made by another student summarizing a passage at home or tackling a revision session in a preparation for an official exam, for instance. Not only choosing the type and form of notes is helpful for and individual to fulfill certain objectives, but also choosing the appropriate types of papers and keeping suitable folders to preserve the notes from any lost is required. For example, the use of A4 papers is widely common among university students who usually store their notes in relevant folders. A

significant point that should be discussed at length in this chapter tended to be that of implementing the different techniques of note making on the main processes of learning, namely recording information during lectures and then, rearranging the notes in a more organized way by revising lectures through making notes in personal formats. All these points and more specific details are discussed mainly trying to have a global view of all what concerns note making as an essential process.

I. 1. Definition of Note Making

Before coming to define note-making as a term, we are likely to agree that it is an inseparable part of the writing skill, as one of the productive processes. Such a process includes variety of steps a writer might follow to compose a piece of writing. However, scholars have different views when coming to situate making notes as a significant step. Hedge (2005), for instance, stated that it is a part of the planning process where the writer jots down information making either a detailed outline notes or a mental one. Another view by Willis, (2007) claiming that it is a reviewing and a reinforcing activity through which the learners record and share personal thoughts, and relate the newly learned information with that existed in their schemata. Spratt, Pulverness and Williams (2005) in another hand, consider it as a stage coming after a writer makes brainstorming and before he even starts to plan and organize his ideas.

Note making is defined by Robertson and Smith (1987) as: "a creative process with a greater degree of discretion as to what is to be included, what is to be excluded and what form the notes are to take" (p. 36). It is then, a personal act of selecting useful information choosing an appropriate way of presentation. Hack (2008), in his course handbook: "MSc in Biomedical Sciences distance learning", offered a similar definition adding the effective factor a learner plays in creating an active recording of information. In addition to the previous definitions, such a remarkable note by Price and Maier (2007) may attract our

attention to the skills needed to accomplish different academic activities as far as the act of making notes is concerned; they refer to those skills as being 'generic' including: selecting useful information, eliminating less important information, summarizing, critical thinking, reflecting (or reflection) and analyzing. Besides, they have emphasized the quality of information being recorded not on its quantity. Moreover, Seely (2005) defines it as a valuable way of recording information and ideas after having carefully read a text and fully understood its main components.

In the light of the above definitions and explanations by previous scholars, one would make a composite definition to note making as: the active process of noting information down in personal but meaningful formats fulfilling appropriate purposes, as the note maker is to attain highly levels of cognitive abilities being able to reach his goal.

I. 1.1. Note Making vs. Note Taking

Apparently, the terms Note making and Note taking seem to be of no difference since the main activity of recording information is required and the purposes behind doing such processes may seem alike in both processes; therefore, many would use the two terms interchangeably.

Technically speaking, a slight distinction should be made concerning the main features of both processes depending on the purposes, to whom the notes are taken or made and how are the notes presented. Robertson and Smith (1987), for example, emphasized on note making in their study suggesting the evidence that personal notes are more effective rather copying information from a blackboard or whatever source. This does not ignore the advantages of originality provided in taking or copying notes word for word such as facts, definitions…etc, but would appear a passive process being a 'mechanical task'. It is clear, then, that deciding the importance of information depends mainly on personal preference after having exposed to a lecture; and this what Price and Maier (2007) claim for, assuring

the significance of selecting the appropriate notes as a result of own analysis and summary of what has been heard.

Scholars such as Seely (2005); University of Bradford (2006); and Hack (2008) agree that effective note making should be characterized by the following points:

- Notes should be easy to read and understand when referring to them at a later date.

- Notes should be related in structure and content to the purposes for which are made.

- Notes should both contain information and show its significance.

- Notes should review, synthesize and link ideas extracted from a lecture or a reading passage.

- Notes should be presented in a readable and creative way that helps sticking them in mind.

- Notes should be brief containing the main themes and/or key points of a lecture or a reading material.

In the other hand, note taking is regarded as the pre-stage of recording information in a descriptive way, commonly used in lectures tackling new subjects. It is the process that leads to note making after reviewing the notes been taken, (University of Bradford, 2006).

I. 2. Purposes of Making Notes

When a person writes, he does not write without having an intention to fulfill. Thus, making notes can serve for a variety of tasks either for personal, academic or occupational purposes. Given that the most field where making notes seem to be crucial is studying at the university, much emphasis has been put towards this skill. Starting with Robertson and Smith's (1987) explanation of why learners make notes, learners are to determine their objectives of making notes according to the current situation they are in. For instance, one may be motivated to take notes from a lecture that is badly delivered for the sake of maintaining concentration; here, the listener might be well knowledgeable about the topic

but doing so is just to add/store new information. Another purpose behind making notes is to gather information from different sources, select needed information, and to organize them in preparation for an essay writing or revision purposes; this happens after having effectively read enough and relevant materials. As a support to what has been proposed by the two above scholars, here are other reasons that can be drawn upon the University of Bradford 's (2006); Price and Maier's (2007); and the University of Otago's (2008) arguments:

✓ Making notes can be helpful in reinforcing memory provided that key points, definitions, terms are highly and carefully selected.

✓ Making notes can also act as memory 'joggers' or memory aids, owing the fact that summarizing what has been learnt in own words provides a well recapitulation of information, and this is can be as a result of understanding the lecture and making decisions of its key elements and themes.

✓ Making notes also helps in keeping learners' concentration in large lectures where there might be some distortions as being unable to hear the lecturer or skipping a significant point in the lecture for one reason or another. Also, matching different processes at one time being able to listen, understand and paraphrase in own words.

✓ Making notes helps learners shape their own ideas and state their points of view towards a specific topic or theory, as such, through making critical comments.

✓ Making notes helps in activating learners to be engaged in the learning process by organizing and presenting their information in a meaningful way. The fact that making logical connections between the lectures' parts is also appreciated in this process.

I. 3. Techniques of Making Notes

As we have seen that there are many reasons for why a person makes notes, the same remark is for what are called 'Note Making Techniques' and/or types of notes. Choosing

the kind of notes and the way of presenting it is by no doubt a sort of personal preference as to which form will provide the note maker with a better grasp of information as well as stands for his interests and needs. However, there are certain conventions one would follow in specific situations for better reaching what is expected.

I. 3. 1. Types of Notes

The act of immortalizing one's ideas or thoughts into written symbols or graphs differs from one person to another depending on the purpose of writing and for whom the notes are being made. Generally, notes can be classified under three major groups, and each group may be divided into sub-group(s). Notes can be either linear (bullet), visual (pattern) or voice notes (University of Bradford, 2006); however, being restricted to only these types would seem insufficient though they are nearly the basic elements of each writing; mnemonics also could be a kind of notes.

I. 3. 1. a. Linear/ bullet Notes

This is the most known type of notes used by almost everyone. As its' name indicates, this type is characterized by the use of continuous sentences, separated points, half-sentences (e.g. phrases), or even the use of abbreviations. This latter is widely common and used among learners attending huge lectures, in which tutors feel the necessity to deliver their lectures at a speed pace. Thus, students are obliged sometimes to omit unnecessary words such as articles and pronouns, as well as contract some words using either: symbols and abbreviations that are related to their fields (e.g. in Chemistry: C stands for Carbon), common symbols and abbreviations (e.g. 'that is to say' can be referred to as 'i.e.') and/or personally constructed symbols and abbreviations that best represent certain words or phrases (Wallace, 2004). Furthermore, linear notes is the traditional way of writing in lectures, summarizing key points being heard or read and that of revising particular sets of information. Listing is also a sub-way of linear notes.

I. 3. 1. b. Visual/ pattern Notes

Such kind of notes is more personal and creative than other types of notes. As its name indicates, visual notes are presented in mental image forms to solve different problems in learning and education, for it provides the learner with an effective way of linking ideas, parts of lectures and elements of discussion in a highly cognitive way. Such an organization would be helpful because the before-mentioned points are linked and connected in a very specific and attractive way in the learners' mind (University of Bradford, 2006); visual notes are then, effective aids to reinforce memory, given that they are meaningful to the person making them and easy to be retained (Price and Maier, 2007). Moreover, they can take various formats since the process is a matter of personal choice; what is worth important is the fact that the notes themselves fit the presentation styles. Ideas are generally presented in forms of diagrams and mind maps (*ibid*).

I. 3. 1. c. Voice Notes

This type of notes as the University of Bradford (2006) asserted is closely directed to auditory learners who learn better by hearing. Voice notes help much better in memorizing information, especially if the notes are a result of summarizing what have been heard in own words. Again, this is another basic evidence as to what is personal would be much easier to recall, because listening to one's own voice or recording will aid in a guaranteed storage of the material being revised. Furthermore, the ability to replay the record as many times as you wish and need is another beneficial characteristic from recording information and making notes as result of synthesizing and warming up the main ideas (*ibid*).

I. 3. 1. d. Mnemonics

Although mnemonics (mind that the letter 'm' is not pronounced) are not, in themselves, a specific type under which the notes may fall, they are considered as such for they provide the note maker with a particular and personal kind of notes that are used

generally to remember pieces of information. Wallace (2004); Davidson (2005); and the University of Bradford (2006) agreed that mnemonics are aids to memory that are formed by means of personal choice of symbols, images, words or even phrases; what is worth significant is that the aid would serve a clear and meaningful support to the writer despite the fact that the notes seem silly to someone else.

Furthermore, mnemonics can be made up through different ways suiting the appropriate purpose; it can be considered as a kind of a word game as to how the note maker solve his learning problems in an intelligent way. Such techniques as being provided by Wallace (2004); Davidson (2005); and the University of Bradford (2006) include: (i) forming rules that rhyme (e.g. *i* before *e* except after *c*), (ii) attributing information with pictures, either kept in mind or drawn in a paper, so as for the idea to be consolidated (e.g. one would think of an aid to remember the definitions of the two misleading terms: the 'signifier' and the 'signified' by imagining a picture of an 'ear' receiving a 'sign' (sound): -ier = ear, for the former term, and by drawing a picture of an 'eye' in our minds receiving a sign (image): -ied = eye = eyed in the mind, for the latter term), and (iii) creating new words, phrases or even sentences by taking the first letters from a series of words or points to be memorized and try to link each letter with the relevant item.

The last strategy of making mnemonics tends to be the easiest and common way among learners, because it is not quite simple to create a rhythmic pattern or a mental image for each piece of information you constantly receive.

Following the above scholars' call for mnemonics, a set of other researchers have added more details to the importance of pictures and cognates to remember vocabulary in particular. Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary and Robbins (1999); and Hedge (2000) discussed this issue raising the significant role that personal mental processes of imagination is more reliable than other strategies of remembering, because linking new lexis with an existing

one followed by a mental connection with relevant images form a solid reinforcement of meaning, especially when the key word and the target one sound the same, or is its equivalent in the target language. Furthermore, cognates are also useful for vocabulary recognition using existing knowledge, as well. Cognates are not far away from visual representation of words, but are usually connected with words formation such as prefixes, suffixes, roots…etc.

Thus, mental pictures and parallel equivalent words provide strong evidence that personal making of effective notes of any sort is a reliable strategy of remembering information.

I. 3. 2. Presentation of Notes

We have seen in the previous sub-title that there are basically three kinds of notes, namely four (04), which are used by every writer in his composing any piece of writing. What is also worth considerable to be carefully studied and designed is how these notes should be presented in such a way, or in other words, what format(s) should the notes at hand are to take. Of course one would claim that writers have the choice to deliver their notes the way they prefer since the objective is to express ideas, opinions, or even to fulfill personal needs, and since the focus is on the content of the composition not on the form itself, but given that the nature of some pieces of writing lead to the way of presentation as the writing of an essay, for example, requires a specific presentation form. It is then, to determine first the purpose of making those notes and to whom those notes have been writing so as to determine the presentation style(s) that conveniently suits. In fact, there are many presentation styles that our notes may take, either those which have been commonly known and used by the majority of writers, or those which have been designed as a result of own creation and have been organized in a peculiar way.

The presentation styles that are listed here are a mixture of both conventional styles and personal ones:

I. 3. 2. a. Conventional Notes

Conventional notes is the widely common and spread style of presenting the notes, being used either during lectures and seminars, for essay writing, in writing reports, curriculum vitas, emails…etc, and even for revision purposes; this traditional way of revising strategy that the majority of learners tend to use. Even though the notes are presented in a form of continuous lines or sentences, the structure of the writing varies as long as the purpose of writing is not the same and since each type of writing has a specific format to follow.

Choosing to use this old or, at least, this available and easy form of presenting information, as Robertson and Smith (1987) claim, is by no way a matter of habit that all learners have grown with along their learning career. It can work well for some writers and in certain positions, yet it is not the best one in other situations where the placement of certain ideas or notes should be carefully stated, and clearly appear to show the degree of its position and importance. However, this does not mean that the use of this style is not helpful in distinguishing important elements of the written material, rather could be solved through the use of colors, capital letters, and underlinings. In the other hand, better presentation styles stand for clarifying connections between the material's items. Moreover, conventional notes require much more space and tools, that is to say, there is the freedom to write and add as many details and comments as necessary, and there is no limits to the number of papers needed to list information. It is true that critical comments and supporting details are of great importance, yet being neglected by others for they only waste time and paper if they are overused. One of the advantages of conventional notes is

the ability to modify or add to the text at any time and in any point of the writing. This style is also known as the "summary method or style" (Robertson & Smith, 1987).

I. 3. 2. b. Patterned Notes

Also called "the linear pattern" of notes, "listing" or "outlining method", in which information is presented in a hierarchical form listing ideas according to importance and priority. One way of doing this is presenting first the main headings and titles, then the subsidiary ones in a way that clearly shows the state of each detail. Robertson and Smith (1987); Price and Maier (2007); and the University of Stanford (n.d.) emphasize the well-organized feature of such a style, having the notes in patterns of ideas, and also highlight its usefulness in many disciplines of study and requires high level of listening and summary skills. Patterned notes is an easy way to contract unnecessary details and leave out traditional habits of recording the whole lecture, trying to overcome all the points mentioned. One sample of this Note making technique is presented underneath:

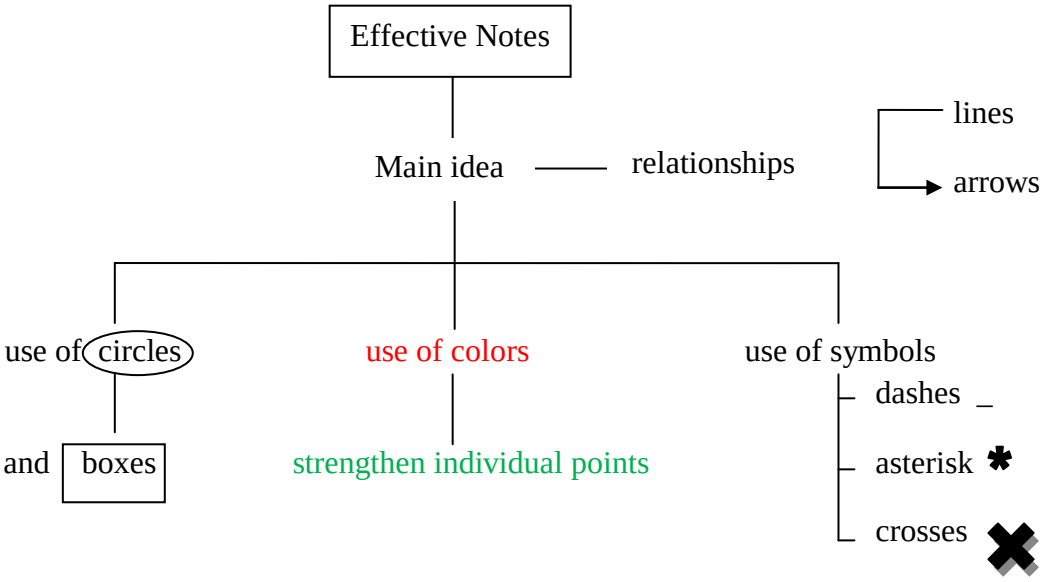


Figure 01: A Sample of Patterned Notes

(Robertson and Smith, 1987)

Besides the use of different clarifying tools such as those mentioned in the diagram, other supporting aids may be helpful including the use of numbers or letters to show steps, procedures and categories; highlighting specific points in patterns is also another advantage that typically work better for future revision. However, personal symbols and tools have been always the effective learning ones for each individual. In addition, guided additions that may appear afterwards may be included given that they are brief and concise (Robertson and Smith, 1987).

I. 3. 2. c. Grids and Tables

If one is to organize the information or points he has at hand into categories, grids and/or tables are, then, the suitable ways of doing so. The university of Otago (2008), following this idea, suggest that there are three types of tables: grouping tables, typology tables and category tables. This technique allows the note maker to compare and analyze data in a systematic way depending on the nature of the lecture; it is then restricted only to specific types or domains of study. What is characteristic of categorizing points in grids and tables is having the global picture of the lecture before even coming to group ideas that need reformulation and restructuring. Furthermore, users of this format of presentation should be prepared beforehand so as for the process of making the effective notes would be in parallel with the smooth running of the lecture (Price and Maier, 2007).

I. 3. 2. d. Branching Diagrams

This kind of diagrams provides a clear visual relationships between and among ideas where those latter are linked in a careful organization. Although branching diagrams are like patterned notes having the hierarchical and paramedic form of ideas, such kind is more structured, and is related mainly to a branch form including supporting points which range generally from one main idea as the diagram in the next page illustrates:

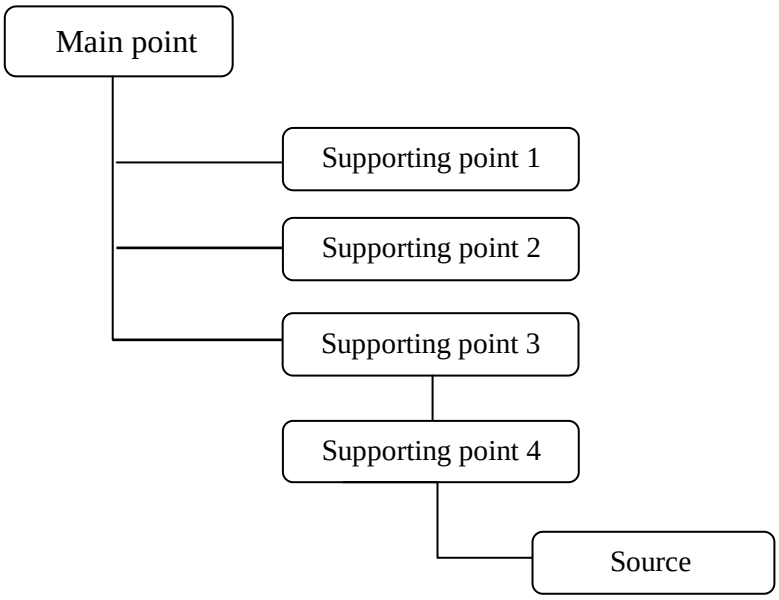


Figure 02: A Branching Diagram

(University of Bradford, 2006)

I. 3. 2. e. Flow Charts

If a summary of such a process is needed, flow charts are, then, the suitable presentation style of such kinds of information. Adding what is used in a given chart such as boxes, circles or arrows depend on the number of the steps or elements presented. Flow charts require organizing the steps of something and ordering them according to their priority and state in the process; numbering the steps is the only way to have them in an ordered manner.

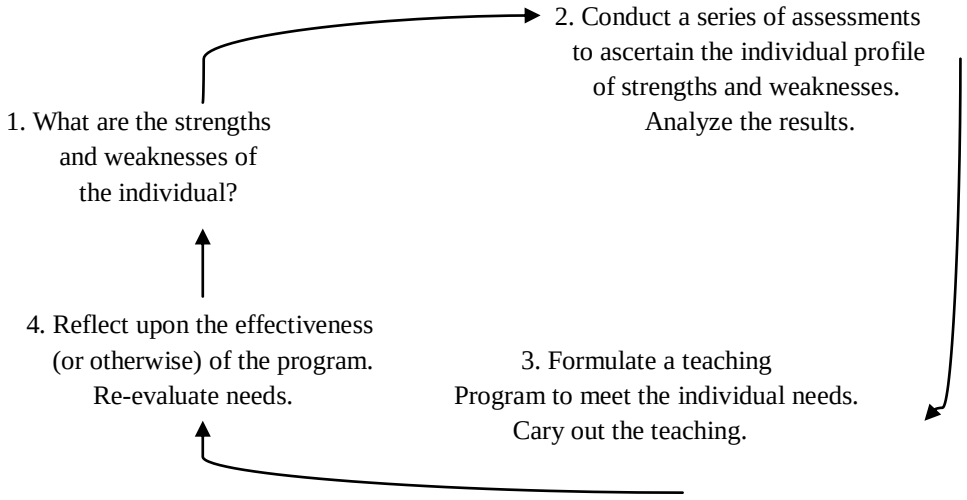


Figure 03: A Flow Chart of the Assessment-Teaching Procedure

Adapted from (Price and Maier, 2007).

I. 3 .2. f. Mind Maps

This style, which is also referred to as "the mapping method", of presenting the notes is thought to be the best way to reach better results, especially if used for revision purposes; whereas, considering it as one the key elements of successful learning does not necessarily mean that it works for all learners, it may only help visual learners who learn and remember better by seeing; mental images that are sometimes associated with drawings in the mind map are also appreciated in this presentation style which seems complex (Price and Maier, 2007), but experiencing this art with time will make it a fruitful idea and a habit for such kinds of learners. According to the University of Bradford (2006), a 'hand-drawn' map is more dependent on and helpful than those which are ready for use and seem to be attractive. The idea of mind maps was first introduced by Tony Buzan in the 1970's during the time when educationalists attempted to find solutions to certain problems, especially to those related to memory and forgetting information. Buzan's idea of mind maps had attained a great popularity among different kinds of people including learners. He suggested that besides their motivating factor that allows users to enjoy their work, mind maps provides an ability to recall and retain information even in non-favorable conditions. Encouraging people to benefit from this innovative style, Buzan tried to train minds to work with all its capacities, claiming that the traditional use of the brain's left hemisphere should be accompanied by training the head with some motivating features of the right one, such as the use of pictures, colors and rhythm. In the page after, an example mind map is presented:

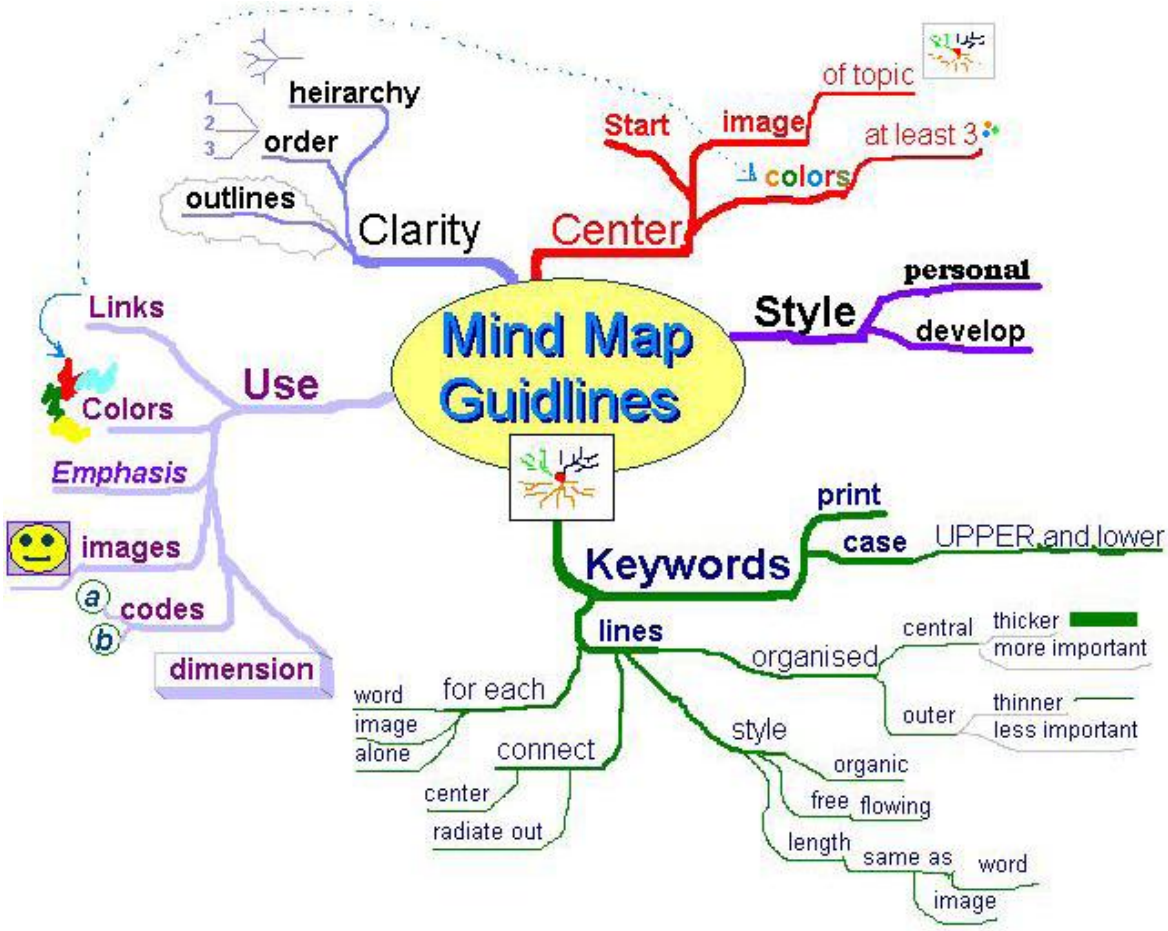


Figure 04: A Sample of Mind Maps.

Adapted from Wikipedia (in University of Bradford, 2006)

In the sample mind map above, a main idea, at the center of the paper prepared, tend to be the focus or the goal to be reached, other sub-focus points appear bit by bit using lines, or better saying 'branches', which then start to be thinner as the drawing begin to develop. What are worth attractive in mind maps are the colors used to beautify it and, indeed, discriminate various points and elements of focus. The useful advantage that pictures add to mind maps, particularly in stimulating the person's mind to a deep and critical thinking allowing it to go beyond the current situation walls into the imagination world, has also Furthermore, Buzan (1994) suggested some hints as to how people could develop a good

mind map such as turning the paper to its horizontal side so as it gives more space to the drawing; further additions are required as patterns appear to be necessary. Giving a life-like form to the mind map will, therefore, sustain the reinforcing aspect of such a style. For example, using variations of lines' spaces and branches' sizes clarifies more the global and even the detailed associations between and among ideas. Moreover, using key words and specific codes add, in one way or another, a guaranteed reinforcement of ideas. Buzan (1994) has also raised the importance of linking the branches with the central idea or image, because attaching the lines in a logical order will make it easier for the brain to make associations and link ideas

I. 3. 2. g. Concept Maps

Or in other word, "concept mapping", indicates the use and focus on several main concepts, where the difference between this style and the previous presentation style lies. Unlike mind maps that put into emphasis only one major topic at the centre of the paper, 'Concept Maps' (CMaps) are more related with linked concepts that form at the end a network form. This style is more complex than any other technique because having many central concepts at the same time will make it difficult to remember the links between these points and, therefore, will be misled. However, positive effects have been ranged from the use of CMaps in learning having the advantage of answering specific questions called "focus questions". Another characteristic of CMaps is that users may choose only one type of notes, that is to say, the use of only pictures and drawings in one CMap or the use of only linear points (one word or two) to represent concepts (University of Bradford, 2006).

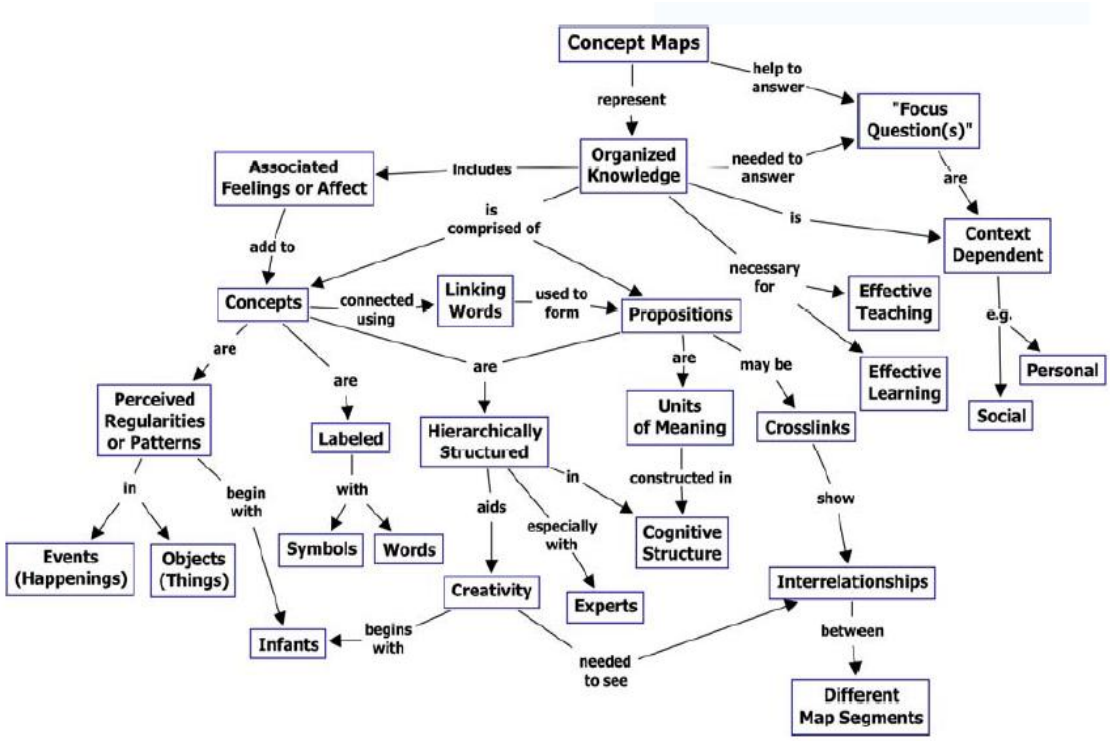


Figure 05: A Sample CMap Using Linear Notes.

(University of Bradford, 2006).

I. 2. 3. h. The "Cornell Method"

This is thought to be the usual method adapted in lectures to organize the ideas in a structured way. It was first introduced over 40 years by Professor Walter Pauk at Cornell University, after which the method was called, to help learners maximize as much information as needed during lectures and post-reading tasks. As Pauk (as cited in Price and Maier, 2007, p. 113) asserted:

> [The cornell method] was intended to increase efficiency and originally consisted of six stages. It was [the] intention that students:
>
> - Record information from lectures.
> - Reduce their notes.
> - Recite the information to aid recall and memory.
> - Reflect.
> - Review the information to make sure they understand it.
> - Recapitulate and make a summary.
>
> Such template of Note-taking (and making) could solve many learning problems.

Many scholars have advocated this method of noting down information such as University of Bradford (2006); Price and Maier (2007) and University of Stanford (n.d); this method has the advantage of combining both strategies of taking the information by means of note taking and making which provides a well recording of the lecture as well as a good reviewing strategy of the lecture's points or elements. How the Cornell method works is uniquely applied having the lectures' points in the right column of the paper leaving an approximate space between each main idea, and stating the questions raised during the lecture or even after it with the key points in the left column section. Providing spaces for each idea will help the learner maximize his recording of the information through answering some questions after discussion, filling in gaps in explanation and detailed information and reaching results and conclusions of the lectures' topic. The top lines of the "Cornell method sheets" are generally for referencing and source information, whereas the bottom lines are for commenting on the topic of the lecture and summarizing its main ideas. For example, the sample "Cornell method" sheet in the next page discusses an experiment on 50 students, studying medicine, about the effectiveness of mind maps rather than other note making techniques:

Source: *Farrand, P., Hussaain, F. and Hennessy, E. (2002). The Efficacy of the Mind Map Technique. Medical Education, May, vol. 36, p.426.*	
Topic & key words/issues	**Main points:**
Topic: Does Mind-Mapping work?	*A test involving two groups of 2nd & 3rd yr. medical students, 50 in total, to see if 'Mind-mapping' note-taking study technique improved memory of something read.*
What other methods used?	*Two groups – one used mind-mapping technique for notes; the other groups used other methods of note making; students randomly assigned to groups. Individuals in both groups asked to read a 600 word passage of text & take notes on it.*
Had they some or all seen it before?	
Why?	*After an 'interfering task', groups tested on their recall of the text the same day, and again a week later.* *No difference in result in short term.*
Key points	*However, at 1 week, the recall of detail in the mind map group was greater by 10%.* *However motivation for the technique used was lower in the mind map group; if motivation could have been made equal in the groups, the improvement with mind mapping would have been 15% (95% CI 3% to 27%).*
Comments/Summary *Some resistance to mind-mapping in the group – why? What didn't they like about it? Was resistance a reaction to the experiment or to the MM technique, or both? They were all medical students, was this a factor in the resistance? Don't force this technique on people – doesn't work for everyone. What other experiments done on MM techniques?*	

Figure 06: A Sample Sheet of the Cornell Method.

(University of Bradford, 2006)

I. 3. 2. i. Fishbone Diagrams

Sometimes called "Ishikawa diagrams", after their founder Kaoru Ishikawa, or "cause and effect diagrams" designed mainly to identify the causes of a problem, event or a

situation, analyze them and attribute them to a specific effect. So, the process of designing a fishbone diagram starts by drawing a thick arrow ending in the problem (the effect), and then, thinner arrows or 'bones' link to the main arrow representing the causes and sub-causes of the problem. Fishbone diagrams are mainly used in 'quality management' and group discussion as well as in making notes by an individual for a cause and effect essay preparation or as a pre-answer of an exam question (University of Bradford, 2006); and (University of Otago, 2008).

Figure 07: An Example of a "Fishbone Diagram".

Lau and Chan (in University of Bradford, 2006).

I. 3. 3. Note Making Profiles

As a matter of fact, studying at the university does not require specific materials to record information on since lectures are of different natures, and are delivered at a high level of speed to the extent that there might be a disorganization of notes, sometimes being

dull or meaningless; however, this does not mean that the process of taking notes is a chaos process, which is not the case of an active learner preparing effective materials beforehand. Here are some of the equipments proposed by Robertson and Smith (1987); Barrass (2002); and Wallace (2004) for a well organized and active learner:

- A4 size paper (210 mm × 297 mm) is an ideal size, especially when the note maker is dealing with diagrams, graphs, and other types of presentation.
- Ring binders and loose-leaf files are best ways to store and organize papers filled with notes. Due to their flexibility, any kind of addition, removal, or replacement can be easily done on sections depending on the notes necessity in a due time.
- Color-coded index guides can be of a great help in organizing the notes of particular subjects.
- Plastic A4-sized pockets are used for storing handouts, photocopies of articles…etc.
- A small punch can be used instead to punch holes in handouts so as to be filed in ring binders.
- Cardboard pocket files are another way of storing handouts.
- Highlighter pens of different colors can be used to highlight various kinds of notes in relevance to the degree of notes' importance and categorizing similar information.
- Laptop computers and small portable audio recorder are expensive but very helpful tools of recording information, of course with the lecturer's permission.
- Bound notebooks can also be used to write down dictated notes from the teacher especially in lectures where events must be classified in a chronological order.
- Labelled manilla or light-weight manilla folders are used to store loose-leaf files at home; they provide a safe storage of A4 papers without folding them.

- Index cards (or post cards) of a (125 mm × 75 mm) size can act as an aid for recording bibliographic information in case of needing them at a later date, or for preparing sample and concise revision tools.

Having access to all those equipments seems to be of no importance as the focus should be on the information itself, it is rather difficult to maintain effective learning without such helping tools for storing data, organizing it and highlighting its significance. For instance, devoting special files for each day's subjects is a helpful way of organizing one's plans.

Another point that should be raised is that of the necessity of that great amount of notes and papers, using them in different situations. A common and significant usage of those profiles is that of revision purposes and reviewing the notes, either immediately after lectures has been taken or just before examinations. The essential factor is not to loose the notes, or as Price and Maier assert: "the proof of the pudding is whether you have used your notes or left them gather dust in files" (2007, p. 80).

I. 4. The Implementation of Note-Making Techniques on the Listening and the Reading Skills

As we have discussed in the note making purposes' section that almost every writer should set an objective to his writing, a note about this point should be raised also in this section to enlighten the readers' mind about the important uses of note-making techniques. Generally, the active process of note-making appears to be mostly used during lectures to record the learned information, and during revision processes for better consolidation of ideas. What learners are required to do in lectures is to have the course, fully understood and carefully recorded. Recording the lecture does not mean having access to the full authentic voice of the lecturer delivering his speech, but rather an effective mechanical task of immortalizing this speech in appropriate profiles using the appropriate method(s) of note

taking and making. A significant stage following the information-getting process, which is constantly related to it, is that of reviewing the notes and sticking them in the long-term memory; this process also can be accomplished by some sorts of note making tasks in accordance to what has been taken in lectures. In order to spot light on the uses of note making techniques in these two significant processes in learning, a particular consideration should be oriented towards the relationship between note making and the listening skill, particularly linked to lecturing, and that with the reading skill, closely attributed to revision procedures.

I. 4. 1. Implementations on the Listening Skill

It is clear that almost any lecture is delivered by means of spoken interaction between the teacher and the learners. So, learners are required to take down any important information mentioned or dictated by the teacher. Listening is, then, the main skill adopted in the classroom to maintain knowledge reception and perception; it takes much more time to follow the teacher's talk, understand it and try to write the information down at the same time, especially if the lecturer is delivering his/her speech at a speed pace or when it is difficult to get the exact organization of the current course points. It is at that moment when the speaker should manage his speech if (s)he feels that learners have difficulty following him or her in one way or another (Robertson and Smith, 1987). Thus, a kind of harmony should be put forward designating the suitable roles that both the teacher and the learners should play in determining the appropriate learning strategies including the best note making techniques applied in whatever learning context. This interrelated and systematic harmony is, therefore, our main concern in this section.

I. 4. 1. a. The Role of the Teacher

Having the great role in providing learners with knowledge, the teacher must account for many principles concerning what important points in the course should learners benefit

from and, consequently, should write in their copy-books or diaries or whatever writing resource available in order to facilitate the retrieval process of any needed information at any time.

During some sessions, a teacher may demand from his/her students to write an essay or a report about a given topic; (s)he is to teach them the steps required before getting to the final step of essay writing. The teacher should provide learners with a lot of practice to recognize and learn the different steps including the main step of brainstorming and note making that could be done in various ways. Harmer (2004) has discussed this issue when coming to generating ideas in a classroom activity to write an essay either individually, in pairs or in groups, emphasizing the personal choice of techniques applied to generate ideas and make notes for the brainstorming. He proposed an alternative to imposing on learners such a method of making notes by exposing them to various methods so as for students to choose the one which works better for them.

Coming to know the exact role the teacher plays in encouraging learners to implement the note making techniques in the language classrooms, we are likely to refer back to the different presentation styles and their uses in generating ideas in preparation for an essay writing. A set of researchers have presented some lesson plans in order for learners to experience as many techniques of making notes; For instance, Chamot *et al*. (1999); and Hedge (2005) prepared some activities suitable for each level varying between the methods of note making used. Graphic organizers, making linear notes and diagrams, as well as making mind maps are the most targeted presentation styles for those researchers in brainstorming tasks, for they provide a smooth linking of ideas with each other starting from the central topic of discussion up to the specific details of minor points where patterns of associated ideas begin to emerge.

Returning back to Harmer's focus on the individuals' preferences of the appropriate note making techniques, one would notice new and less common ways of presenting the notes such as the 'spaghetti' approach and the 'spidergram' approach which stand as unusual and creative note making techniques (Harmer, 2004). Teaching such techniques to students may help them a lot in essays' preparations and may also help them in other situations such as in writing the lecture's points themselves. Different viewpoints concerning the teachability of note making to students have raised the debate on this point as to how teachers could train learners to make effective notes. While the previous scholars have designed some activities on note making strategies, Price and Maier (2007) offered another view claiming that teachers assume that learners, when getting to the university, have at least developed their own ways of summarizing and note making in lectures without waiting to be taught such techniques by tutors.

Applying what has been learned from teachers in essay writing stages as a preparation for a lecture, note making techniques can enhance the development of learners' achievements through organizing their lectures and being able to make decisions on their own learning. Learners can also benefit from watching their teacher using, from time to time, some techniques of note making such as insinuating to some mnemonic aids; the role of the teacher is to provide learners with information, yet focusing on important sets of information through attributing it to appropriate mnemonics as one strategy.

I. 4. 1. b. The Role of the Learner

It is at that time when the role of learners appears to be the most essential in the learning context. While teachers are expected to give lectures on given subject matters, learners are to take notes from the lecturer's dictation of basic ideas, to note down any word written on the board that seems to be essential, or to make their own summary of the whole lecture. Learners vary in taking the notes they think are important from the

explanation of the teacher, and vary also in the way of summarizing the information (i.e. they understand the information the way they think of it, and would formulate the teacher's wording according to their understanding), so that is why we generally find many answers and interpretations to one question in exams.

In order to know how the process of listening is linked to that of note making, with regard to learners' differences in recording lectures, we are likely to analyze what Robertson and Smith (1987) referred to as the five steps applied to any talk which are put in this order: preparation, listening, selection, recording and organizing.

The first step, preparation for a lecture, is an essential one; but how learners prepare for their course? This, absolutely, differs from one person to another. For example, Robertson and Smith (*ibid*) argued that there are some learners who possess good mental abilities which allow them to concentrate on the topic of discussion without making notes either at the current time or later, after the lecture; working with such a strategy as the two authors claimed may lead to loosing or forgetting even the main ideas of the lecture. Other learners tend to record every piece of information said by the teacher, which is in itself a wrong strategy again as Robertson and Smith proposed (*ibid*). Providing that understanding the speech is the core element in attending any lecture, the necessity to write down definitions of key terms, specific quotations and critical examples does not conflict with the main principle of note making that is to summarize in own words. Making summaries to the teacher's speech is thought to be the appropriate strategy which indicates the 'creative thinking' of the learner, being able to discriminate between the main ideas of the lecture and/or explanations or sub-ideas (*ibid*).

The second main step in the lecture is listening which forms the most applied task by learners. The kind of listening required in such situations is the 'effective listening'. By saying an 'effective listener', we are likely to refer to the kind of learners to analyze the

speech after understanding its bits, and then organize the notes in a meaningful way. Effective listeners are also known for their ability to cope with the different problems that may occur in a lecture either that which come from the learner himself or that which come from the surrounding environment. Avoiding all this distortions can help the learner to focus his attention on the teacher's voice and to the notes he is writing (Robertson and Smith, 1987).

The third step, selection, is a crucial skill which can be attained with the help of the teacher. Raising and falling tones of the speech, gestures and facial expressions, and eye contacts with careful looking are main clues used to identify what the essential points of the lecture. Other verbal clues include words such as 'important', 'key', 'basic', 'essential', 'fundamental'…etc or certain questions addressed to students to pay their attention to the significant aspect of a given information (*ibid*).

Recording is the next and fourth step in listening, which accompanies it in a regular manner. The use of abbreviations is also required, especially when the speed of the teacher's talk is fast to the extent that learners would find it difficult to keep up with. Moreover, a learner has the opportunity to create his own set of abbreviations to certain repeated words so as to be able to follow the speech of the teacher. Using different colors to discriminate the priority of each piece of information as well as making specific codes for each part of the lecture is also appreciated (*ibid*).

As we have discussed in note making techniques that the Cornell method is the suitable approach used in lectures, other forms of note making are commonly used such as the linear method of writing in sentences and the 'outlining method'.

The fifth and last step that happens most of the time at the end of the lecture is organizing the notes in a clear way. It is not a necessary step as the previous ones because organization concerns only unstructured lectures where the teacher just throws information

on learners without going on a specific outline for the entire lecture. It has been proved that reviewing the notes within the twenty-four hours is better for memorizing because the information is still fresh in the mind. So, reorganizing the notes allows the learner to fill in gaps in understanding given areas of the lecture by formulating questions which should be answered in discussions with the teacher (Robertson and Smith, 1987).

In addition to the above arguments by Robertson and Smith, similar opinions about the useful support that effective making of notes can bring to gain advantages from any lecture have been approved of. For example, Barrass (2002); O'Hara (2005); and Gardner and Jewler (2006) prompted for the effective strategy of learning by focusing only on the main elements of the lecture; the learner afterwards is free to leave some space in the paper for further additions of some details and illustrations. Putting much emphasis and concentrating on the subject of discussion, rather than attempting to record everything said by the teacher, is thought to bring good results in terms of reviewing and remembering the notes.

I. 4. 2. Implementations on the Reading Skill

Note making from books or from a reading material can be an easier task than that from a listening procedure. Such a practice is thought to be more structured and organized in terms of the appearance of the notes, the approximate time taken to accomplish the process and the liberty of choosing any of the note making techniques mentioned in early sections. Moreover, the learner is to organize the notes the way (s)he likes taking his/her time to reflect upon the information to be included in the note making sheet.

I. 4. 2. a. The Role of the Learner

Reading a book, an article or whatever would be of no importance without making some sorts of notes on the significant parts that has been read. A common activity where

making notes appears to have a great impact is that of reviewing information, either immediately after the lecture is taken or just before tackling any exam.

Making notes on the main ideas of a lecture will make the process of recalling information easier, especially when each set of notes is accompanied by the relevant bibliographic information, including the topic of the lecture, the name of the lecturer, the date and page number, and other citing information (Burns and Sinfield, 2004).

Note making is one of the strategies adopted by learners to benefit from their readings, being them course notes dictated by the teacher or handouts relevant to the entire subject. However, considering strategic making of notes as an alternative is not always a good idea that works for all learners, though effective for some reasons. For example, Robertson and Smith (1987) reported that some learners would find marking or highlighting the text more helpful to narrow their scope of revision and to help them memorize information easily. Underlining key words and sentences and making margin notes is also a common and a traditional strategy that is used by many students.

Different note making techniques are now available to learners for the sake of selecting needed parts from a lecture, a book or any reading material; for example, Burns and Sinfield (2004); University of Bradford (2006); and Gardner and Jewler (2006) have advocated the facility to use a specific format of the "Cornell method" as an effective note making strategy from readings. There are other strategies of note making from readings such as the "note and review" approach which uses at least two or three sides of A4 papers and the use of small index cards for revision purposes. Students also may be making notes from a reading material in a preparation for essay writing; the purpose of reading, then, is to gather enough information on the topic to be writing about. Thus, learners should first determine the purpose behind their reading any piece of writing as well as should focus their minds only on the points which they need from the reading material.

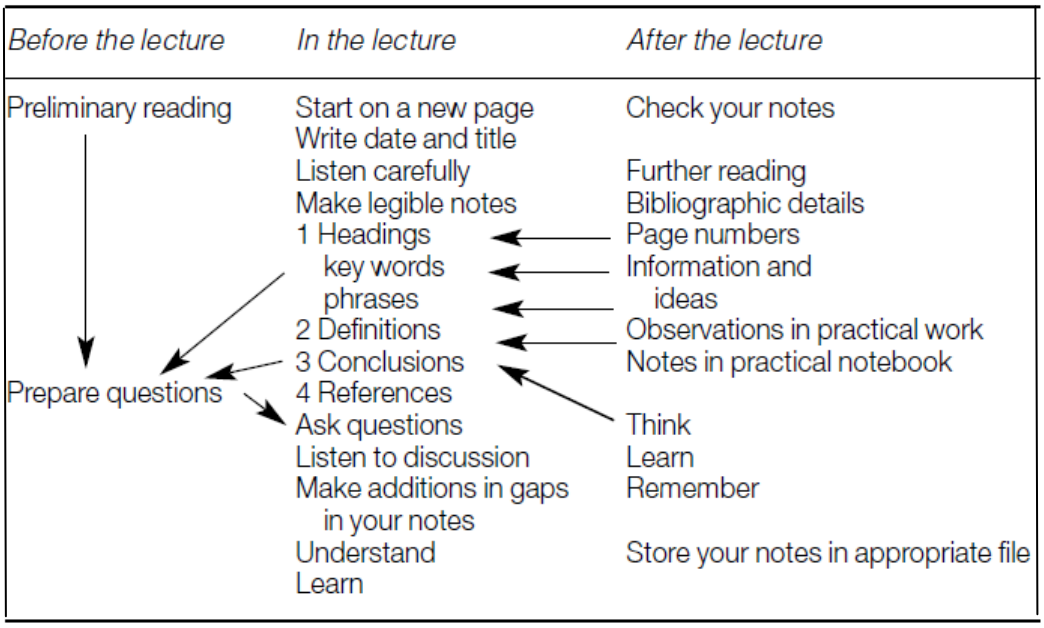


Table 01: Making Good Notes as an Aid to Thinking and Learning.

Adapted from (Barrass, 2005)

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to discriminate between the two different but interrelated processes: note taking and note making. While note taking is the first step required in some lecturing situations such as writing the same words of the teacher's dictation, note making is thought to be the next process which accompanies note taking, and is considered as the active process of analyzing, understanding and reformulating information in a personal way. Choosing to use the common method of conventional presentation using linear notes is not imposed by any person but the note maker himself who finds it the easiest style to work with. Other styles are now available utilizing different kinds of notes such as pictures, images and voice notes for the sake of realizing certain objectives which are most of the time personal. Generally, active learners tend to be well prepared before any lecture and well concentrated during and after the lecture; those learners are thought to be effectively engaged taking a part in understanding the subject and restating the information

according to what have been understood, given that the new paraphrasing preserves the intended meaning which the teacher aims to clarify. Certain areas of learning require full concentration and push the learner into deep thinking in order to analyze the learned material. Thus, note making is the best solution to maintain this concentration and to keep the learner alert during almost the whole lecture as so as not to skip any significant idea or point. Sustaining the recapitulation and reinforcement of information with some sorts of note making would make it an easier task for the memory to store the information effectively; this issue will be further dealt with in the next chapter besides tackling other issues connected with academic success.

CHAPTER TWO:

UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND APPROACHING ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Introduction

Ameliorating one's level is one of the desired goals of college students willing to be successful. Indeed, this cannot be accomplished without knowing the effective factors which lead to academic success. There are many factors which contribute either positively or negatively in shaping learners' fortune at the university level. Among the effective factors which stimulate learning to be an active process rather than just accumulating information in a random way and restoring it when necessary is memory. Knowing how information is processed and restored effectively at the level of different kinds of memory is in itself a skill which can be analyzed and investigated exploring major types of memories and their main characteristics. Moreover, seeking positive aptitudes of learners towards the target language is another cognitive factor which may help to a great extent in identifying other positive factors such as reaching self-motivation and being able to control stress and anxiety; or in other words, having positive attitudes towards the target language creates a positive mental image of one's self and one's capacities as well as recognizing the inner potentials which stimulate motivation; these are known as the psychological factors.

In addition to the cognitive and psychological factors, there are other external factors which affect learners' achievements in a way or another such as social influences and relationships. Moreover, it is not enough to know only the factors contributing to own development and success but also to know individual styles and strategies which have a great impact on the learner's abilities to realize the desired goals. Furthermore, discovering the way one learns and deals with learning problems will certainly help in exploring other useful strategies to be used either in the classroom to receive knowledge or at moments of revision. Knowing essential strategies of revision and knowing how to deal with exam stress paves the way for the learner to reach success. Thus, in this chapter we will examine

some of these factors and strategies taking into consideration what can be regarded as hints towards success.

II. 1. Getting into the Learning Situation

During the time one enters a college or a university, many things come to the new comer's mind concerning the new method of teaching will be exposed to, the way of dealing with different areas of study and the types of assessment that are probable for the official classes. Generally, students have different attitudes as to how they approach a learning situation and how to deal with it quietly. Therefore, each learner assumes that the way (s)he uses to learn and solve various problems in learning is the best one, even though with a strong belief that learning does not necessitates a specific style or strategy to be followed. Learners are also of different attitudes concerning their achievements and degree of success in general; they keep following certain methods of learning, being them good or bad habits. Others would find it better to develop and look for fruitful ways in order for their knowledge to be increased and for their learning styles to be ameliorated. Moreover, many things contribute to the common term of effective learning, as an essential factor to academic success.

II. 1. 1. Definition of Effective Learning

Having to understand the core of success, we are likely to know first the meaning of 'effective learning' (Ef. L.) which many students aim to approach. It is, then, of great importance to discover the elements of an effective learning situation where learners take the vital part in flourishing the learning context as a global basis. Looking at the attractive explanations of Ef. L. given by Watkins, Carnell and Lodge (2007), one would conclude that this term covers mainly two aspects which are: the specific time during which learning occurs and the ultimate goals that have been settled down beforehand. Yet, active learners

are known for their ambition to realize specific objectives which they have normally put at the beginning of the academic year.

As an illustration to the above arguments, gaining useful information by selection and succeeding in exams are the most occurring purposes of those learners, frequently attempting to process, link information and get relevant use of it. Such type of learners seeks usually for new and updated information which they find interesting and enjoyable. Furthermore, this belief of change in information has made it a must that learning should be developed. Getting useful knowledge is not confined only to the classroom situation, but a willing student may get it from any available source, especially at a time when technology has revealed for many benefits from which education has profited.

The term 'effective learning', according to Watkins *et al*. (2007), involves knowing the strategies which work best for an individual learner as well as importing all what is relevant as helping tools from other learners. Meta-cognitive and meta-learning strategies are two significant terms within the broader context of Ef. L. where learners tend to apply certain cognitive and learning strategies. But what is meant by meta-cognitive and meta-learning strategies? What is common between the two processes, which in themselves range in other procedures, is that they are both used by effective learners who proceed according to the cognitive level and the learning level.

First of all, the cognitive level involves four strategies of overlapping functions: planning, monitoring, problem solving and evaluating. The first step in the 'meta-cognitive' (usually referred to as 'thinking about thinking, Watkins *et al*. (*ibid*)) _ cycle is planning for the entire task or activity by setting goals and gathering relevant information about the subject. Then monitoring involves checking and revising the previous plans and links them with the data in the task in order to adjust some of these plans in case they do not fit with the activity. Problem solving is the third of these steps in which learners focus

their minds on certain problems to be solved; learners are to use previous knowledge of similar problems as a basis for finding solutions to the current situation. The last step in meta-cognitive strategies is evaluating; or in other words, assessing oneself to check the degree of understanding of the topic and to try communicating with other peers covering the newly learned aspects of the language (Chamot *et al*., 1999).

The other level which is relatively linked to Ef. L. is 'meta-leaning' which Watkins *et al*. (2007) referred to as 'learning about learning', a term which in itself needs another clarification. What, in fact, the authors discussed at length would carry many significant issues concerning how learners should be made aware of their goals by stating an organized schedule to all what concern the academic year as a whole. The stated programme may contain an ultimate objective for the whole year or intermediary ones prepared to be reached after a specified period of time. The authors also mentioned the learner's awareness of their own experiences about their learning as well as their control of own feelings and emotions towards all related aspects of learning. Getting to know how to manage good social relationships may also affect positively in shaping the expected destiny of an effective learner; this later is again opted for using innovative strategies and tools to develop their own learning and to get higher grades in the coming tests. Watkins, Carnell, Lodge, Wagner and Whalley (2005), in another research about meta-learning and its relationship with Ef. L., have made an interesting remark on how Ef. L. is measured by the final outcomes which are generally represented in: seeking for further ideas and knowledge, reaching enthusiasm and exciting moments after success, looking for other useful strategies of learning and maintaining a collaborative work with others.

II. 1. 2. Factors Affecting Learning

It is obvious that learning does not happen as an isolated process without any internal or external factors which may provoke learners to advance in their career or disrupt them

from doing so. These factors may affect learning outcomes in a way or another, and to varied degrees of impact. It might be important to tackle this subject of affecting factors on learners and on learning in general for the simplest reason that learners are of different backgrounds as well as carrying multiple attitudes of their own methods of learning. It is yet worth crucial that much consideration should be put forward to the different factors contributing in academic success. In most cases, factors are restricted to three major domains: the cognitive domain, the psychological domain and the social one.

II. 1. 2. 1. The Cognitive Domain

This factor is thought by many scholars to be the most affecting domain on learners' achievement. Because it is at the level of the brain where learners receive, store and retrieve information, we are obliged to discover how the brain operates in such a manner and how the different kinds of memory vary in their characteristics and functions. However, before getting into detailed analysis of memory types and functioning, we should first examine its role in learning besides other supporting cognitive factors such as aptitude and intelligence.

II. 1. 2. 1. a. Memory

Every learner after receiving information passes through the usual process of storing the learned information. It is obvious that this process will happen in no other place but in the memory as a 'warehouse' for storing information. As Schunk (2009) has been claiming for the cognitivist view of memory, and in particular that of advocates of the Information Processing Theory (IPT), IPT theorists believe in the idea that memory functioning is just like the way a person gets information and processes it, or simply stated, just like the way learning proceeds in. The strong argument that IPT has proved of designates a crucial role of memory in stimulating learners' achievements in various ways, unlike that of the minor

consideration which behaviourists put to memory as a neurological device which works only when associated to other external motives.

From an IPT view, also called 'neuroscience' theory Schunk (2009), the human mind operates like a computer actually does. Learners constantly perceive information through their senses, work out this information and automatically store it in their memories. The beginning operation of storing information happens rapidly within the very few moments of receiving data. Wong (2009), for example, has been making a detailed study on how learners do pass through the complex process of accumulating information in mind, and she has based her work mainly on the principle of IPT of the different roles attributed to various kinds of memory. Coming back to the starting point in the process of storing, Wong has begun with the first destination information will be sent to after learners receive input through their five senses. This latter is referred to as 'sensory input' which comes from the external world taking different forms. 'Sensory input' will simultaneously go to the *Sensory Memory* (SM) which keeps information in for a short period of time. Wong has given a terrific definition to this type of memory and asserts: "Sensory memory is a temporary storage center that receives and holds sensory input for one or two seconds before beginning to encode information for further processing. Information that you do not attend to or that you ignore fades or become discarded quickly". (*ibid*, p. 39).

We have known that the information gained will disappear quickly from this storing center, but we should also analyze what the author meant by in the last sentence of her quotation. It happens sometimes that one may not attend a session for one reason or another, and tend to get access of the lecture's notes from a colleague; until that moment, the data is not directly perceived from the original source, as would be expected by some, through the five senses. Thus, the next expected operations which the information should pass through will not occur, and the information will be very soon lost from the SM. One

major reason behind fading this information is that many learners would remember the lecture's points or structure only if they attend the lecture themselves, record its basic elements, and not being given the full lecture by another student. Therefore, it may seem hard to recognize the significant considerations that should be put on some elements at the expense of others, and this is in itself a matter of personal choice, or in better words, a matter of individual strategies. In another hand, a learner may be attending the lecture and having recorded few points with ignoring some information which may seem important for another learner. So, this fact of being unaware of the necessity of information leads obviously to loosing it quickly.

A follow-up remark has been done by Wong (2009) again as to how we prevent the recent information from being disappeared, and still keep it in the SM for another few seconds. Her remark is not far away from what we have been dealing with so far, but would stand as a solution to benefit from this kind of memory as long as possible. Learners, then, through selective attention may allow further processes of storing information, maybe at other levels of memory, to be working in a normal way because focusing the mind on the action being done will make the process of reinforcement much easier.

It may not seem logical to talk about the *Working Memory* (WM) as the next destination where information might go to, but looking at the different perspectives of the cognitive theorists and advocates on how they classify the different types of memory obliges us to do so. For instance, Dehn (2008); Skehan (2008); and Wong (2009) have worked on the issue of the WM as the active storing center in which information may be kept in mind temporarily when this latter is conscious. They have considered the WM as a basic process which consist of two other centers which are: the *Short-Term Memory* (STM) and the *Central Executive*. After the information go out from the SM, it may continue to

have other destinations to pass through other processes, such as willing to hold certain particular information in memory for further moments which depend on the purpose and activities. The conditions under which information can be kept in the STM, a limited in capacity and duration kind of memory, are concentrating on the targeted information and trying to encode it instead of overloading the memory with too much data. Information that comes from the SM appear to enter the STM if attention is paid on to last for nearly thirty seconds of an average amount of seven 'chunks'.

The WM can be considered, therefore, as the 'bridge' which allows information to pass from the STM into the *Long-Term Memory* (LTM) including various processes of analyzing data and transferring it into meaningful items which are easy for the mind to retain. This type of memory can be seen as the central place where information can be either restored or exposed to loss according to the intentions of the learner as well as the degree of information's importance.

Wong (2009) has made a detailed work on how information is processed in our minds, focusing on the great role the WM plays in activating further processes including relating new information with similar ones that already exist and try to fit them in the relevant space in the brain. WM processes also involve activities as rehearsal, recall, practice, connecting ideas and retrieving information from memory. Another argument has been made by Dehn (2008) on the various features the WM has, as a distinctive unit in memory. He emphasized the differences between the WM and the STM although having no tendency towards the relationship between and among the two memories. Among the major differences which Dehn listed between the two is that WM is an active process unlike STM which is not. While STM is restricted only to information coming from the environment, WM is more connected with cognitive processes of analyzing different kinds

of information. In addition, the WM is thought to be the central axis which differentiates between learners and which supports learning through ‘semantic coding’ (Dehn, 2008).

The last destination which receives information for a permanent period is no longer different from the WM in terms of importance and functionality. It is, yet, the probable arriving point to which information will be kept forever fulfilling many learning purposes including reviewing information to be ready for exams. Other significant features of the *Long-Term Memory* have signaled its significance particularly in retaining information and have attracted the attention of many researchers on the field. In fact, no one agreement has been done on the right sub-division of memory kinds or, at least, which kind of memory is a sub-category of the other. Nevertheless, all researchers have agreed on the typology of memory kinds, and have resolved for LTM as the essential store of everlasting knowledge.

As long as the importance of memory in learning is concerned, interested researchers on memory functioning, and precisely on the role of LTM in the full retention of information had been advocated. We shall take as an example the revolving ideas of Wong (2009) where she spots light on the interactive aspect among both the WM and the LTM as relatively dependent processes. The role of LTM lies on receiving information from the WM as a reaction to repeating and reviewing information until it sticks in the mind permanently. It also provides the WM with relevant input when needed which the latter actively engages in encoding it again and maybe modifying it according to the entire context. She also argues that the LTM is able to hold enormous amount of information which can be restored partly by the WM as mentioned before. The information which enters the LTM at different sets of time is encoded and organized each in compiled categories which hold related information together. All these related data in the LTM is called *schemas* which are unlimited in the human mind’s capacity, and that take different forms as verbal knowledge, images, sounds or images. The difficulty of learning as Wong

asserted relies heavily on the forming of new *schemas* because the brain at that time carries no idea about the new subject being exposed to. However, receiving similar information with that already existed in the mind would make it easier to compare and store the new *schema* (Wong, 2009).

Dehn (2008) has discussed this issue of LTM in his work on the role of the WM on academic learning and has tackled it because of the necessity to do so as long as all kinds of memory have related relationships, yet possessing different features, in processing information and in storing it accordingly. In his work, Dehn (2008) also has stated two other kinds of LTM which he felt necessary, maybe because of their overlapping and significant functions, in the learning process. *Semantic memory* and *Procedural memory* are of the main focused kinds in Dehn's view in which the former, basically, involves the general verbal form of knowledge including facts, concepts, principles and rules, whereas the later is more connected with visual and contextual information involving specific events and episodes. Whenever a person receives new information, he stores the verbal details in the *semantic memory* and simultaneously attributing this information with any relevant contextual details, such as time and space, which will be eventually stored in the *episodic memory* (*ibid*).

There are other kinds of memories which are of less importance than the above mentioned categories of memory. Looking in detailed studies of those kinds may bring more ideas and benefits for academic learning. For instance, Willis (2007) stated different kinds of memories as the: *Procedural*, *Automatic*, *Emotional* and *Relational* memories which are the most frequent types holding many advantages for learners. Those learners are opted to categorize each piece of information according to its kind. The brain's parts have also a role in identifying which type of memory to receive which form of information available. A note of all these categories has been done by Willis raising points of focus

concerning each category such as the exact part of the brain where each type takes place and how each one functions independently (Willis, 2007).

Another work has been done on the skill and strategy of memory use in learning by Einstein and McDaniel (2007) has shown other scopes of interest mentioning another type called *Prospective memory*. This particular type of memory is characterized by the absence of external stimuli and other agents to initiate the retrieval process, but would rather appear as a self-controlled process which happens at the appropriate time by the learner.

II. 1. 2. 1. b. Aptitude

As long as learners are not alike in their styles and meta-cognitive strategies, a crucial domain in individuals' cognitive structures contributes effectively in shaping the real personality of each learner and which makes the difference between a good learner and a weak one. Aptitude is defined by Richards and Schmidt in their Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics as:

> The natural ability to learn a language, not including intelligence, MOTIVATION, interest, etc. Language aptitude is thought to be a combination of various abilities, such as **oral mimicry ability** (the ability to imitate sounds not heard before), **phonemic coding ability** (the ability to identify sound patterns in a new language), [and] **grammatical sensitivity** (the ability to recognize the different grammatical functions of words in sentences, ROTE-LEARNING ability, and the ability to infer language rules […]. A person with high language aptitude can learn more quickly and easily than a person with low language aptitude, all other factors being equal.
>
> (2002, p. 285). (Emphasis in the original).

This natural ability is thought to determine the variability in language learning success as provided by Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg (2004) through influencing on the learner's performance using different kinds of aptitudes, namely: socio-emotional and psychological (including meta-cognitive, cognitive, emotional and affective aptitudes). Hedge (2000) in another hand referred to two language aptitude tests: the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and the Language Aptitude Battery (LAB) which tackle four components in general: auditory ability (similarly attributed to phonemic coding

ability), grammatical sensitivity (as stated by Richards and Schmidt (2002)), inductive language learning ability and memory. Moreover, Dunlap and Weisman (2007) have accounted for the effective contribution this innate ability shows in identifying different levels of development among learners.

Interested researchers on the issue of personality and aptitude like Barrett (2006); Carter (2007, 2009); and Carter and Russell (2008) have proposed many tests in different disciplines of study, taking into consideration various aspects of aptitudes (e.g. verbal, numerical and special).

II. 1. 2. 1. c. Intelligence

This is probably one the most helping factors which distinguish successful students from their peers in the same level. It is viewed by Gardner as: "a neural mechanism or computational system that is genetically programmed to be activated or "triggered" by certain kinds of internally or externally presented information" (2011, p. 68). Gardner in the same work about multiple intelligences (MI) has proposed another supportive definition which stands as being able to solve problems and create products which must be approved of by at least one culture. His idea of MI has been first prescribed in 1983 showing a list of seven intelligences which later have been expanded to be eight (*ibid*).

Wong (2009) was among the initiative researchers interested in Gardner's work on MI and in its impact on language learning. She purposely introduced this issue as an essential factor determining learners' differences in skills, abilities and interests. The author has offered an organized explanation of the eight intelligences of Gardner, and has proved for the cultural aspect which affects the individual orientation towards some kinds of intelligences rather than others. Owing the fact that an individual may possess all these kinds of intelligences, Hewitt (2008) has emphasized the characteristic which many learners have, which is that of having a partial acquaintance and strength in particular

kinds of intelligence. Returning back to Wong's explanation of what she referred to as the different intelligences and their subintelligences, and we shall begin with the most important and frequent one, named *Linguistic* or *Verbal*, (specifically linked to left-brain dominant learners as mentioned by in Sárosdy, Bencze, Poór & Vadnay (2006)), which is defined as "the ability to effectively use written language within different domains of life". Learners characterized by this intelligence are known for their accuracy in writing poems, stories, and why not jokes, showing an interest mainly in the semantic and syntactic levels of the text. Being a fluent speaker is also one of the habits of left-brain dominant learners. Furthermore, they are talent in word games such as puzzles and crosswords. Besides all these characteristics, those learners ought to learn languages and would rather expected to be interested in doing so (Wong, 2009).

The second intelligence is called *Logical-mathematical,* and as its name indicates, it is closely related with using logic and mathematical calculations in an effective manner to solve difficult problems. Holders of this intelligence are known for their ability to analyze and solve mathematical operations in a sequential order through reasoning, yet following the scientific method of observing, hypothesizing, testing and confirming results. The use of both ways of thinking (i.e. abstractly and concretely) is also appreciated (*ibid*).

Another different intelligence which seems unimportant for some has also its owners and supporters; it is the so-called *Musical Intelligence* which calls for certain skills of singing and using own voice and musical instruments. Loving different types of music and having strong memories to remember lyrics and melodies are the most features of musical people (*ibid*).

Dancers, artists, painter, and so on are like those having the previous intelligence, yet they are more active than the preceding ones are; they are more likely to act then to just

practice auditory tasks. The ability to control body movements and to approach flexibility is the most significant characteristic of *Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence* (Wong, 2009).

The next intelligence is named *Spatial* and is perceived to evoke creativity and imagination into talent people. Showing an enjoyment of drafting and painting things using lines, shapes of various sizes and angles can be the doorway to such intelligence (*ibid*).

Having an *Interpersonal Intelligence* is in no way a skill of building intimate social relationships with different kinds of people with a belief of feeling responsible for them through participating in group dynamics and teamwork. Interpersonal people are known for their ability to understand nonverbal signs such as facial expressions and body language. In contrast, individuals with *Intrapersonal Intelligence* are more closed to themselves having a sense of bride and self-esteem. People with this kind of intelligence are characterized by the use of certain skills for the sake of developing their own goals, strengths and feelings. They always opt for more strategies to achieve self-motivation and discover their own potentials. Examples of intrapersonal intelligence owners are philosophers, biographers and psychiatrists (*ibid*).

We shall afterwards move to the last intelligence which had been added lately by Gardner in 1996, which is called *Naturalist Intelligence*. Observing in an intelligent way all what surround the individual, especially natural creatures such as plants and animals, is one characteristic of individuals with this intelligence. They are typically oriented to the environment and to changes in climate, for instance. In addition, they are able to identify kinds, groups and categories which belong to a given item or object (*ibid*).

The fact of mentioning these intelligences in details here would rather help any learner to identify his position towards whatever type of intelligence which suits him/her, and to benefit from his/her own skills and strategies by means of exploiting them in learning and revising.

Testing the degree of an individual's intelligence is done through a kind of testing called *Intelligence Quotient* (IQ). This test is designed for measuring and comparing the scores got in one of these IQ tests with other test-takers. However, there is one claim which separates the scores attained from the IQ tests and the active operations required by the different kinds of memory; in other words, there is no scientific theory which proved the close relationship between intelligence and success in learning. A note on this idea has been claimed of by Barrett (2006); and Paechter and Schweizer (2006) denying the fact that an intelligent person is necessarily a successful one, and vice versa (i.e. not all successful learners show high IQ in an intelligence test). However, it seems true that some keen learners are more successful than others do, owing the fact that the intelligence they possess goes with their subject or field of study; that is to say that there are some fields which require certain core abilities or subintelligences as Wong (2009) asserts. Provided that the learners are given the choice to decide what aspects of study they want to learn at the university, intelligence may help a lot in succeeding in their career as long as their learning styles and strategies match the intelligence they possess, a note which has been made by Willis (2007).

II. 1. 2. 2. The Psychological Domain

Taking into consideration all what would bring, as positive factors, for learners in order to survive and continue their studying career easily, one would not neglect what advantages the psychological status of the learner can bring into success in final grades. Having a high self-esteem and being in a good mood are among the wide range of psychological factors which directly affect, either positively or negatively, on the learner's success and grading in general. The same thing can be said about motivation and all what lead to it.

II. 1. 2. 2. a. Motivation

It is in no doubt very crucial to understand how much motivation is significant in the life of all learners without exception. Being motivated to learn and to cope with different mentalities, either that of teachers or that of peers, is one of the basic elements to get an idea on how much development occur within an individual with time. Moreover, one would ask a significant question as how does learning occur, or even if it does, what kind of learning would it be if the person is not motivated? This question and even more will be discussed underneath.

We have, then, arrived to a point of focus which many scholars have discussed and worked on because of its significance in learning in general. We shall again start with the definition of motivation as given by Gardner as "the effort, want (desire), and affect associated with learning a second language and is seen as important in determining how actively the individual works to acquire the language material" (1985, p. 147). Graham (1997) has commented on this quotation, and precisely on the term 'desire' and explained it as being linked with learner's objectives designed to be achieved through learning.

Another point that should be raised would be that of the reasons behind failing to build an 'inner' motivation Downing (2011) has listed some of them, and has concluded that learners not participating in class and skipping lectures, especially after they finish their first year at college are more exposed to failure and these are probably their most demotivation features. Having a strong belief and expectation of your success and even the probable degrees you think you could achieve from your learning (value) are the two basic elements which result in motivation in Downing's view. He has come up with a formula which represents this idea of 'academic motivation', and referred to it as:

V (value) × E (expectation) = M (motivation).

So, the more values and expectations you set to your success, the higher motivated you will be to learn and adopt yourself to different situations (Downing, 2011).

There are actually two major kinds of motives which people opt to use. These kinds are: *instrumental motivation* and *Integrative motivation.* The first type means learning a language for the sake of using it as a tool to fulfill certain objectives like translating and understanding some areas in a field. The second type (integrative) means studying a language for immigration purposes in order to integrate into the society and culture of the target language (Brown, 2000).

Learners in another side can be either *intrinsically* or *extrinsically* motivated. Intrinsically motivated learners are those who get involved in any learning situation by their own choice. Their aim of learning is, therefore, not for any purpose or any other agent, but for their own interest. Edward Deci (1975) has given a precise definition as:

> Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake and not because they lead to an extrinsic reward . . . . Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of *competence* and *self-determination*
>
> (As cited in Brown, 2000, p. 164)

Extrinsic motivation, in another hand, does not occur within the individual himself, but would rather come from the outside environment as an impulse to a given reward. For example, other expected agents such as parents and teachers would be required to reward learners who have done well in previous tests; such reinforcing behaviours may create a sense of appraisal and satisfaction within the learner (*ibid*).

In another hand, motives can appear to have different kinds. In other words, motives may take different forms and, therefore, seem to act according to certain perspectives. For instance, Seifert and Sutton (2009) have listed these perspectives and have considered them as ‘major theories’ trying to encompass all diversities of learners. There are typically

six major perspectives which are: (1) motives as behaviour, (2) motives as goals, (3) motives as interests, (4) motives as attributions about success, (5) motives as beliefs about self-efficacy, and (6) motives as self-determination.

II. 1. 2. 2. b. Stress and Anxiety

Obviously, these two factors are not supporting ones for learners to be established here. Yet, they should be discussed carefully looking for ways to reduce them as much as possible. Stress and anxiety may happen due to many factors; both the cognitive aspect and the social aspect may directly contribute in increasing or decreasing the general psychological mood of the individual. Most of the time, these psychological problems emerge within some learners during certain moments of study, especially that related with tests' and examination periods. Learners may feel under pressure when in it is near to cope with exams. Being not well-prepared to deal with all the notes that should be covered, feeling a sense of loss and fear of being unsuccessful and other many sources of stress are the most frequent ones among hopeless learners. Here are some of these sources which Robertson and Smith (1987); Price and Maier (2007); and Van Blerkom (2009) have stated:

- Lack of ability and getting use of ineffective strategies.
- Lack of self-esteem and over-thinking of negative consequences as failure rather than focusing on the subject.
- A sense of over-motivation towards oneself, own ability and own success may disrupt effective learning.
- A sense of too much responsibility emerged from parents' and teachers' expectations from the learner to well-perform in tests.
- A sense of 'examination panic' and fear of not to work well, or even to forget information or to be unable to understand the questions and respond.

- A sense of being under the pressure of overloaded courses and exposure to a very fast way of delivering lectures; this is mostly experienced by freshman students who are not yet used to such teaching styles.
- Change in lifestyle and taking too many responsibilities at hand may raise anxiety and add much stress.
- Staying alone without maintaining any relationship with the family and friends may lead to stress and anxiety.
- Coping with personal problems is also a direct source of stress including family problems, health problems, social relationships and worrying about money are all causes of stress and anxiety.
- Feeling disappointed because of inability to reach what was expected or designed as future goals.

Another Source of anxiety which has been exclusively mentioned by Dias *et al*. (2006), as a direct source that may diminish the self-esteem of weak learners, is that of impressing them from the early stages of learning. This would create a sort of fear and hatred towards school and learning and may develop to grow with those learners until they reach their college studies. Dias *et al*. have suggested the idea of 'FearNot' (Fun with Empathic Agents to Reach Novel Outcomes in Teaching) in order for weak learners to cope with this problem and to be comfortable working with their peers.

Such factors of stress may have negative or, sometimes, positive effects on the learner. Being anxious to a reasonable degree creates such a kind of impulse within the learner in order to make a serious step and start taking care of own study and own destiny. In favour of this idea, Price and Maier (2007) have emphasized the positive role which stress can play as a motive for creating a sense of challenge and 'buzz'. They claim that we all need

such kind of stress in order to keep alert and concentrating on only what is expected to be done in the due moment.

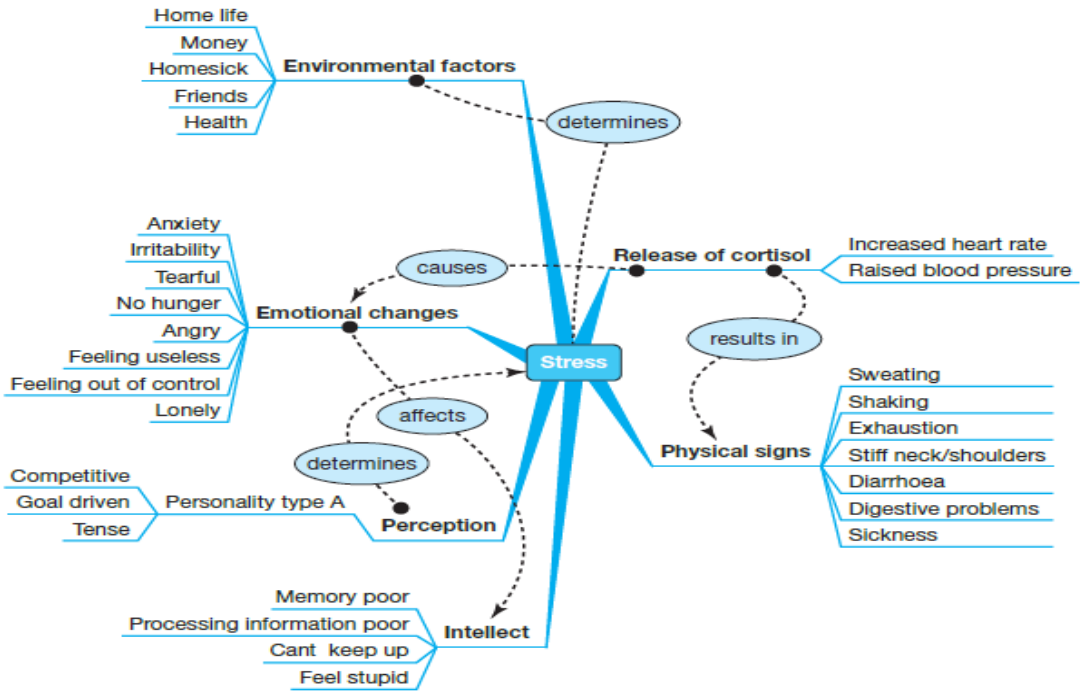


Figure 08: A Concept Map of Causes, Effects and Signs of Stress.

Adapted from (Price & Maier, 2007)

In addition, there are many 'symptoms' as to what stress can cause to us. Symptoms, generally, vary between physiological, emotional and mental. Sweating and experiencing digestive problems are physiological problems. Feeling angry and out of control are emotional changes. Forgetting is known to be the most intellectual trouble learners face when they are under pressure (*ibid*).

Looking for practical solutions to avoid or at least reduce stress and anxiety among learners, the previous researchers and others have tried to overcome this issue by proposing efficient ways. Such techniques have been proposed by Robertson and Smith (1987);

Dembo (2004); O'Hara (2005); Price and Maier (2007); Race (2007); Pritchard (2008); Van Blerkom (2009); and Downing (2011) include the following:

- Elimination of all sources and causes of stress is the first step towards reaching a good mood and learning in a comfortable atmosphere.
- Preparation and practice of different activities, both in the classroom and outside it, will make it a habit for learners to be familiar with the various problems and how to deal with them effectively.
- Relaxation techniques are optimal particularly during revision and exam time. There are many exercises of relaxation including breathing exercises and visualization.
- Early identification of goals and making frequent 'to-do' lists for each day's activities may reduce stress and tension.
- Avoidance of negative thoughts and reciting positive mental images instead is a good idea for relieving stress.
- Arriving five minutes before the exam starts can work better than coming too early because this may raise the student's curiosity and anxiety.
- Making short breaks and applying the 'ten-minute' breaks after each thirty minutes of study is also appreciated.
- Identification of own motives and 'triggers' can impulse the learner to replace negative feelings into positive ones.
- Eating well balanced food containing fruits and vegetables would help a lot in managing the individual's general health and consequently the psychological status.
- Getting support from others such as friends, family or any students' or medical services may inhibit stress and anxiety.
- Establishing certain strategies of self-belief and focusing on the entire activity, aiming at finishing it in due time, is better than keeping hands tied.

- Employing work avoidance tactics to give the learner some time to relax, practice hobbies and favourite work and make up one's mind is also approved of.

In fact, these are not all the techniques used and available for remedying stress and anxiety, but mentioning these would represent the most effective ways of dealing with stress especially during revision and exams.

II. 1. 2. 3. The Social Domain

Practically speaking, this domain is not as significant as the two other previous domains do. However, maintaining a peaceful social life would bring a lot of advantages to the leaner by adding some contribution factors as peace and care. For example, Nannyonjo (2007) has discussed this issue of social influence on pupils in Uganda raising many points such as the parents' educational levels, the family size, the distance between home and school, the language spoken at home and even pupils' and teacher's gender.

Actually, what has been discussed by Nannyonjo concerns only pupils during the first stages of learning; however, this does not neglect the fact that these factors can be applied also to college students. A significant point which has been stressed on by Gardner (1985) was on the importance of socio-education in shaping the student's personality and character, and consequently in contributing to academic success. He has also initiated the 'potential' role which parents play in stimulating positive attitudes and in providing motivation for their children. In addition, Dunlap and Weisman (2007) have stressed on the great role which parents' educational level plays in encouraging their children to excel in their studies. Similarly, Jeynes (2011) has worked a lot on this issue stressing the effectiveness of parental involvement during all the stages of learning even in college; thus, contributing in academic success is the main advantage gained from parental involvement. Investigating on the same issue, Hill and Flynn (2006) have stressed on the same ideas raising an awareness of the importance that each of prior knowledge about the

target language, the quality and length of previous formal education being exposed to as well as students' cultural background all bring to the success of learners.

Griffin (2004) in another hand has another view of parental involvement in which she pointed on the role of minority groups and bilinguals in succeeding. Because of the fact that students who have been living and growing in communities in which two languages are adapted, success among these minorities is generally high unlike those who speak only one language.

In addition, maintaining good relationships with friends can also play a role in affecting either positively or negatively. Sometimes, it is better for some to share with their peers some points of study in the classroom; thus, one would benefit greatly from others discussing and sharing their own notes. Making some breaks and entertainment with friends for the sake of reducing stress is another advantage of social relationships (Barrass, 2002).

II. 2. Understanding the Learner's Personality

Forming the most important part in learning in general, learners have to be cautious about their significant duties in shaping their own future and success. They have to know their personalities, their abilities, their types, as well as their styles and strategies. It is obvious that not all learners share the same characteristics and have the same personality types, but would rather vary in terms of mental capacities, social backgrounds and other many things. We have seen in the previous section what is meant by effective learning in general and what are the factors affecting it. In this section, we are likely to focus on individual learners, their types, styles and strategies. Becoming an effective learner is a skill which can be acquainted as any other skill. Thus, this kind of learners tends to be more successful than others.

II. 2. 1. Definition of the 'Proficient' Learner

Being a 'proficient' learner is not an easy task to accomplish since getting used to certain strategies requires much more time than one imagines. However, it is just a matter of practice to be the type of learner required for reaching a high degree. Thus, we have first to know the meaning of a 'proficient' learner.

This issue of 'proficiency' of a learner has been used by Price and Maier (2007) in which they have initiated the active step a learner must proceed with instead of just reading lecture notes and 'hoping' to succeed. There are other terms used for a 'proficient' learner such as an 'active' learner (Gardner & Jewler, 2006; and Du Boulay, 2009), an 'effective' leaner (Watkins *et al*., 2007), and a 'strategic' learner (Wong, 2009); yet, all these terms mean the same thing.

A 'proficient' learner is regarded by Gardner and Jewler (2006); Price and Maier (2007); Watkins *et al*. (2007); Du Boulay (2009); and Wong (2009); as being skilled and selective in choosing the best strategies after knowing their tendency towards learning and learning styles. They also tend to construct own knowledge resulting from understanding the new material by linking it to the existing knowledge, and thus activating their memories to work and monitor the new information. Du Boulay (2009) has made a crucial analogy comparing the 'effective' learner with a gardener who chooses the best environment for the best seeds she has carefully chosen. Effective learner's plans and procedures of studying are like the expectations of the gardener she has set for her plants. In addition, 'strategic' learners are known for their participation in collaborative works and in taking responsibility for their learning. Furthermore, exploring new processes and strategies of understanding information is among the most apparent features of 'active' learners. Gardner and Jeweler (2006) have pointed on an additional characteristic of effective learners who frequently prepare for their lectures before they attend the course

and review what they have studied after they return back home. Moreover, those learners are characterized by seeking information from different sources and not just taking what has been given in the classroom for granted. Active learners also ask questions for each piece of information they receive and look for expected answers to these questions.

II. 2. 2. Learning Styles

When coming to categorize learners into specific types, scholars have different views and, indeed, different classifications. Sometimes, the terms 'learning styles' and 'types of learners' are used to mean the same thing. However, one should make a distinction between the two terms with regard of making a close link between them.

Generally, learners prefer to have the information displayed in a certain manner that fits their learning styles or 'modalities' as Wong (2009) has suggested. Learning styles are defined by Spratt *et al*. as: "the ways in which a learner naturally prefers to take in, process and remember information and skills. Our learning style influence how we like to learn and how we learn best." (2005, p. 52). This definition has been also advocated by Pritchard (2009). According to Spratt *et al*. (2005); and Wong (2009), and many other previous researchers on the field, learners are classified under three major learning styles: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic.

II. 2. 2. 1. Visual learners

According to Spratt *et al*. (2005); and Wong (2009), this kind of learners prefers to learn and remember information through seeing and visualizing. For instance, they like the information presented in visual forms as pictures, graphs and/or even in forms of sentences. Besides having strong visual memory skills, visual learners are able to create mental images or 'movies' of the information in their minds, and that is how they process, link and remember information. In addition, they possess a strong ability to understand and interpret paralinguistic features such as eye contact and facial expressions. Having a

tendency towards the beauty of the physical environment (including colours, shapes, angles and textures) is another feature of visual learners who try to apply visual strategies according to this basis.

II. 2. 2. 2. Auditory learners

Liking the information to be delivered verbally is the most significant feature of auditory learners. It is, then, by hearing and discussing with the teacher and other learners how do these learners process and recall verbal language. Furthermore, they are known for their tendency to listen to discussions in seminars and tutorials as well as taking a part by sharing personal viewpoints. Their 'keen' auditory memories enable them to learn foreign languages easily only by listening to native speakers or any other person speaking that foreign language. In addition, they are skilled mainly in listening and speaking, and have a strong capacity to store as many vocabularies have been exposed to (Wong, 2009).

II. 2. 2. 3. Kinaesthetic learners

Such kind of learners is restricted to those preferring to use their body in order to learn; that is to say that they engage in activities which enable them to move and use their muscles. For example, studying in specific domains of arts as drama and role plays, in domains of sculpting and designing, in some domains of physics in which the use of gestures and body movements is required. We may notice that some students with this style usually prefer to move their legs while sitting, stand up when they work, walk as they read and use exaggerated movements when they study (*ibid*).

Another classification of learning styles had been advocated by Brown (2000); and Skehan (2008) which call for holistic and analytic learners. This classification is referred to as *Field Dependence* (FD) and *Field Independence* (FI) that has been first developed by Herman Witkin in 1962.

II. 2. 2. 4. Field dependence

Learners with this style usually learn and remember information as a block. It is better for them to have the whole picture of the lecture or any piece of information they want to remember in their minds. FD learners have a tendency towards learning languages and communication.

II. 2. 2. 5. Field independence

Dividing the learned material into chunks or parts of information is the most significant feature of FI learners. Their aim of reading any piece of information is not to cover all its components but to focus their minds only on the parts that interest them. Furthermore, they attempt to analyze the intended parts of the discourse, identify its elements and try to find the link between these parts. In addition, Skehan (2008) emphasized the advantage gained from dividing the discourse into parts, in which selecting only the relevant and needed information will certainly help the learner to focus on the necessary parts during revision in one hand, and to gain time and effort in another hand.

II. 2. 2. 6. Left-Brain learners

This type of learners is sometimes called '*Linear Learners*' (Wong, 2009) who base their learning; or in other words, process information using the left hemisphere of their brains. Buzan (n.d.) also has been interested in this issue of 'Brain Dominance', and has referred to the left 'cortex' where functions as processing and analyzing words, lists, lines and numbers are applied. Wong (2009) has stressed their tendency towards detailed information, sequential steps and procedures, as well as analytic knowledge.

II. 2. 2. 7. Right-Brain learners

'*Global Learners*' usually prefer to learn through visual aids, colours, rhythms, and so on; they like creativity and imagination. In addition, they like the 'big picture' form of the lecture or the information in general (*ibid*). Another term that has been used for this type of

learners, and was approved of by Buzan (n.d.); and Skehan (2008); it is 'Gestalt' which means the same thing as grasping information as a whole. They are just like FI learners having this feature of 'holistic' or global view of knowledge. Moreover, those learners are strategic in solving difficult problems to which they sometimes use innovative ways in order to effectively deal with the situation. Right-brain learners are also tactful in skimming through the text, reading introductions and/or abstracts, and reading summaries (Wong, 2009).

In fact, there are other learning styles which are supported by other theories. What we have mentioned in this section as learning styles are just the most significant ones, and the most relevant in the learning context. Consequently, determining to which style of learning one belongs to would strongly orient him/her towards the suitable field of study which fits the required interests. Therefore, applying strategies which go hand in hand with the relevant learning style will have a great impact on learners' achievements.

Such other learning styles may include *reflective* vs. *impulsive* learners as advocated by Spratt *et al*. (2005); and Seifert and Sutton (2009). Another classification which has been made by Felder and Silverman (1988); and Felder and Henriques (1995) include styles as *sensing* vs. *intuitive* learners, *sequential* vs. *global* learners, and *inductive* vs. *deductive* learners. In addition to some learning styles mentioned earlier, Gardner and Jewler (2006) have added other types like *extraverts* vs. *introverts*, *thinking* vs. *feeling* learners, *judging* vs. *perceiving* learners.

II. 2. 3. Types of Learners

In fact, referring to types of learners is not far different from learning style preferences or learning 'modalities'. However, a slight distinction should be set, giving a considerable attention towards the degree of engagement with other learners which characterizes each

type. For instance, Skehan (2008) has pointed on this issue raising awareness of the features of each type.

II. 2. 3. 1. Convergers

This type of learners is characterized by an ability to work well in project works no matter the activities being taken in the classroom or outside it. The main principle of convergers is to reach the goals and the results required from doing these activities. In addition, participating in such activities would help in maintaining and developing social skills with other peers. In fact, what seems a negative feature of this type is that they tend to avoid communicating with the target language, yet liking to be engaged in activities or taking roles in which using the target language is less required (Skehan, 2008).

II. 2. 3. 2. Concrete learners

Concrete learners are absolutely unlike convergers; they comfortably engage in situations where language use is the dominant task. This natural ability enables them to speak the target language without any planning. In addition, being fluent speakers, or even accurate writers, may help concrete learners to take parts in activities such as organizing and writing reports and delivering final presentations (*ibid*).

II. 2. 3. 3. Conformists

Such type of learners is more confined with the classroom context; being directed by the teacher is what fits those learners who easily interact when being in the classroom. This feature may sometimes hinder the success of those learners given that they may feel unable to proceed in project works, in which most of them take a part outside the class. As a solution to this problem, Skehan has proposed some activities which he has referred to as 'mini real-world' tasks; the basic thing which portrays these tasks is that they take a part outside the classroom but are planned and directed by the teacher (*ibid*).

II. 2. 3. 4. Communicative learners

Unlike the previous type of learners, communicative learners are more willing to learn outside the classroom walls. Maintaining conversations, then, would be an easy task for those learners to accomplish. However, being an analytic learner or a holistic one will make the difference (Skehan, 2008).

Going through the four 'Cs' which construct types of learners, this would help in knowing why some learners are more successful than others rather the fact that each type has its advantages and disadvantages. Practically speaking, knowing how to manage and adapt certain strategies that fit own type and style of learning will be helpful given that the most important aim is to reach what is required from the task or activity.

II. 2. 4. Learning Strategies

Technically, learning strategies is a vast topic to be discussed in this section; it includes a wide range of ways adopted by learners in order to help them solve problems in learning. However, not only these ways are to solve learning problems but also to recall information, to maintain concentration, to be actively engaged in learning, and so on and so forth. For this reason, we are likely to list just the most important strategies that are frequently used by learners.

A lot of work has been made on learning strategies many years ago and many researchers have worked on this issue trying to explore other ways of effective learning and success. As an illustration, Spratt *et al*. (2005) have reported that learners generally use strategies which fit their personality types and learning styles. However, this makes another evidence that there are no best strategies than others. Furthermore, learning strategies fall into four main categories according to Macaro (2001). They can be either cognitive, meta-cognitive, social or affective strategies. In the other hand, Oxford (1987) stated another classification of strategies as being either direct (including memory

strategies, cognitive strategies and compensatory strategies) or indirect (including meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies).

A set of learning strategies have been emphasized on by some researchers like Dörnyei (2001); Macaro (2001); Dembo (2004); Crawford, Saul, Mathews and Makinster (2005); Spratt *et al*. (2005); Hewitt (2008); Van Blerkom (2009); and many other scholars covering the different dimensions of learning strategies:

✓ Repeating new words for the sake of reinforcing them in memory (rehearsing).

✓ Frequently asking questions about the parts of the lecture which they have not understood or which they have found vague and unclear.

✓ Reformulating what the teacher has said in own words according to the corresponding teacher's intentions.

✓ Designing small cards to be used for noting down new vocabulary or even for revision purposes.

✓ Making a careful analysis of the text through the SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite and review) technique.

✓ Sharing personal thoughts with other peers and gaining advantages from others' skills, strategies and opinions.

✓ Adopting strategies related to meta-cognition like planning, monitoring, problem-solving and evaluating in all areas of learning.

✓ Creating mental images, mind maps and CMaps to resume lectures and readings.

✓ Applying lecture strategies of taking notes and maintaining concentration.

✓ Using motivational and organizational strategies such as developing a positive attitude towards one-self and own abilities.

✓ Knowing how to set specific goals and how to manage time.

✓ Listening carefully to the teacher and observing his movements tactfully.

- ✓ Establishing good relationships with the family, the teacher, the learners, and so on.
- ✓ Creating a positive learning environment by finding a quiet place to study.
- ✓ Relating new information to already existing one and putting the new learned words or phrases into meaningful sentences in order to better remember them.

As we have stated earlier, learning strategies are not restricted only to what we have included here, but would rather go beyond the boundaries of such elements; therefore, every individual learner opts for creating his/her own way of learning and revising; it is then why it is difficult to obtain certain strategies for successful learners.

II. 3. Exploring Vital Skills of Revision and Success

Recognizing own objectives and needs is one stimulating factor towards establishing a solid basis for successful learning and obtaining higher grades. Now, as we have arrived to the core of investigation, we are likely to spot light on the direct factors which influence on students' grades at the end of each term. Reference here is particularly oriented towards revision techniques and strategies as well as what could be helpful as hints of success. Thus, knowing the right ways to revise and recall information is a crucial element.

II. 3. 1. Revision and Examinations

Most of the time when we speak about revision, we are likely to refer back to examinations and tests. This 'narrow' view as Robertson and Smith (1987) reported is true but should not be considered as the only purpose to revise our lectures and review what we have learnt; according to Robertson and Smith, people generally revise in order to: (1) Reinforce memory, (2) link individual items of information together, (3) check the adequacy of the notes, and (4) check understanding (*ibid*).

It is clear, then, that an effective and successful learner does not limit himself only to the period which immediately precedes examinations, but would rather establish a regular

program through which one organizes his revision timetable even before examinations approach to start.

II. 3. 1. 1. Techniques of revision

Successful learners are always eager to discover new ways for processing, reviewing and recalling information. They tend to set goals for every day, month, year, and so on. Furthermore, they tend to manage their time effectively giving a considerable amount of time to study and revision. Therefore, a successful learner is thought to revise and check his understanding frequently; this is done through making daily 'to-do' lists including periods of revising the day's lectures and checking areas where necessary clarifications are needed (Van Blerkom, 2009).

In order to identify what key elements do construct a good revision program, we are likely to examine some of the works done on this issue. In fact, the term 'revision' does not mean this literal meaning of just 'looking back' at lecture notes and read them, but would rather require a great deal of effort and work (Pritchard, 2008). However, one should not be misled by the terms 'effort' and 'work', and understand them from the negative side. Referring back to Price and Maier's (2007) argument about this issue, one would conclude that failure among students happens generally not because they have not revised but because they have used ineffective ways of revision spending much time and effort than required. As a solution, exploring strategies of preparation, organization, memory and recall is required.

We have arrived now to discovering some of the skills and strategies of a good revision program as proposed by some scholars. For example, Dudley (1986); Orr (1992); Buzan (1994); Donald and Kneale (2001); Burns and Sinfield (2004); O'Hara (2005); Race (2007); Du Boulay (2009); and many other scholars have revealed for many effective strategies which learners might explore in order to develop their levels. Here are some of

these essential techniques of a better revision program evolved from the previously mentioned scholars:

❖ First of all, one would need to control at least almost of the factors that might have an effect on the current situation; such factors include the cognitive, the psychological and the social domains which we have discussed in earlier sections.

❖ Then, one should get into the 'CORE' learning system; this acronym stands for: Collection (of all relevant information needed from lecture notes and reading assignments), Organization (of the all the necessary materials to effective study in front of you), Rehearsal (of all the main points and ideas expected to be included in the exam), and Evaluation (of oneself checking the adequacy of the learned materials as well as confirming understanding).

❖ Reviewing what has been learned should not be done in the last 'minutes' or the last night prior to the exam but should rather be done quite early; reviewing every day's lecture notes is, then, a good habit to follow.

❖ Planning a balanced schedule in which there is enough time and space to revise and cover each module fairly is also required.

❖ Sharing personal notes and discussing them with other colleagues may help in exchanging significant points which seem to be unclear or unknown before.

❖ Getting used to the 'five-day' study plan in which all modules are distributed in a fair manner.

❖ A first step which should be taken into consideration is to learn about the exam; to know its nature, its form, its parts and organization. Asking the teacher about how the exam will be like is the students' right in case the method which the teacher follows in making exam questions is unknown.

❖ Reciting what has been previewed as study materials (lecture notes, handouts, textbooks … etc) and repeating it as many times as possible until making sure that it has been kept in mind.

❖ Rehearsing in an elaborative way is much better than 'rote' learning or 'leaning by heart'; the former method of rehearsal is thought to be more active involving both understanding the meaning of the material and, then, remembering them unlike 'rote' learning which focuses on recalling information rather than understanding its meaning.

❖ Exploring strategies of a good rehearsal will be more effective if accompanied with some sorts of rewriting what has been just read and recited is beneficial for sustaining memory and recall.

❖ Aiding memorization using certain memory 'joggers' or aids is also gratefully helpful in the recapitulation of difficult information. For example, mnemonics are one of the most significant memory aids which form one kind of making own notes and, consequently, provide a 'raw' material for better revising tools. Mnemonics are more a matter of personal creation and innovation used to multiply the degree of remembering information; they are, then, peculiar ways developed at the individual level raising curiosity to speed up memory functions. Furthermore, they can be formed up using different forms. For instance, acronyms are one common type of mnemonics that can be extracted from the first letters of a list of words, phrases or sentences resulting in a new word or group of words; the newly formed words or sentences may seem meaningless, but once accepting that they will help to memorize in one way or another, it becomes easy to get acquainted with them no matter silly they are. In fact, there many other kinds of mnemonics which seem to be alike, yet being formed up in a specific way.

❖ Creating mind maps and CMaps is also approved of by many scholars in the field of education. Having the lectures and all information willing to be memorized in sorts of

mind maps and/or CMaps will help more in recapitulating small but meaningful chunks of information as well as in reducing time and effort. These two techniques of making notes are also, like mnemonics, a matter of personal choice, but learning about specific rules and principles of each technique is necessarily required.

❖ Applying different strategies of reading and revising during almost the whole time devoted to revision is no longer different from other procedures of a good revision program. For instance, applying strategies as the SQ3R method (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Recall) and the SQP4 method (Survey, Question, Predict, Plan, and Prepare); these are two strategic methods which combine both reading strategies and revision strategies. As can be noticed, both strategies share some common points, yet what can be considered as points of contrast complete each other.

❖ First and last, one should be strongly confident about himself creating a mental image of success.

Discussing all what concern an ideal revision schedule evokes a great deal of research and curiosity. So, we have just summed up the main principles governing the process of revision attempting to conclude with some norms of a successful learning plan.

II. 3. 2. Hints for Success

Reaching academic success and willing to get higher grades require specific norms in order for a learner to be successful.

For example, O'Hara (2005); Van Blerkom (2009); and Downing (2011) have stated some basic rules of success including attending all courses regularly, planning for a successful learning program, making good use of lecture notes, and many other vital skills. In fact, planning for success requires applying not only good revision strategies but also certain ways to be followed from the very early stages of entering a college or university. Therefore, it requires incorporating all the effective factors which we have discussed

earlier starting from knowing how different kinds of memory work, to controlling social and psychological factors, until knowing own' style and strategies.

Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, one would understand that there is choice to opt for the different skills and strategies, and manipulate them according to own learning styles or learning styles preferences. Specifying which type one belongs to is, then, the only interpretation which better illustrates that the strategies adapted by one individual would fit in no way the requirements and needs of each learner. In addition, effective use of these strategies must be accompanied by knowledge of the internal and external factors a learner may cope with. Besides, knowledge of the way of dealing with each factor individually and carefully is also required. Generally speaking, internal and external factors fall into three main categories; they can be either cognitive (including knowing the way different memories process and/or retrieve information), psychological (including motivation, stress and anxiety), and social (including family influences and relationships). It may seem that the first step into getting high grades starts at the very early stages of revision and preparation for official exams; however, seeking to reach what is expected requires more than exploring efficient ways of revision into sustaining own learning with vital skills to be adopted from the beginning stages of getting knowledge. Such skills must involve great skills of concentration in the classroom as well as fine skills of making efficient notes.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Making efficient notes is a significant skill that should be acquainted at least by nearly almost university students in order for their levels to be ameliorated. They need to be made aware of the different techniques and strategies which form note making and consequently to use them effectively either to write down their lecture notes or to revise and prepare for their exams. Nevertheless, our graduate students seem to follow the traditional method of taking notes in continuous sentences. One reason behind students' insistence to keep on using such usual kinds of notes may be due to lack of knowledge and expertise to try other kinds and techniques of making notes. Another reason may be that of the old method or style of teaching they have been exposed to during high and middle school trainings.

III. 1. Data Collection

Seeking to prove our hypotheses of the effectiveness of developed note-making techniques on students' memorization and recapitulation of knowledge mainly and consequently on their achievements either in usual tests or in final exams after the end of each term; the research has called for tangible results and positive effects of note making on third year students approaching graduation expected to have an idea of the style of teaching at the university and acquiring certain developed skills of recording information. Thus, a practical investigation is required in order to collect data about students' perceptions and positions towards whether they implement various kinds of notes in order to accomplish different learning purposes or not; the data is collected by means of a questionnaire administered to third year students at the University of Biskra as well as by means of observed techniques and strategies adopted by our graduate students.

This study focuses only on Students' attitudes and orientation towards their learning styles and strategies including the way they take down their lecture notes and the way they revise. No part of this practical analysis concerns teachers' attitudes towards these

techniques because this depends mainly on students' preferred ways of dealing with different learning contexts and requirements and no longer on teachers' mission to provide their learners with such lessons about how to make efficient notes.

III. 2. Design, Description and Analysis of the Data Gathering Tools

As we have stated earlier, two data collection tools are used in this study in order to prove and see how far effective the different note making techniques are in sustaining memory and in reinforcing the recapitulation of information. These data gathering tools are represented in forms of a questionnaire and an observation directed particularly to third year English students.

III. 2. 1. Students' Questionnaire

III. 2. 1. 1. Design and Description of Students' Questionnaire

In an attempt to discover students' learning styles, strategies as well as attitudes towards making notes and all its relevant issues, we are likely to propose a sample questionnaire consisting of three sections targeted to reveal for the various viewpoints of students concerning mainly note-making in relation with the different tasks required from learners such as writing lecture notes and preparing for a good revision plan. In fact, our main concern in this study is to focus on the effects which note-making techniques offer while revising lecture notes and also while taking an exam. However, we have devoted a considerable part for specific skills needed in the classroom such as the way they listen and follow the teacher and the strategies they use to record information. These elements are particularly helpful for organizing future plans and revising materials.

III. 2. 1. 1. a. Pilot Study Testing of the Questionnaire

In order for the research to be more accurate and for the questionnaire to be clear and directed to the point, we opted to pilot test it before administering it to the whole sample. Thus, some first templates of the questionnaire were given to ten (10) graduate students

specialized in the same option (i.e. “sciences of the language”). The examples contained the same questions as the ones prepared for the entire sample; however, they included a separated part in which those students are asked to give their viewpoints concerning the questionnaire; its clarity, validity and reliability. The pilot study testing was composed of six questions tackling mainly issues as the clarity of the layout, the instructions, and whether there were some points which are ambiguous and/or missing. After distributing the questionnaire to the (10) participants, and by the time their papers have been collected, an analysis of their answers was required in order to have the feedback. No comments were given by those students concerning the layout of the questionnaire or the ambiguity of some items except some remarks given by one participant claiming about item four in section two. After checking this item, we have found necessary to revise it and restate it in another manner. The same participant complained about the length of the questionnaire and the repetition of some questions as she thinks. However, the reaction of the researcher was not to reduce the length of the questionnaire or to omit the similar questions because they were put on purpose.

In the other hand, the researcher has soon discovered that not only comments and/or complains have been obtained from the pilot testing of the questionnaire but also observations on the necessity and usefulness of the proposed research had been noticed. Some insightful comments were given by some participants on the value of this particular topic in helping to improve one's skills and strategies.

III. 2. 1. 1. b. Administration of Students’ Questionnaire

After the pilot testing was completed, the questionnaire was soon administered to forty (40) graduate students chosen at random at the department of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The agents were between males and females specialized in the option labelled “sciences of the language”. They were opted for answering 28 items distributed

into three sections related to making notes during lectures and revision schedules as well learning styles, strategies and the factors affecting learners' achievements. A full analysis of the questionnaire's results is presented underneath the brief descriptions of the main sections.

Section One

This part of the questionnaire is generally referred to as 'Background Information'. We listed in this section two main areas of personal information namely gender and choice of English in the University. These two areas are classified under one item.

Section Two

'Introducing the Note-making Technique' is the second main part of this questionnaire. It includes eleven items pursuing students' position towards dealing with lecture notes and the manner of taking them accordingly. The items also seek for depicting the nature of notes students use most and the frequency of using other types of notes if they have adapted any. Points of focus are also required concerning the strategies they use to take their notes and how these latter seem to be like.

Section Three

The last section in this questionnaire is entitled 'understanding the learning environment and approaching academic success.' Its main objectives are to know the dominant level(s) of learners, their learning styles preferences and strategies especially that of listening, note making and revision. The questionnaire concludes with a set of items seeking to probe students' tendency towards mainly mind mapping and mnemonics as revision aids as well as their viewpoints about the effectiveness of making notes in sustain memory using the various kinds and techniques.

III. 2. 1. 2. Results and Analyses of Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information.

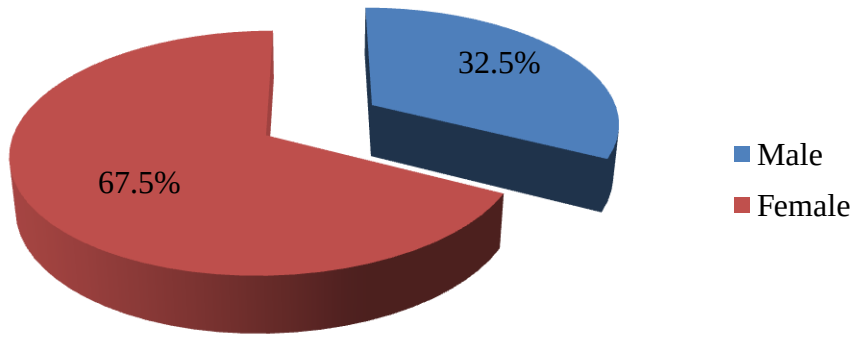
Item one: 1- Sex Distribution: The table below shows the distribution of the questionnaire agents:

Response	Male	Female
Participants	13	27
Percentage	32.5%	67.5%

Table 02: Students' Sex Distribution

As being displayed in the table above, a percentage of (67.5%) is given to female representation with number of (27) participants. Male representation, in the other hand, forms (32%) of the whole percentage of participants with (13) males; both genders are being concerned with this issue of note making, as well.

Chart 01: Students' Sex Distribution



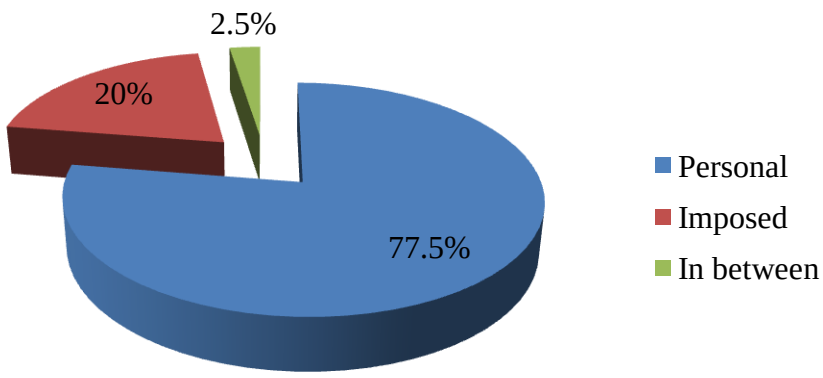
2- Students' Choice of English: This part of the item probes for students' attitudes towards English as a branch in the University.

Response	Personal	Imposed	In between
Participants	31	08	01
Percentage	77.5%	20%	2.5%

Table 03: Students' Choice of English as a Branch at the University

As shown in the table above, the majority of participants (77.5%) chose English willingly; the (31) participants need to show high motivation towards learning English. Thus, there are other items in which we discuss this issue in details. However, only (08) participants (20%) claimed that they were obliged to choose English as a branch at the University. One participant (2.5%) responded neutrally supposing that her choice of English was between personal and imposed.

Chart 02: Students' Choice of English as a Branch at the University



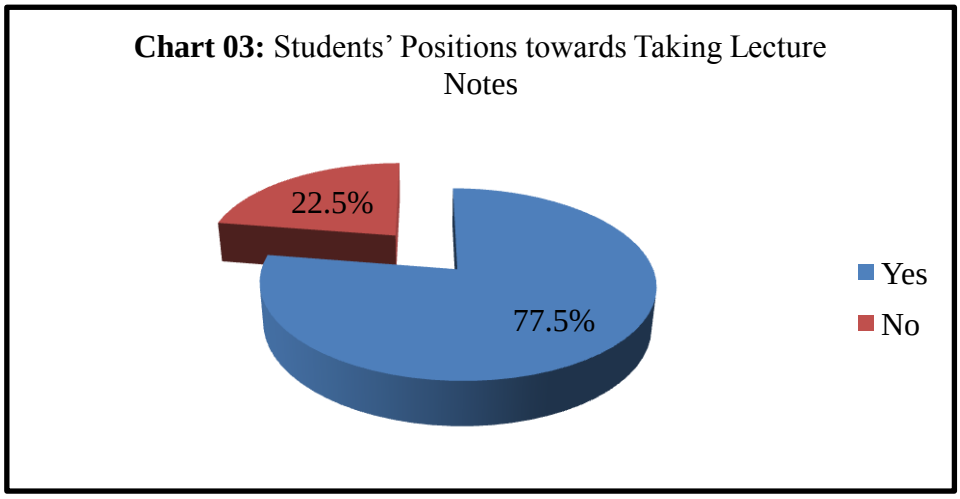
Section Two: Introducing the Note-making Technique

Item one: Attending your lectures, do you usually take notes?

By asking this question, we tend to see the proportion of graduate students who usually take notes and to see whether there are agents who do not take notes or not.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	31	09
Percentage	77.5%	22.5%

Table 04: Students' Positions towards Taking Lecture Notes



This question is tended to recognize whether all students take notes during lectures or there are some exceptions who just attend courses without making even meaningful summaries to what they have listened to. As it was not expected to have agents responding 'No' to this question, it seems that (09) participants of this sample do not take notes; (06) of them are males and the other three are females forming at whole only (22.5%) of the whole sample. In the other hand, the other (31) participants, ranging between females (25) and males (06), do take notes during lectures. However, taking into consideration the remaining items, the participants responding negatively to this question may have

responded to the other items which follow. The reason behind their negative answers may be attributed to their methods of writing lecture notes ranging between taking just few words or sentences and writing only main titles, dictated notes and/or information from the blackboard.

Item two: When taking your notes do you tend to?

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Record everything the teacher says	06	15%
b- Write only the main ideas mentioned by the teacher	19	47%
c- Make your own notes according to what you have understood	18	45%
d- Wait until the teacher dictates or writes on the board	04	10%
e- Separate the dictation of the teacher from the explanation	03	7.5%
f- No answer	03	7.5%

Table 05: Students' Attitudes towards the Nature of their Lecture Notes

By asking this question, we are likely to discover the nature of notes students adopt; whether the notes are originally copied from the teacher' speech, made up according to own understanding, organized according to the teacher's dictation and explanatory details, and so on.

According to the data presented in the table above, nearly half of the sample write just the main ideas given by their teachers and reformulate them according to what they have understood. Their percentages are represented as follows in that same order (47%), representing (19) participants and (45%) representing (18) participants. Arriving to participants tending to record everything said by the teacher, the table reveals for (06) participants doing so with a percentage of (15%). By contrast, (04) other participants (10%) claimed that they wait until the teacher dictates or writes on the board. Only three

participants (7.5%) of the sample do organize their notes by separating the dictated points from that resolved to be the teacher's explanation. The same percentage (7.5%) represents the number of participants giving no answers. In fact, what can be interpreted from the data is what students do is just restating only the main ideas in own ways/words. Having the recorded notes classified in an organized format seem to be minimized and of a low consideration although it may help to a great extent in identifying important areas of focus when coming to review lecture notes.

Item three: How often do you use the following sorts of notes?

Technique \ **Frequency**		**Always**	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**	**N.A**
a- Linear notes	Participants	07	21	06	02	04
	percentage	(17.5%)	(52.5%)	(15%)	(05%)	(10%)
b- Visual notes	Participants	04	06	17	12	1
	Percentage	(10%)	(15%)	(42.5%)	(30%)	(2.5%)
c- Mnemonics	Participants	05	12	09	12	02
	Percentage	(12.5%)	(30%)	(22.5%)	(30%)	(05%)
d- Graphs and tables	Participants	03	06	21	09	01
	Percentage	(7.5%)	(15%)	(52.5%)	(22.5%)	(2.5%)
e-CMaps/mind maps	Participants	05	09	09	14	03
	Percentage	(12.5%)	(22.5%)	(22.5%)	(35%)	(7.5%)
f- Abbreviations	Participants	17	12	06	03	02
	Percentage	(42.5%)	(30%)	(15%)	(7.5%)	(5%)
g- Patterned notes	Participants	12	17	06	04	01
	Percentage	(30%)	(42.5%)	(15%)	(10%)	(2.5%)

Table 06: Frequency of Using various Techniques of Note-making

We attempted by asking this significant question to know what sorts of notes are used frequently by graduate students taking down notes to fulfill different writing purposes. In

addition, we are likely to note the disparity between using the different kinds of notes and the degree of this variability.

Looking at the data displayed in the table, we find that students' responses were not quite accurate. However, by examining the numbers and percentages representing the frequency of using each technique, we find that 'linear notes', 'abbreviations' and fortunately 'patterned notes' are approximately the most frequently used ones. The data reveals for (17.5%) of the whole percentage using 'linear notes' frequently and (52.5%) using it 'sometimes'. Although the expected results was to find out a considerable number of participants using this kind of notes 'always' and not 'sometimes', 'linear notes' appears to be the favorable type to be used by learners since writing in continuous sentences is the easiest and dominant way of writing.

In another side, the use of 'abbreviations' and 'patterned notes' is also common among students showing statistics as (17) participants (42.5%) 'always' using abbreviations and (12) participants adapting this technique sometimes. The percentages representing participants using 'patterned notes' 'frequently' and 'sometimes' are in the reverse order with that of 'abbreviations'.

According to data shown in the table, (12) participants claimed that they sometimes use 'mnemonics' with a percentage of (30%). However, this does not mean that those participants do really use this technique, and may have perceived it as 'abbreviations' although this latter has been already identified. Similarly, the same percentage represents participants who have 'never' used this technique before.

Concerning the use of 'graphs and tables' and 'CMaps and mind maps', it seems that the number of participants who 'rarely' or 'never' used these two effective techniques is noticeably apparent having (09) participants who claimed that they 'sometimes' and, again, 'rarely' use CMaps/mind maps similar to the number of participants reporting that

'mnemonics' are being rarely used by them. Furthermore, more than half of the sample representing (52.5%) of the global sample said that they 'rarely' use tables/graphs, whereas the other remaining percentage (47.5%) is divided between participants who 'always', 'sometimes' or 'never' used this technique with the dominant number of participants having 'never' experienced this kind (i.e. (09) participants).

Expectedly, a considerable number of participants responded that they have 'never' experienced 'CMaps/mind maps' showing a percentage of (35%) with (14) participants. What can be obtained from the students' responses is that the percentages of using other forms than the usual methods of writing in continuous sentences and abbreviating are less common and seem to be neglected by students. This is maybe because of getting used only to these techniques or lack of motivation to try other forms; further reasons may be identified in coming items.

Item four: In your opinion, do you think there is a relationship between the subject (module) you are studying and your choice of the note's kinds? How?

In this item, we seek opinions of students towards whether there is a possibility to use other kinds of notes for all lectures or not, and if there is/there is not, why should such response can be argued for? Students' responses are presented in the table below and the paragraph underneath it.

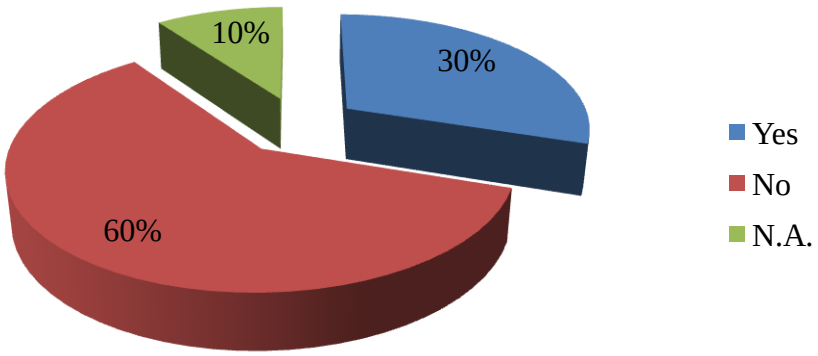
Response	**Yes**	**No**	**N.A.**
Participants	12	24	04
Percentage	30%	60%	10%

Table 07: Students Responses of whether all Modules Require 'Linear Notes' or not

Examining data presented in the table above, we discover that more than half of the sample responded 'No' to this question forming (60%) of the whole percentage (i.e. (24) participants). In the other hand, (12) participants chose 'Yes' as an answer which form only (30%). In addition, the remaining participants representing (10%) gave N.A. (no

answer). However, reasons behind such responses may vary depending on how these participants perceived the question.

Chart 04: Students Responses of whether all Modules Require 'Linear Notes' or not



In order to know why each group of participants has chosen whichever of the two responses, we have proposed a sub-question (How?) in order to depict students' perceptions of this question. Here are some of their general arguments after having been revisited:

Starting to examine arguments of participants responded 'yes' previously, we should at first make a remark that (07) out of (12) gave no arguments in this part of the item; this is may be because they do not exactly why they are particularly confined to this usual kind. The other (05) participants' arguments were mainly about issues related to revision and understanding claiming that this method illustrates better the sequencing of ideas (argument given by one (01) participant) as well as provides more ideas and less confusion. In fact, their arguments seem to bring narrow views believing that other kinds may not help in future revision by sustaining memory.

In the other hand, participants' arguments that not all modules require writing in continuous sentences varied between claiming that there are modules in which writing

notes is either not needed or, if so, it would be writing just few words/sentences like ‘oral expression’ (a claim made by (05) participants). Although this is a reasonable and accepted argument, it was not the intention to obtain responses related to ‘oral expression’ but content modules where taking notes is required. Other (09) participants have the belief that other kinds may be useful namely ‘abbreviations’ and ‘patterned notes’ (One of them has not responded to the previous sub-question). Those participants claimed that factors as time, nature of modules (e.g. lectures in amphitheatres), as well as own objectives or preferred ways are the most reasons behind such a choice. Another participant stated that writing notes is needed only in difficult modules as linguistics and pragmatics. The other remaining participants have not answered to this question (forming (10) participants).

Item five: Do you choose the kinds and/or techniques to make your notes according to:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- The module	12	30%
b- The objective of writing	11	27.5%
c- The nature of information	09	22.5%
d- All of them	11	27.5%
e- None o them	03	7.5%
f- No answer	02	05%

Table 08: Students’ Perceptions of Choosing Kinds of Notes according to Certain Criteria

Although not all students use various forms of notes, being, most of them, using ‘abbreviations’ and ‘outlining method’ in lectures, the choice of using other kinds depend mainly on the module with (12) participants and the objective of writing with (11) participants. In addition, only (09) participants with a percentage of (22.5%) claimed that they choose the kinds of notes according to the nature of information which is an important factor. Other frequent percentage of (27.5%) with (11) participants said that all criteria are required in choosing the kinds of notes. What can be interpreted from having most participants answering this question is that not necessarily these participants do choose the

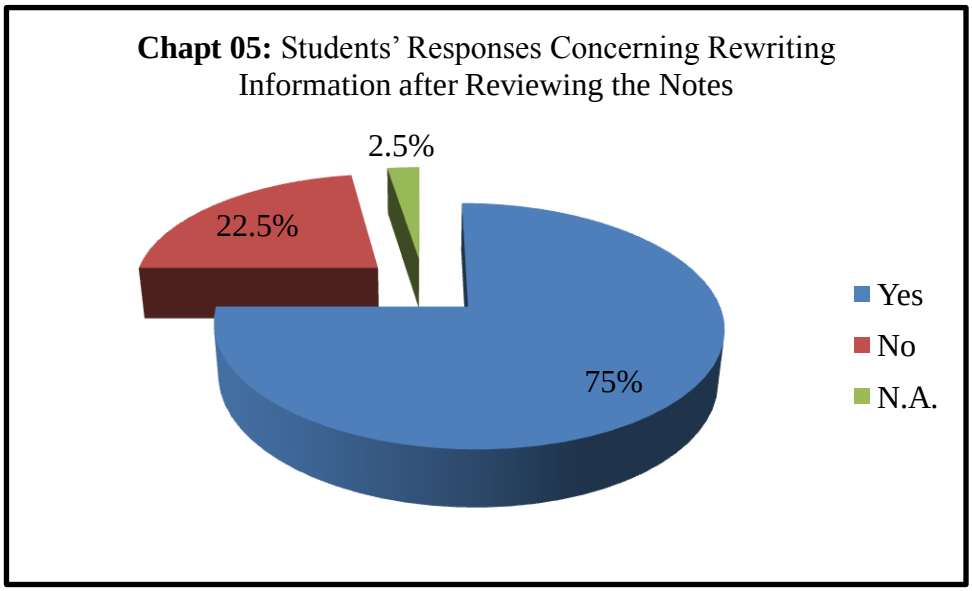
kinds of their notes, but would have been perceived the question as seeking their attitudes towards this issue. However, we can assume that students have started to recognize to a certain extent the probability of getting benefits from other types of notes.

Item six: Do you rewrite the information in your own words when you review your notes?

The rationale behind asking this question was to know whether graduate students do rewrite the information they have reviewed in their own words or do not.

Response	Yes	No	N.A.
Participants	30	09	01
Percentage	75%	22.5%	2.5%

Table 09: Students' Responses Concerning Rewriting Information after Reviewing the Notes



According to students' responses, it seems that many students try to immortalize what they have revised, or in better words what they have recited in their own ways. It has been found that many students claimed that they use this strategy of revision using sorts of writing information down for better reinforcement. One participant gave no choice to this question (2.5%), and the other remaining (09) participants responded 'No' to this question

that forms (22.5%) of the global sample. However, the kinds of notes those students use is still unknown for which other items are required.

Item seven: What about essay preparation? Do you PLAN for it making use of notes?

This question was intended to set students' position towards making notes while preparing or planning to write an essay. It is considered as an item which paves the way to a significant item, where students' positions towards the different kinds of making notes are required fulfilling various objectives including essay preparation.

Response	**Yes**	**No**
Participants	29	11
Percentage	72.5%	27.5%

Table 10: Students' Positions towards Making Notes for Essay Planning

Examining data presented in the table above, we discover that a huge number of participants ((29) participants out of (40) forming (72.5%) of the global sample) do claim that they plan for their essay using some sorts of writing. The other remaining (11) participants said that they do not make notes of any form to plan for their essays.

Item eight: What sort(s) of notes do you use most fulfilling the following purposes?

This question was intended to measure students' degree of awareness towards using the various techniques of making notes in different situations of learning, for example, what sort(s) of notes appear to be frequently used fulfilling precise processes as taking lecture notes, planning for an essay, and revising for future examinations. Students' responses with relevant percentages are presented in the coming table:

Technique \ Purpose		Writing Lecture notes	Planning for Essay writing	Revising	N.A
a- Linear notes	Participants	15	16	07	06
	percentage	(37.5%)	(40%)	(17.5%)	(15%)
b- Visual notes	Participants	08	10	14	09
	Percentage	(20%)	(25%)	(35%)	(22.5%)
c- Mnemonics	Participants	11	11	06	12
	Percentage	(27.5%)	(27.5%)	(15%)	(30%)
d- Graphs and tables	Participants	14	10	13	06
	Percentage	(35%)	(25%)	(32.5%)	(15%)
e-CMaps/mind maps	Participants	06	08	19	09
	Percentage	(15%)	(20%)	(47.5%)	(22.5%)

Table 11: Students' Uses of kinds of Notes according to the Purposes

What could be noticed from the table above is that ‘Linear notes’ seem to be again the most appearing technique to be used by students especially to write their lecture notes and to plan for essay writing with percentages of (37%) with (15) participants for the former purpose, and with a percentage of (40%) with (16) participants for the latter one. Although the results obtained from item six revealed for many participants claiming that they do make some sorts of writing when they review their lecture notes, the data showed in the table here does not reveal for a considerable amount of participants who use this technique for revision purposes, only (07) participants of them, though it is the most common and available method of revising, expecting higher percentages.

In the other hand, (11) participants claimed that they use ‘mnemonics’ to write their lecture notes, and the same number of participants stated also that they use it for essay preparation that form in each of the two purposes (27.5%) of the whole percentage. Concerning the number of participants claiming that they use ‘mnemonics’ for revision

purposes, they were only (06) participants with a percentage of (15%). Taking into account students' claim to use 'mnemonics' for lecture notes and essay planning, which is in itself illogic, one would conclude that these students have perceived 'mnemonics' as 'abbreviations' although it has been differentiated in item three of this section. This may raise an idea that some of students' responses were nearly just filling gaps and responding insincerely.

Going back to 'visual notes' uses as displayed in the table, we find that (14) participants (i.e. 35%) claimed that they use this technique to revise, (08) participants to write their lecture notes, and (10) to plan for entire essays. However, examining data in item three, we notice that many students do say that they have never or rarely used 'visual notes'. Thus, if this technique is really adopted, it is done just rarely or by a few number of students. The same remark can be applied on to 'graphs/tables' and obtaining data as (14) participants using them to write their lecture notes (35%), (10) to plan for entire essays (25%), and (13) participants to revise for exams (32.5%). 'Graphs/tables' seem to be rarely used as results in item three revealed.

In addition, what can be noticed from students' responses concerning the use of 'CMaps/mind maps' is no longer different from the two previous techniques. It has been revealed that (06) participants claimed that they use this kind of note making to write their lecture notes, and (08) participants to plan for their essays. Although using this technique for writing lecture notes is quite unreasonable or is somehow difficult to be controlled, (15%) claimed to do so. Provided that (25%) of the sample claimed that they use 'CMaps/mind maps' as a preparing technique to plan for essays, we can assume that other sub-techniques as 'spider diagrams' and 'clustering' may be applied instead of real mind maps. Then, comes the significant purpose where making notes is helpful that is revision; what the statistics actually show is that (19) participants do claim that they use

'CMaps/mind maps' among their revision tools that forms (47.5%) of the whole sample. In fact, (25%) out of this percentage claimed before that they have never used it before (i.e. in item three) that represents (10) participants, and the remaining (09) agents' previous responses were classified as being 'rarely' ((03) agents), 'sometimes' ((04) agents), and 'always' ((02) agents). This small number of participants does, again, reflect students' ignorance to try new methods of revision and making notes in particular.

Receiving considerable amounts of participants giving no answers to each of the various sorts of notes also holds the fact that making notes of different kinds is not of their main concerns as numbers appear to be significant; for example, (12) participants not responding to the 'mnemonics' choice, and (09) participants not responding to both: 'visual notes' and 'CMaps/mind maps' choices are better evidence.

Item nine: When taking your lecture notes, do you focus more on:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- The format of your notes	04	10%
b- The significance of information	24	60%
c- The quantity of information	10	25%
d- The Relationships between and among ideas	18	45%
e- No answer	01	2.5%

Table 12: Students' Perceptions towards Points of Focus while Taking Lecture Notes

Proposing this item, it was our intention to seek students' attitudes towards what points they focus more on when they take their lecture notes; do they focus on the format of their notes? On the significance of information? Or on what aspect? Here is the description of the data displayed in the above table:

Starting with the most reoccurring aspect which graduate students seem to focus on, we find that the majority of students do emphasize on writing only the significant ideas being stressed on by their teachers with a percentage of (60%) representing (24) agents of

the global sample. Moreover, the percentage of participants claiming that they take into consideration the relationship between ideas is also significant forming (45%) of the general percentage with (18) participants; which means that those students are aware of what they write.

In the other hand, (10) participants reported that their notes seem to contain as many information supplied by the teacher. A percentage as (25%) is a threatening sign that some of graduate students still absorb everything mentioned by teachers. Expectedly, only (04) participants have chosen the first point stating that they focus on the format of their notes forming only (10%) of the whole percentage. Again, one (01) participant chose none of the proposed points that maybe interpreted that this participant does really not take lecture notes. Providing the significant role which the format of lecture notes plays in organizing data, having a unique form of notes, and in identifying or classifying data according to their significance, we conclude that still graduate learners are not aware of the benefits which making notes in specific formats provide as long as the organization of information is concerned.

Item ten: Do you assign specific files for every module or you condense your notes in one file?

By asking this question, we tend to know whether participants condense all their notes in one file or devote particular files for each module. And here there are two possibilities given that students condense their notes in one file, in which they either write mixed lectures all together or they devote specific parts for each module. Here are students' responses:

Response	Assign many files	Condense notes in one file	N.A
Participants	22	17	01
Percentage	55%	42.5%	2.5%

Table 13: Students' Positions towards Recording Lecture Notes in Personal Files

Throughout the data obtained from students' responses concerning the preferred style of recording lecture notes, we find that nearly the results representing each of the two choices were not far out from each other. The number of participants liking to have their notes for each module in a specific file is (22) forming approximately half of the whole percentage (55%). However, the second half of the percentage is divided and devoted mainly to participants condensing their notes of all modules in one file forming (42.5%) of the whole percentage with (17) participants, and the remaining (2.5%) representing one (01) participant has not responded. Having at least one (01) participant not responding to approximately every item makes a sense that this participant writes random and mixed notes if even the process of taking notes is rarely adopted. Organizing data of each subject in specific files still remains the best way used to aid in future management techniques of the different lectures' notes.

Item eleven: Practically speaking, your lecture notes seem to be:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Arranged in an organized manner	19	47.5%
b- Disorganized and untidy	05	12.5%
c- Written using various colors	08	20%
d- Difficult to be recognized (handwriting)	11	27.5%
e- Connected and meaningful	19	47.5%
f- Unclear and meaningless	03	7.5%
g- No answer	01	2.5%

Table 14: Students' Perceptions towards their Lecture Notes

By asking this question, we seek to know how generally the notes made by graduate students seem to be like. According to some conditions of learning, the notes being taken or recorded may seem to contain some gaps, and therefore, seem to be unconnected due to teacher's speed in explaining and/or in dictating parts of the lecture.

Referring back to the table, one would remark that nearly half of the participants (19) claimed that their notes seem to be connected, meaningful, and arranged in an organized manner, which forms in whole (47.5%) of the entire sample; having collected a meaningful and a connected set of notes by such a considerable number of participants may be attributed to teachers' style of teaching including the slowing down of the speed of speech while explaining and dictating. A threatening point that many students still suffer from is that related to 'bad' handwriting revealing for (11) participants who chose this response forming a noticing percentage of (27.5%). Thus, the call for ways to develop ones' handwriting is necessary for those students to evolve this problem which leads in most of the time to their failure.

Another significant point that should be taken into account is that of the role which colors play in sustaining memory. Although the use of colors may be helpful to a great extent not only to differentiate central titles and sub-main ideas but also to signal out some key words, phrases or even sentences. The data reveals for only (08) participants using colors when they write their lecture notes forming just (20%) of the global percentage.

It seems also that there are only few participants who opted for the two remaining options (i.e. the option of notes as being 'disorganized/untidy' and the option of notes as being 'unclear/meaningless') with percentages as (12.5%) for the former, and (7.5%) for the latter. Again, one (01) participant gave no answer.

Section Three: Understanding the Learning Environment & Approaching Academic Success

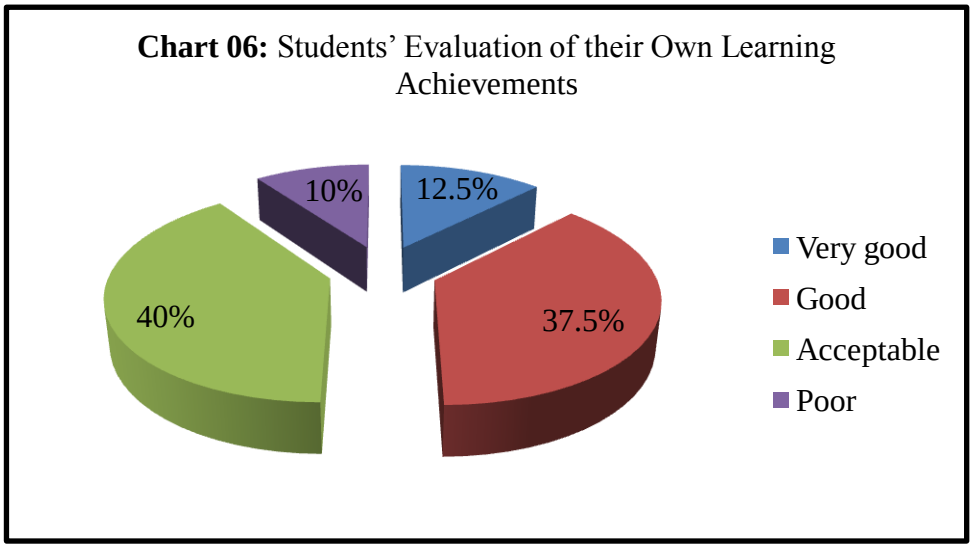
Item one: Assessing yourself along three years of study, how would you evaluate your achievements?

This question seems to be classified under section one seeking for personal information; however, it would rather be included here as a starting point to evaluate

students' level(s) depending on the strategies they adopt as well as the possible factors which may affect learners' outcomes in a way or another.

Response	Very good	Good	Acceptable	Poor
Participants	05	15	16	04
Percentage	12.5%	37.5%	40%	10%

Table 15: Students' Evaluation of their Own Learning Achievements



From the table and chart above, we notice that the most occurring levels are 'good' and 'acceptable' with percentages as (37.5%) representing participants opting for the 'good' choice and (40%) representing participants opting for the 'acceptable' choice. Only (05) participants claimed that their achievements are 'very good' constituting a percentage of only (12.5%) of the global sample. Similarly, the other remaining (04) participants stated that they have a 'poor' level. Having a few number of participants with a 'very good' level and, a proximate number of participants having a 'good' and an 'acceptable' levels ranging between fifteen and sixteen participants, urges us to discover the strategies which graduate students adopt either in the classroom or at home when revision is required. This also urges us to look for flaws in students' lives and learning modalities as

well as to search for ways for the sake of overcoming expected problems. The coming items, then, do tackle some of these issues.

Item two: When the teacher is explaining the lesson, you seem to:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Just listen carefully to the teacher	15	37.5%
b- Combine and make harmony between listening and note making	24	60%
c- Focus on taking as many notes without selective attention	03	7.5%
d- No answer	01	2.5%

Table 16: Students' Positions towards the Teacher's Explanation

Through proposing this question, we tend to know students' ways of dealing with the teacher's explanation of the lecture; i.e. whether those participants try to record everything without selecting needed information, just listen to the teacher, or accompany careful listening with sorts of writing to record information.

Examining the table above, one would notice that (15) participants, that are big deal, forming (37.5%) of the whole sample do claim that they just listen carefully to the teacher; this may insinuate that these participants might have faced difficulties to keep up with the teacher explaining the lesson trying to write down their teacher's explanations. Representing (60%) of the global percentage, about (24) participants claimed that they try to make harmony between listening to their teachers, and summarizing or paraphrasing what they have understood through making notes. In the other hand, participants' reporting that they tend to take as many notes as the teacher provides form only (7.5%) minimizing the number of participants claiming to do so in item two in the previous section into the half (i.e. from (06) participants to (03)). A participant gave no answer which represent only (2.5%) of the global sample. One possible reason behind students' choice of keeping just to

listen carefully to their teacher0 is that they may be considering the teacher's explanations as being just additional information waiting for the teacher's dictation.

Item three: While listening to your teacher do you:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Listen carefully without making notes	05	12.5%
b- Listen carefully making some sorts of notes	31	77.5%
c- Pretend to listen but cannot follow or understand	05	12.5%
d- Keep listening until you are distracted by something else	04	10%

Table 17: Students' Positions towards the While-listening Phase

As a follow-up to the previous item, this question was meant either to confirm the data presented previously or reject them, as well as to find out other realities about students' status while listening.

What can be obtained from the table above is the fact that making notes is a significant process that students tend to adapt while taking a part in the process of careful listening resulting in a percentage of (77.5%); however, (09) out of the (31) participants reporting that they make notes as they listen have chosen the first point in the previous item (i.e. they have reported that they 'just listen carefully to the teacher'). This indicates that there were only (20) participants out of the (31) participants responding truthfully to this question. And this also indicates that only half of the sample try really to combine careful listening with note-making. The other remaining (03) participants' responses out of (31) were a kind of paradox in the previous item combining either two choices or even all of them. Thus, participants opting for choices (a), (c) and (d) range between four (04) to five (05) participants forming only between (10-12.5%) of the global sample. It is, then, important to increase the number of students making their own decisions to copy down necessary information the way they have understood it, given that right interpretations are critical.

Item four: Are you a: visual learner? An auditory learner? Or a kinaesthetic learner?

Response	Participants	Percentage
a- A visual learner	16	40%
b- An auditory learner	22	55%
c- A kinaesthetic learner	07	17.5%

Table 18: Students' Styles of Learning

The item hereby seeks the general dominant style(s) learners are characterized by. Generally, learners seem to have either a visual or an auditory learning style; however, including the 'kinaesthetic' style was to know whether there are learners who show other talents than learning languages.

The table above reveals for only (16) participants having a 'visual' style with a percentage of (40%). In the other hand, about half of the participants (55%) do claim that they have an 'auditory' style represented in (22) participants. The number of participants opting for the 'kinaesthetic' choice was seven (07) constituting at whole (17.5%). Although no one style is better than the other, it seems that (03) very good participants out of (05) have a visual style which indicates that the strategies which visual learners adopt may be more useful than that adopted by auditory learners. However, learners belonging to each style need to develop strategies and adapt them according to their learning styles including developing strategies of note making.

Item five: Name some strategies you use and think are effective for you in the classroom:

By proposing this question, we meant to discover some of the strategies students commonly use in the classroom in order to overcome learning deficiencies and to solve learning problems.

Getting through students' responses and/or judgments about what they think are effective strategies for them, we have come up with a considerable amount of strategies,

sometimes being shared by students or adapted as individual features. Here are some of their responses with their relevant statistics and percentages:

We shall start with the most reoccurring and common strategies among students. Such strategies involve skills as listening carefully and taking notes (including making own notes and using abbreviations) with a percentage of (30%) for each strategy representing (12) participants. The next preferred strategies are asking questions, with (06) participants and focusing on important words/phrases which most of the time stimulate students' attentions, with (04) participants forming only (10%). Then, comes strategies as using visual illustrations (including 'real-life scenarios') as well as working in groups and exchanging personal notes (cooperative work) with a shared number of participants (i.e. (03) for each strategy) with a percentage of (7.5%). Other rarely used and shared strategies include using dictionary (manual or electronic), working individually, following the teacher's actions and speaking, with a percentage of only (5%) for each one.

However, individual strategies seem to vary depending on each learner's way of seeing effective learning methods. For instance, each of the following strategies has been advocated by only one participant for each, representing only (2.5%) of the global sample; these strategies are as follows: using colors, mind maps, entertainment, clustering strategy, providing personal opinion about the subject, writing (on the board and in own files), participating, and lastly organizing notes for having a good work are all personal ways of dealing with various learning issues.

As a result of the aforementioned responses, one would conclude that all the strategies adopted by those participants are effective to a great extent. However, coming across only very few participants adopting efficient ways of learning indicates that graduate students still lack internal and external motives to try other strategies and are still not ready to leave out what is inefficient for their own interest. In the other hand, receiving no answers to

such a question brings the impression that the (08) participants do not apply specific strategies, or do not know exactly what are they applying or how they do it.

Item six: What is your position of time management? Do you manage your time:

Response	Participants	Percentage
a- Often	08	20%
b- Sometimes	30	75%
c- Never	02	05%

Table 19: Students' Positions towards Time Management

This item is another aspect of learning styles where time management is a crucial aspect in sustaining academic success. It is also considered as bridging the gap between learning strategies in the classroom and preparing for taking official exams (i.e. good revision approaches). It seeks to know how frequently graduate students manage their time to reach a balanced studying program.

As the above table shows, (08) out of forty (40) participants stated that they 'often' manage their time. In the other hand, the majority of students (here (75%) of the global percentage) claimed that they 'sometimes' manage their time which indicates that graduate students try from time to time to take a real step in . The other remaining two (02) participants reported that they have 'never' managed their time. As long as time management is necessary all the time though difficult, it would be better if graduate students increase their time management frequencies and if they know well how far successful they can obtain what they have settled as expected goals.

Item seven: Do you set your goals previously?

This question is a follow up to the previous one seeking to know also how many students do set their goals previously.

Response	Yes	No
Participants	30	10
Percentage	75%	25 %

Table 20: Students' Responses of whether they Set Goals or not

Examining data in the table above, we obtain results as (30) participants claiming that they set their goals earlier, forming again (75%) of the entire sample. The other remaining (10) participants reported that they do not plan for any goals as they learn, forming wholly about (25%). Although we have the same percentage of participants claiming that they set their goals with that reporting that they 'sometimes' manage their time, we still have other (08) participants stating that they 'always' work according to time management. This leaves the impression that not necessarily all those who claim they manage their times do really set earlier goals. It may happen that students start to manage their time only when exams are near to cope with. Despite the fact that we have a considerable amount of participants reporting that setting goals and time management are of their concerns, we still have very participants holding a 'very good' level. So why, then, these participants do not reach what they have expected although they have settled goals and managed their time? It is, then, due to some factors why these graduate students fail to achieve what they expected to realize. The coming items discuss some of these factors.

Item eight: To what factor(s) can you attribute your failure to reach your expected goals?

By asking this question, we tend to know what factors graduate students usually suffer from. It proposes three major factors to which students' failure can generally be attributed to. Students' responses are presented in the table just following this page:

Response	Participants	Percentage
a- Cognitive factors	11	27..5%
b- Psychological factors	24	60%
c- Social factors	10	25%
d- No answer	04	10%

Table 21: Students' Responses Concerning the Problems they Suffer from

As could be noticed from the table, psychological factors seem to be common among a wide number of students revealing for (24) participants with a percentage of (60%). Cognitive and social factors are also common, but less common than the psychological factors do, revealing for percentages as (27.5%) for the former and (25%) for the latter. Although a lot of participants have claimed that their choice of English were personal, many of them suffer from psychological problems of various kinds.

Item nine: State some factors you feel they usually hinder (obstruct) you to do well, especially in exams:

This item was presented as a follow up to the previous question seeking for specific reasons behind students' failure.

Throughout scanning students' papers of the questionnaire, we find different viewpoints concerning what can be considered as negative factors influencing academic success. It is obvious that one would expect as many reasons as long as learning differences are concerned. Most factors which appear to affect students' achievements are stress and anxiety (including shyness) with (06) participants, and lack of self-confidence and motivation (sometimes because of some teachers) with (05) participants. Fear to make mistakes and to enter the makeup exams comes in the second place with the social influences (including family, responsibilities and commitments) with a percentage of (10%) for each factor. Other (03) participants claimed that they feel obsessed by noise

inside the classroom; this latter happens generally due to large classes. In addition, factors as: being uncertain about how the exam questions will be like; hesitation to identify the right answers in exams; claims that there teachers who do not know how to deal with the students; psychological factors (being not identified); and lastly making relationships outside the classroom have gained a percentage of (05%) for each of the two factors. Other factors as: focusing on getting good marks rather than understanding the lecture; large quantity of information supplied in a short period of time; lack of attention and interest; pressure put on by the teacher; feelings of boredom, tiredness and sometimes negative attitudes towards some courses; and/or adapting inefficient ways of revision are some of the individual reasons behind students' failure each forming only (2.5%) of the global sample. Similarly, other participant stated that the format of her essays is usually difficult, that makes it hard for the teacher to recognize. Another one participant claimed that he does not exactly know the reasons behind not reaching the expected goals.

Some other participants have understood or acted as if they were asked to state the positive factors which stimulate them to do well at exams. Although the question was clearly stated and differentiated from item five in this section, these only (07) participants have revealed for other good strategies of revision (one of them claimed that she does not suffer from any problem in the previous question). Most of their responses were about issues as good listening strategies, preparing good revision techniques, organizing time, and building welfare emotional and psychological beliefs as motivation and self-confidence. One of these participants reported that factors as [reading the Quran, sitting in a 'quite' place far from other people, and answering in the same paper] are the factors which help him to succeed.

Remarkably, obtaining a percentage of (30%) having not been responding to this question indicates that these (12) participants do not know exactly what factors affect their achievements although most of them have responded to the previous question.

Item ten: Do you revise your lecture notes:

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Every day	02	05%
b- Every week	10	25%
c- Two or one week before the exam	20	50%
d- Just the night before the exam	10	25%
e- No answer	02	05%

Table 22: Students' Positions towards Revision Scheduling

This item was intended to measure students' preferences towards revision programming, and how these participants plan for their revision schedule.

As the above table reveals, only (02) participants claimed that they revise their lecture notes 'every day' forming just (05%) of the global percentage. The same percentage represents the number of participants giving no answer probably for that they do not follow specific method of revision. In the other hand, (10) participants reported that they do revise their lecture notes 'every week' revealing for (25%) of the global sample, similar to the percentage of students claiming that they revise their notes only 'just the night before an exam' (i.e. (10) participants). Forming half the sample, (20) participants reported that they start their revision one or two weeks before the exams.

It seems that nearly half the sample were really responding accurately to almost every item in this questionnaire. Yet, it is not enough to receive (50%) starting quite earlier before the exams start because even reviewing one or two weeks before will not guarantee the full retention of information. Relevant studies on the issue emphasized the advantages gained from reviewing the notes of the day's lectures within the same 24 hours of receiving

the information, for which the data obtained does not go with. This later indicates students' ignorance to reinforce what they have learned and are deemed to revise only for exams. Again, working and revising just to get good marks seems to be a narrow view of learning and may, therefore, lead to unexpected results.

Item eleven: What is your method of revision?

Now that we have approximately arrived to the central part of this investigation, we shall identify how far effective are the strategies adopted by graduate students as well as to see how far accurate their responses were.

Response	**Participants**	**Percentage**
a- Review your lecture notes	15	37.5%
b- Recite what you have learned (read aloud)	09	22.5%
c- Learn by heart	12	30%
d- Create summary notes	22	55%
e- Make up mnemonics and/or mind maps	04	10%
f- Revise individually	20	50%
g- Revise within a group	09	22.5%
h- No answer	02	05%

Table 23: Students' Reported Methods of Revision

Ultimately, we should begin with the most common and essential step of revision which is 'reviewing lecture notes' or 'looking back at lecture notes'. It seems inevitable to skip this essential step of revision because no one would imagine a revision style without the necessary step of reviewing the notes. However, what we have obtained from students' responses is that only (15) participants reported that they review their lecture notes forming (37.5%) of the global sample. Reciting aloud is another common and useful method of revision revealing for only (09) participants using this technique with a percentage of (22.5%). In the other hand, (30%) of the global sample tend to learn by heart believing that it is a useful way to revise. Despite the fact that learning by heart is not an assured

technique, those (12) participants may be using it as a way to satisfy the teachers, though it does not work for all. As an alternative, making summary notes can be helpful to a great extent in reinforcing information, especially when accompanied with a loud recitation. There are practically (22) participants claiming that they create summary notes among their revision techniques representing (55%) of the entire sample.

Besides, there are other useful strategies including the use of various note making techniques, namely mind maps and mnemonics. Being of our main concerns in this dissertation, we seek to know how far these two techniques are awarded and applied by graduate students. Looking at students' responses to this item, we find that only four (04) participants who used this technique to revise for exams. Thus, such a very few number of participants, representing only (10%), brings the impression that graduate students do not attempt to innovate new ways to develop their skills of revision, and prefer to keep on using old methods of revision unaware of whether they are effective or not.

Taking into account another aspect of revision which is that of preferring to revise individually or within a group; concerning this issue we obtained the following results:

✓ The number of participants preferring to work individually were (20) forming wholly half the sample (i.e. (50%)).

✓ The number of participants reporting that they like cooperating with their peers in order to maintain good revision were only nine (09) representing practically (22.5%) of the entire sample.

In the other side, we reported having two (02) participants having not responded to this question which indicates that they may have no specific or identified methods of revision. What can be concluded from the above results of this item is that graduate students still can use some effective strategies of revision but would have not known the

degrees of usefulness of such techniques, and whether there are other ways to ameliorate owns' level.

Item twelve: Do your notes seem to be disorganized and of nonsense when you refer back to them?

By asking this question, we tend to check whether graduate students really organize their notes and whether they are aware of what they write or not. Having clear and meaningful notes will certainly make the process of revision much easier.

Response	**Yes**	**No**	**N.A.**
Participants	13	23	04
Percentage	32.5%	57.5%	10%

Table 24: Students' Reported Judgments of their Notes

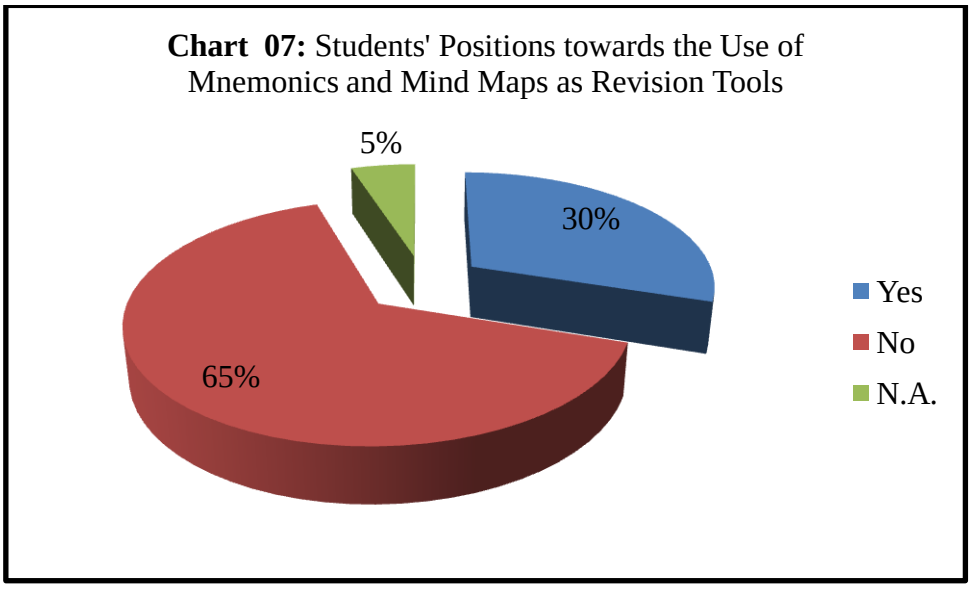
As long as the good organization of notes is concerned, we attempted to spot the light on this issue seeking for the exact number of participants having their notes clear and meaningful despite the kinds and forms they use to record the lecture. Referring back to the data displayed in the table above, we note a considerable number of participants, practically (13), reporting that their notes seem to be of nonsense when they return to review them. Thus, a percentage as (32.5%) is a threatening sign to graduate students not considering what needed information is to select and most importantly how to restate it in a simple and clear manner. Another reason behind having unclear notes is that related with handwriting; having a poor handwriting may affect the clarity of notes especially when the speed of the teacher' speech is so fast to the extent that students cannot follow or recognize what they write. In the other hand, (23) participants claimed that their notes seem to be organized and have to bring sense when they refer back to them; this forms at whole (57.5%) of the global sample. The other remaining (04) participants gave no answer. One reason behind giving no answers may be because these participants do not know what their notes seem to be like.

Item thirteen: Have you experienced revision using mnemonics and mind maps? Specify?

This item is divided into two parts; the first part requires a 'yes/no' answer seeking to probe students' awareness towards these two significant techniques of note-making, yet being the core of our investigation. As the question seeks students' positions towards two note-making techniques, the second part was meant to ask these participants to specify which technique they are used to work with.

Response	**Yes**	**No**	**N.A.**
Participants	12	26	02
Percentage	30%	65%	05%

Table 25: Students' Positions towards the Use of Mnemonics and Mind Maps as Revision Tools



According to the data being displayed in the table and chart above, we find that there are (26) participants responding that they have never experienced these two techniques, that form at whole (65%) of the global sample. Thus, it seems that many graduate students do not attempted to apply these two significant revision tools or even they have never heard of them as being new ways of making notes. In addition, (02) participants gave no

answer to this item indicating either that they have never used them before or have ever been heard to such kinds of making notes. In the other hand, (12) other participants claimed that they have adopted these techniques among their revision, representing about (30%) of the entire sample; but do these (12) participants really use or have already used mnemonics or mind maps? We will discover this through the second part in this item as well as through the next item.

As we have stated earlier, the second part of this item is for specifying which technique of making notes students responding 'yes' use for their revision. Throughout examining students' sheets, we discovered that (06) out of these (12) participants claiming that they have experienced revision using mnemonics and mind maps have not answered to this part, and obviously they have not specified any of the two techniques. This latter indicates that those participants might not been really using these techniques and were just filling gaps. In the contrary, there were still other (06) participants who have nearly specified which type they use. For example, two (02) participants reported that they use mind maps (one of them has a 'very good' level) acknowledging that it is really a helpful strategy. The other four (04) participants' opinions were different looking like they are using some sorts of mnemonics. One participant reported that she used it in methodology, though she has not specified which technique. Another participant claimed that he tries to remember things that the teacher said in the lecture; this seems as if this student makes visual links or specific clues captured in the lecture and associates them with the particular information. A third participant claimed that he tries to separate the lesson by date! And the last participant's response was a bit vague reporting that she had to try it once; this may be regarded as having already used this technique (not specifying which one) once before or she managed to use in the future.

Some other comments were given by three (03) participants responding 'no' to this part of the question as a reaction to the question. For instance, two (02) agents claimed that writing in full sentences is better for them because these techniques do not allow as many details as they think are important in revision. The other participant claimed that she used it twice, although she has responded 'no' in the first part of this item. Incidentally, this participant has a 'very good' level.

Throughout the results obtained from this question as well as from the previous one(s), we can say that various forms of making notes such as mnemonics and mind maps seem to be neglected by graduate students who only opt for using traditional techniques to revise for the exams.

Item fourteen: Can you make up mnemonics to differentiate between the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ or supply any mnemonic you have created?

This question was intended firstly to draw students' attention towards the uses of mnemonics as well as to see how far intelligent those participants are in attempting to differentiate between the two supplied linguistic terms 'signifier' and 'signified'.

In fact this question was directed only to participants who know this technique or have used it before. Obviously, all the participants who have responded that they have never experienced mnemonics before cannot deal with that case. Similarly, no one of the participants having been claiming that they used this technique could make up mnemonics out of the two terms, or even to supply any of the examples they were applying. This holds the impression that graduate students are not eager to try other strategies for the sake of developing their own thinking. However, there were some participants who do not use this technique, yet attempting to provide us with the definitions of the two terms. The consequence was that these (02) participants gave the wrong definitions.

In the other side, there were (05) participants claiming that they can supply mnemonics in some ways (02) of them have not used this technique before. Two of these participants asserted that they can, yet giving no evidence. Another girl stated that she sometimes supplies any mnemonic she has created, though focusing just on mind maps in the previous question. Other female participant responded: [Yeh! May be in some ways] having not showing how. The last participant claimed that she can but does not prefer to do so. This last participant claimed also that she has not used this technique before preferring to write in full sentences.

We may also make a note that nearly all the participants claiming that they have experienced these techniques have either a 'good' or a 'very good' level.

Item fifteen: In your opinion, is making notes helpful to sustain revision?

This question was proposed to seek participants' points of view concerning the effectiveness of making own notes in sustaining the revision process. It is considered as the major question, if not the essential one, which probes for students' positions towards this issue.

Throughout examining the participants' responses, we have found that almost all the sample strongly agreed that making notes help in the process of revision. Expressions like: "sure", "definitely", "yes, of course", "yes, it is (very) helpful" were frequent in the sense that these participants do believe in the fact that making summary notes help to immortalize the information being learnt. They have also acknowledged the significance of writing in own words in facilitating the memorization process. Features such as summarizing the whole lecture(s) in a small form and avoidance of needless details were also appreciated. In the other hand, there were two (02) agents claiming that it may be a good way to help students revise, or it is helpful only sometimes. Apart from the (27) participants responding positively to this item, there were (03) participants who did not

answered to such a question which indicates the probability that those students have no idea about the usefulness of making notes in the revision process.

Item sixteen: To what extent is making notes of various forms helpful in aiding memory?

This last item in the questionnaire is also considered as a seeking attitudes item. It supplements the previous question, yet it is more detailed and precise than the first is. Furthermore, it probes for students' awareness of the effectiveness of making various forms of notes in helping their memories to recapitulate the information.

Throughout analyzing participants' responses, we obtained various viewpoints towards how much significant is note-making in sustaining our memories to recall information. The first and most dominant explanation given by (07) participants was the fact that writing in own words and style helps in consolidating the information in the mind because when we paraphrase what the teacher says, use various colors and repeat what we have restated, all this information will stick to our minds. One of these participants gave an insightful comment stating that "it is how the brain works", emphasizing the role which colors play. In fact, what this girl noticed is one major point among the wide scope of note-making.

Paraphrasing, then, goes hand in hand with restating the learned information in an organized manner by the time of revision, and this will certainly leads to an easy review. This second feature was favored by (06) participants. In addition, the fact that choosing or selecting needed information depends mainly on concentration; making notes, then, indicates that the student has fully understood the idea. Practically, (03) participants have advocated the pre-mentioned feature of making notes.

Another view, similar to the previous ones being given by other (03) participants, advocated the great impact that making notes has on the memory in the sense that this latter keeps the main ideas during the same moment of recording them in the lecture.

Other five (05) agents gave dependent views, yet providing good observations as far as making notes is concerned. The first view made by one participant claiming that making notes help him to collect relevant data and puts his mind straight when making notes during the different periods of time. Another participant advocated the use of visual pictures to illustrate specific pieces of information. A third view supporting the role that the teacher plays in giving some hints and ways to help in understanding the information as well to help the students store data. Another advantage from making notes is that it is the best alternative to learning by heart; a note which has been given by the same previous participant. The next view proposed by a 'very good' student shows a significant feature which note-making can provide. This feature was referred to as refreshing our minds or memories by bringing the situation again. The last observation was no longer far from the other views in terms of significance and precision. This view supports the idea that one can remember the details of the lecture only through some precise words or sentences (namely: 'clues').

In the other hand, there were (02) other participants reporting only that it is helpful without mentioning in what sense(s) or even to what extent.

Apart from the above (26) participants (forming (65%) of the global sample), there were (14) participants (i.e. (35%) of the entire sample) who did not provide any response or explanation for this question. This may be interpreted as their lack of knowledge about that particular issue. Their narrow focus on just taking or copying the notes as they were given by the teacher shows that these students have not yet recognized the benefits of making various forms of notes in sustaining memory and in providing the well retention of information.

III. 2. 2. Classroom Observation

III. 2. 2. 1. Participants, Design and Description of the Observation

In their book "Research Methods in Education", Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) have stated the significant factor of observable facts and/or events by reporting that: "The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers [the] investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations" (2007, P. 396). For the reason that the research inquiry requires students' real implementations of certain techniques and strategies, we opted for observing the way those students record the lectures' points, as a first step of receiving information, then, the approaches they follow for revising what they have learned.

The type of observation used in this research is 'semi-structured'. However, the majority of the statements being examined were designed in advance according to the research topic, objective as well as related issues to the fundamentals of this research.

The observation has been apparently made with nine (09) third year students specialized in 'sciences of the language'. It took the researcher about four weeks (i. e. about a month: from April 22nd, to May 13th, 2013) to introduce the topic; to look for volunteers to undergone the observation procedures as well as to accomplish the process of observation in itself. The researcher, therefore, throughout the pre-mentioned period of time attended about seven classes (or sessions) in didactics.

Yet, not all of the aforementioned attended classes belong necessarily to the targeted observation expected objectives but would have rather been another chance to make third year students be aware of such note-making strategies as well as to look for further volunteers. However, the fact that third year students have these 'didactics' sessions as lectures being delivered in the amphitheatre has made it a bit difficult to control the situation. So, the researcher suggested examining just some items related mainly to how

these participants record their lectures with some other related issues. The participants were asked to sit in an isolated side of the classroom in order for the observation to be more organized.

After the first phase finished, the researcher feels it necessary and appropriate to provide additional sessions for those participants to see the ways and strategies they adopt for revising. There were mainly two (02) additional sessions (one hour and a half (1h 30 min) per session) in which the researcher examined what approaches of revision are actually adapted by these participants. In fact, the number of participants for each of the two revision sessions was five (before one participant from the second set of participants refused to continue the investigation). Rather the fact of dividing the group of participants into two sets was basically because of some constrains (see the part of limitations of the study), it had another positive side to whichever of the subgroups were the idea of note-making more clear, and consequently more effective to be applied. A quiz (or test) has accompanied or just followed the checked-in statements contained in the checklist. The test was mainly designed according to the requirements and objectives of the study in order to see whether effective uses of various note-making techniques are efficient and beneficial or not. Such relevant techniques include mnemonics and mind maps that were our focus in probing for students' perceptions towards note-making in general and were also considered to be the most affecting techniques on students' memorization of the learned materials.

III. 2. 2. 1. a. The Observation Checklist

Observation checklists are thought by many researchers to be the basic element in any observation procedure. For example, Cohen *et al*. reported that "Observations are entered on an observational schedule" (2007, P. 398). Checklists or grids are, then, used to prove and immortalize what we have observed as facts, phenomena, steps and so on and so forth.

So, a sample checklist has been prepared for this purpose of recording the observed elements of the study.

The checklist (see the part of appendices) contained mainly fifteen (15) statements of the researcher's main focus points as well as other related features and rubrics commonly used by the students. In this checklist, we listed about ten (10) statements related to issues of taking notes in the lecture such as the style used to record the lecture and the forms and materials used to do so. In this section of the observation checklist, we designed four (04) statements for personal preferences to learn such as student's sitting position and organization of the lectures. The next two (02) statements deal with a main issue in the research or that related to the way those students deal with the information they receive; that is to say, the way of recording the lecture is mainly to be dependent on the teacher's same words of dictation and written data on the board or it is with an own style. Statements (7-10) get into more details of the kinds of notes used to take notes and other helping tools as highlighting key words. The second set of items (namely five), which were quite different from the first set (i.e. the ten observation statements), dealt basically with the procedure of revision and its main approaches. So, the first three (03) statements tackle general methods of revision such as writing, sharing and reciting aloud personal notes. The other remaining two (02) statements went into details of the first statement in this particular set, raising awareness to the use of particular techniques of making notes (namely mind maps and mnemonics).

The designed checklist statements were followed by a key to the observation procedure. Two main key symbols have been used for the entire checklist to see the degree of the adaptability of each of the proposed statements. The proposed first symbol represents 'active participants' in the current process as opposed to each statement referring to as the "tick" (√) symbol. The next symbol, referred to as the "slash" (/)

symbol, indicates that the proposed current statement is only "partially adapted". Other minor clues were used to indicate specific personal features of each individual participant like the letters "F/B" (see appendices) standing for the student's sitting position; and "M/O" (see also appendices) standing for the way lectures are condensed and recorded.

The first phase in this observation dealt with the statements being adapted specifically in the language classroom situation. Observations of the first section in that checklist (the ten items) were made firstly with ten (10) participants. However, and because of some deficiencies (see the part of limitations) another same procedure was done with other five participants. After this phase, two sessions of revision were provided for these participants. The first five participants were given a chance to revise and after it they underwent the quiz in another session of didactics. During this revision session, students were been observed the way they revise and the kinds of notes they use for their revision. The other five participants took the same procedures of observation besides having been exposed to some techniques of revision. They were showed some strategies of note-making such as the way how mnemonics and mind maps work.

III. 2. 2. 1. b. The Quiz

As we have stated before, a test has been made after all procedures of observations have been completed.

Tests are good examples and effective ways to measure observable facts; or in better words, to see how effective the proposed hypothesis can be furthered and applicable. As evidence to what we have stated earlier, Cohen *et al*. (2007) have given such an explanation to tests as: "In tests, researchers have at their disposal a powerful method of data collection, an impressive array of tests for gathering data of a numerical rather than verbal kind" (p. 414). So, for our research to be more enriched and powerful, we have designed a test according to the objectives of the research as well as according to the pre-

mentioned two techniques of note-making; that is to say, this test encompasses some pieces of knowledge that might have normally have been stimulated by the use of mnemonics as our main focus, besides the possible activation and use of mind maps as a second main revision technique.

The designed test (see the part of appendices) was actually divided into two main tasks. Task number one tackles mainly the four types of goals. It contained four definitions and the students were asked to peruse them and identify the relevant concept(s), which were indeed summarized in the word PACT (forming a mnemonic that stands for 'Proficiency', 'Affective', 'Cognitive' and 'Transfer' goals). One point has been assigned for each correct concept. Task number two was basically divided into two activities. The participants were given an example of an objective and were asked first to identify the different components that make up this objective. The second activity, then, inquires the students to classify the types under which this sample objective can be classified into. The marking scale was three points per each activity that forms at whole six points for the entire task. Generally speaking, the whole test was corrected out of ten.

III. 2. 2. 2. Results, Analysis and Discussion of the Observation

III. 2. 2. 2. a. Results and Analysis of the Checklist

As we have stated earlier, fifteen statements have been proposed to be observed and discussed with the nine (09) participants. Those statements were divided into two main parts: that which deals with note taking and making in the general language classroom situation and that which deals with the process of revision and its most applicable methods.

- The first part was divided into three other sub-parts which will be analyzed as follows:

Statements 01-04

These statements deal mainly with personal preferences and also with the student's awareness and position towards his/her learning in general.

Statement one: - The student's sitting position:

Response	**Front sitting position**	**Back sitting position**
Participants	09	00
Percentage	100%	0%

Table 26: Students' Preferred Sitting Position

Throughout the observation stated time, the observer has noticed that all of the nine (09) participants like to sit within the first places in the lecture. This may hold an impression to the observer's mind that those volunteers are likely to have a positive attitude and welfare motivational stimuli towards learning in general and towards establishing certain trials to ameliorate their own level.

Statement two: - Preparation of necessary materials:

This item has been considered as the starting point to measure students' awareness towards their learning. It is quite nearer and more specific than the first statement may hold. The underneath table shows how different degrees of adaptability are distributed with certain clues: "Active participants" (A. P), "Partially adapted" (P. Ad.), and "Not adapted" (N. Ad.):

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	04	05	00
Percentage	44.44%	55.55%	0%

Table 27: Students' Position towards Preparing Necessary Materials

This statement as we have said earlier tests students' care about their own learning before they come to the classroom. Certain materials that can be necessary for the process of recording information may include: copybooks (or registers as being preferred in the university), maybe A4 papers accompanied with folders to be kept neatly saved with relevant handouts, pens and pencils with different colors, probably highlighters for main or key points in the lecture, and so on.

What can be deduced from the table is that nearly half the sample (44.44%) seem to prepare their necessary materials before they come to the lecture. The four (04) participants appear to be well prepared at both the psychological and material level. In the other hand, the other remaining five (05) participants seem to be only "partially" prepared for their lectures. Simple materials are used by these five participants such as the use of separated sheets of paper and pens with one or two colors only.

The use of different colored pens and highlighters seem to stimuli and trigger the learners' minds towards key elements and main ideas of the lecture. Colors and highlighters, then, play a great role in activating students' attention towards specific points of focus rather than needless details.

Statement three: - Having all lectures mixed or organized:

The fact that this item has been repeated both in the questionnaire and observation was not at hazard but because of its influence on the general form(s) of notes the student adapts. It may also cause some deficiencies during the process of revision in case all the lectures are mixed without any designation of particular parts for each module.

The table hereby describes Students' positions towards the style used in condensing notes; that is to say, do these students condense the notes of all the lectures in one file or they specify a file or even a part for each module.

Statements' key symbols	Mixed (m)	Organized (o)	Mixed/organized (m/o)
Participants	01	06	02
Percentage	11.11%	66.66%	22.22%

Table 28: Students' Position towards the Style Used to Condense Notes

What the researcher has observed is that six (06) participants out of nine (09) do organize their notes either in different files, or in one file but many parts for every module. Two (02) other participants out of the three remaining ones ((22.22%) of the global sample) said that they first mix all the notes together in one file, then, they organize the notes of each module in the relevant file being specifically assigned. The other remaining participant (11.11%) seems to mix all notes of the modules which is not a good idea to easy retrieval of information, especially when coming to revise.

Although the fact that students mix all the notes of the day, altogether in one file, is not appreciated, this may hold another advantage in case the students organize these notes when they come back home. Rearranging the notes after coming back home is a kind of a post-lecture review of the learned information. For instance, Downing (2011) has advocated the idea of reviewing the notes within the twenty four hours of receiving them. This strategy usually helps to reinforce the memory as well as to identify any point of ambiguity or confusion where questions can be drawn upon for the next session. Certain regulations can also be done whenever parts of the lecture seem to include some gaps (Downing, 2011).

Statement four: - Organization of the lecture:

Again, this fourth statement seeks for participants' positions towards the organization of lectures' notes. Organizing the notes that have been recorded in the classroom does not involve only the general structure of the lecture but also specific parameters such as the use of colors to highlight the main ideas in the lecture and the fact of separating these key

points from the dictation and explanation of the teacher. The coming table here stands for the degree of adaptability of such a technique.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	00	08	01
Percentage	0%	88.88%	11.11%

Table 29: Students' Positions towards the Organization of Lecture Notes

What is actually common among and between these English language learners is the fact that nearly most of them fail to achieve a good and welfare organization of lectures. If a kind of organization appears to be used, it would be just "partially" adapted as the table above shows. The eight (08) participants seem to have only a partial coordination of ideas especially when the teacher is speeding up or explaining quickly without dictating, or when a specific outline of the lecture's elements is not pre-stated. This is maybe said with other modules rather than 'didactics' where the objectives and/or key elements of the lecture are not clear, such as 'linguistics' and 'methodology'. The remaining participant (11.11%) seems to have a disorganized set of notes since she also mix all the modules together.

As has been stated earlier, the aforementioned four statements deal with personal characteristics starting from the awareness towards learning in general up to organizing oneself and own files or notes. The next set of statements get into more detailed information about the nature and forms used to note down the information.

Statements 05-06

These two main statements probe for learners' positions towards issues of making own notes and/or recording the same wording of the teacher's explanations. This issue of originality or adaptation of the received information according to own understanding makes a big difference in the process of reinforcing this information, and consequently will make the process of recapitulation much easier. What the scholars Robertson and smith

(1987) emphasized on in their book 'Effective Studying' as the process of note-making is concerned was because of the great advantages personal notes bring to memory processes. However, the process of adaptation of the learned information does not oppose with or prevents any usefulness of copying the same words or arguments given by the lecturer as the two authors suggested (*ibid*).

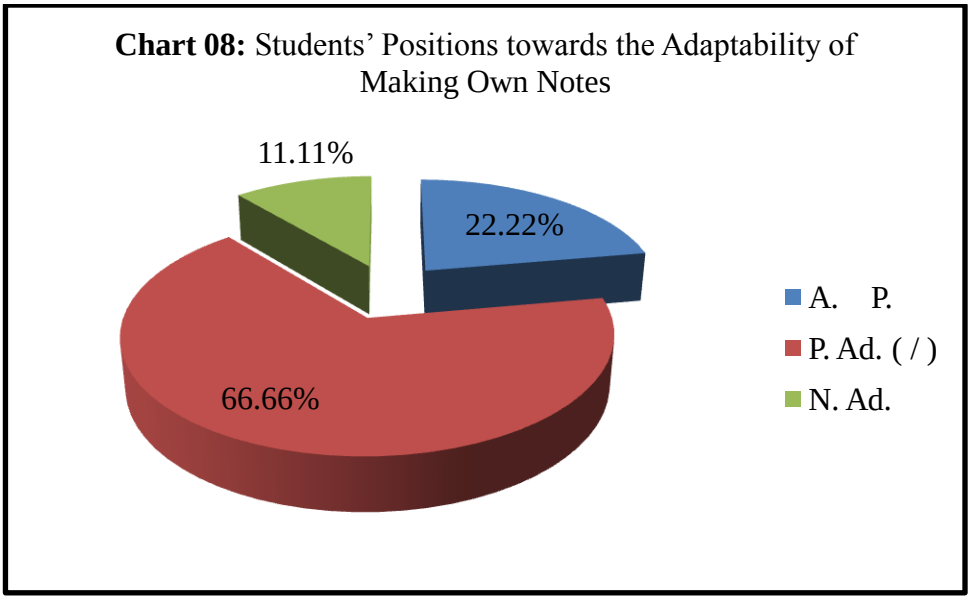
Statement five: - Making own notes:

This as we have said though to bring great advantages for learners, especially those who do not like to learn by heart as long as the process of revision is concerned.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	02	06	01
Percentage	22.22%	66.66%	11.11%

Table 30: Students' Positions towards the Adaptability of Making Own Notes

What can be deduced from the table above is that the degree of adaptability of making own notes is only partially used among the participants with a percentage of (66.66%) representing (06) participants. 'Active participants' in the process of making own notes form (22.22%) of the global sample with (02) agents. In the other side, the state of adaptation of making own notes does not seem to be fruitful for the other remaining participant (11.11%) liking to record the same words of the teacher's explanations and dictation including needless examples and illustrations.



Although making own notes requires a great deal of attention and specific basic skills (Price & Maier, 2007), it is a good way to greatly help in the retention of information because the brain is deeply active during the whole process of accumulation of information as well as in analyzing, working out and storing these data.

Statement six: - Recording nearly everything:

The proposed statement, as being partially opposed to the previous one, looks for how far adapted is the process of recording the exact wording of the teacher's explanations and/or even dictation. It maybe somehow efficient to stick to the same specific words or explanations provided by the teacher in terms of being asked to define certain terms or concepts; however, some teachers may accept students' definitions being stated in own words, given that they are correct and do include key words.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	01	04	04
Percentage	11.11%	44.44%	44.44%

Table 31: Students' Positions towards Recording the Same Teacher's Words

The above table as being displayed shows students' positions towards this issue resulting for only one 'active participant' in favor of the process of recording nearly

everything (11.11%). This participant thinks that it is better to have all the points and details mentioned by the teacher, including possible examples that he/she mentions that happened outside the classroom. The degree of 'partial adaptability' of this process seems to be common among four (04) participants with a percentage of (44.44%) of the global sample. Such process of 'partial adaptability' according to these four (04) participants includes only the main points such as specific definitions. Again, the same number of participants (44.44%) appears not to adapt and/or record everything the teacher says preferring to depend on themselves in choosing what information to be important and included in own style.

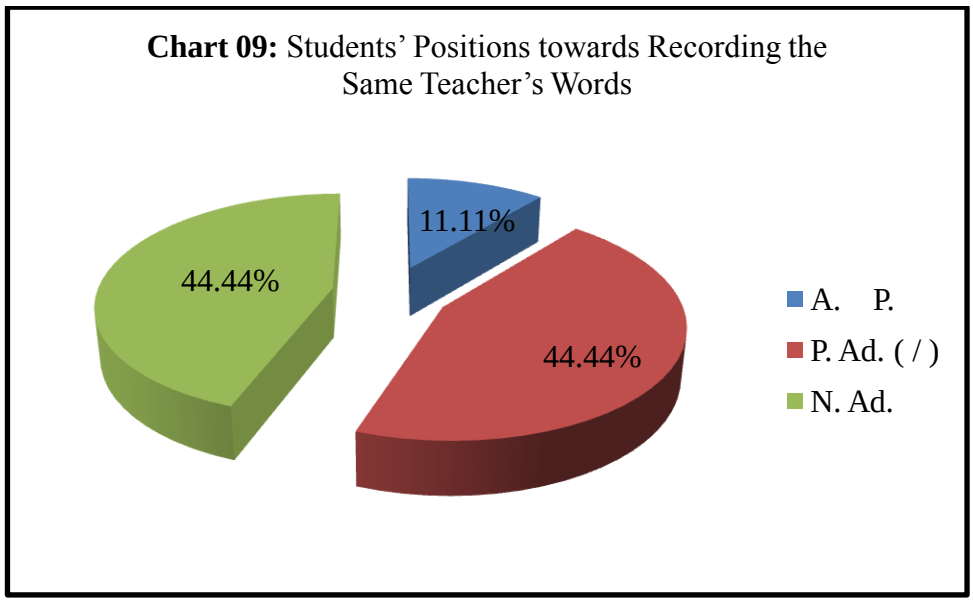


Chart 09: Students' Positions towards Recording the Same Teacher's Words

Statements 07-10

We have seen just previously what style the participants like to use in recording their notes. Now we will get into more detailed aspects of noting down received information such as the technique(s) or type(s) of notes they use to record information as well as certain ways of highlighting main points.

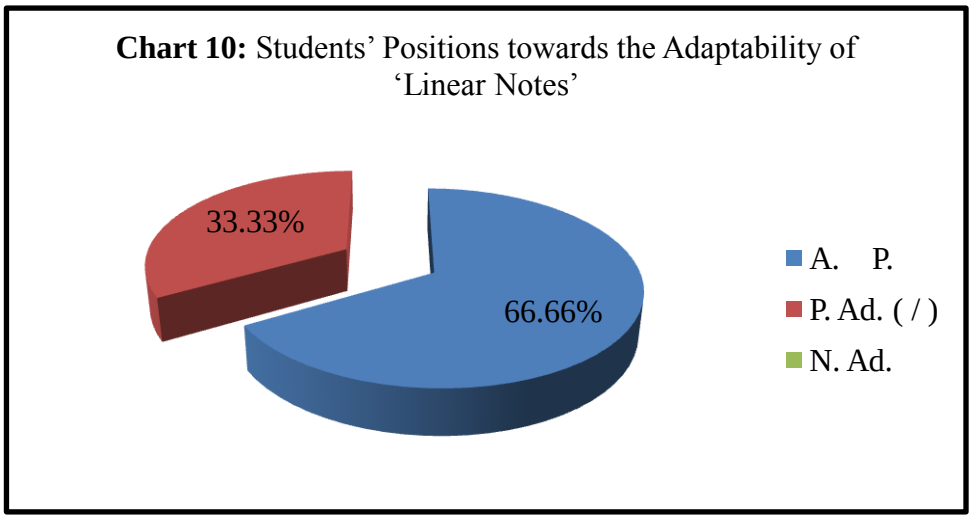
Statement seven: - Using linear notes in lectures:

Linear notes are thought to be the most common and easy to be used kind and method of recording information. According to Robertson and Smith (1987) 'linear notes' or

'conventional notes' may also include or require the use of other forms such as abbreviations, charts and diagrams. However, our intention behind proposing such an item was to see the degree of adapting and using 'continuous sentences' without the use of other forms.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	06	03	00
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	0%

Table 32: Students' Positions towards the Adaptability of 'Linear Notes'



Roughly speaking, almost participants do regularly write their lectures in 'continuous' sentences without the use of other forms, maybe except for abbreviations, forming (66.66%) of the whole sample with (06) 'active participants'. The degree of 'partial' use of 'linear notes' with three (03) participants (33.33%) refers to the overuse of 'abbreviated' words or separated phrases and sentences.

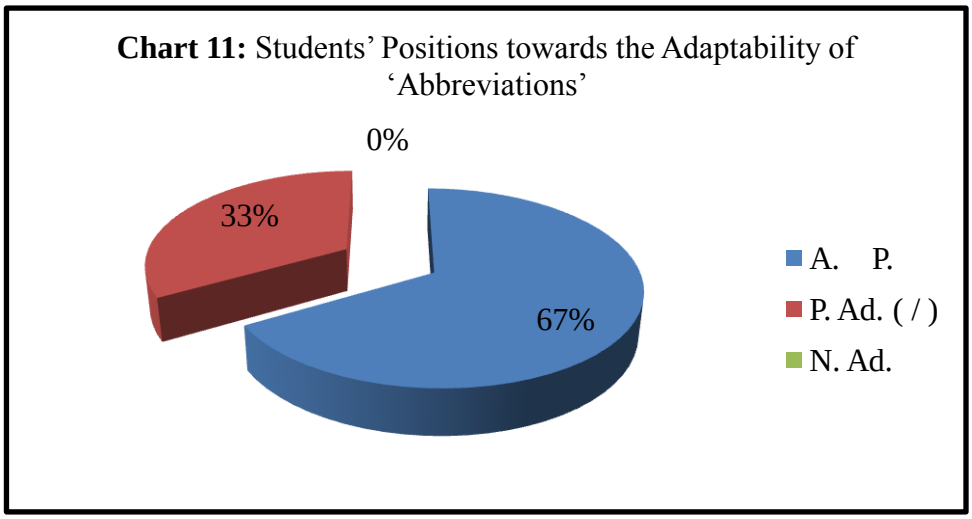
Statement eight: - Using abbreviations:

Being nearly essential types of note-making, abbreviations seem to sustain the process of easy recording of dictated points or quick explanations made by the teacher. Whatever kind of abbreviations is used: personal, common, and so on (Price & Maier, 2007), it is not important to use them as long as they bring many advantages to you and as long as they are

of a meaningful sense to you. Using this technique nowadays is common especially among graduate learners as having experienced a sufficient exposure to quick delivery of lectures. But to what extent are abbreviations used among these learners? This is absolutely our primarily intention of including such statement.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	06	03	00
Percentage	66.66%	33.33%	0%

Table 33: Students' Positions towards the Adaptability of 'Abbreviations'



As we can deduce from the table and chart above, the same percentages obtained in the previous statement seem to appear again with this one. 'Active participants' in the process of wide and regular use of 'abbreviations' of both kinds seem to represent (66.66%) of the entire sample. The other remaining three (03) participants, (33.33%) of the whole sample, only do 'partially' or sometimes when they use abbreviations liking to write in full words.

Statement nine: - using other forms of notes:

Experiencing different forms and techniques of note-making brings many advantages for graduate learners. The use of tables, patterned notes, charts and diagrams, and other

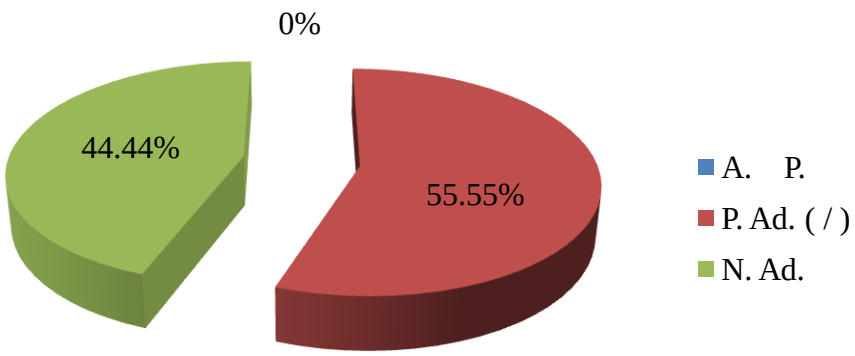
forms of notes are strongly approved of. Other common methods of recording notes during lectures are the "cornell method" and the "two-column system".

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	00	05	04
Percentage	0%	55.55%	44.44%

Table 34: Students' Positions towards the Adaptability of Other Forms of Notes

The table above displays the extent to what other forms of notes are used by these graduate learners. Only 'partial' use of other forms of making notes seems to be dominant by these English language learners with five (05) volunteers (55.55%). Practically speaking, two (02) participants advocate the use of 'visual notes', having 'rarely' using them, and the other remaining three (03) participants (out of the first five ones) appear to use 'patterned notes' sometimes with lecture notes and as a sort of writing to revise from. The other four (04) remaining participants claim to adapt no other forms of notes other than 'linear notes' and/or 'abbreviations' forming (44.44%).

Chart 12: Students' Positions towards the Adaptability of Other Forms of Notes

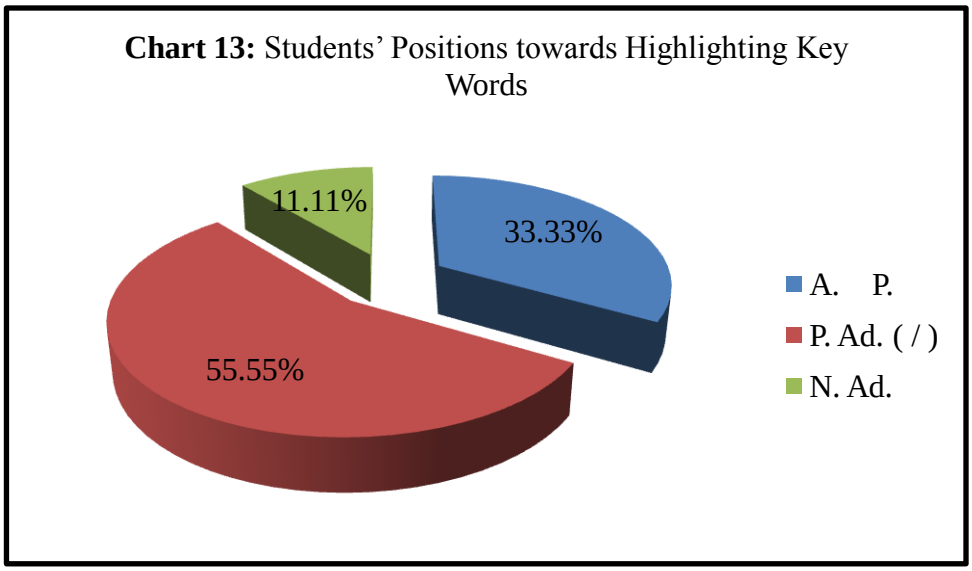


Statement ten: - Highlighting key words…etc:

'Active learners' seem to meaningfully engage in the learning process as being the targeted and essential part in the classroom context. Such learners' engagements involve the adaptation of various effective strategies to deal with the learned information, to accumulate welfare amounts of main ideas and try to store them in the mind for further use. The use of colors and highlighters to stress in the main ideas and points of focus in the lecture is also widely common among students.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	03	05	01
Percentage	33.33%	55.55%	11.11%

Table 35: Students' Positions towards Highlighting Key Words



Highlighting key elements in the lecture appear to be appreciated by nearly half the sample (i. e. (55.55%) of the global sample). Such an adaptation of highlighting seems to be only 'partial' involving only the use of different colors to present key elements in the lectures. However, 'active participants' thought to strongly defend for the use of highlighters, besides the use of colors, especially for lecture handouts; 'A. P.' form only

(33.33%) of the global sample, representing only three (03) active participants. One other remaining participant seems to have no tendency towards the use of colors and highlighters.

- As we have stated earlier in this section before starting to analyze the observation' statements, the first part in this observation dealt with basic issues of recording the notes in the language classroom. This next part of the observation checklist concerns issues of preloaded techniques of revision. They are mainly five statements divided also into two other sub-groups.

Statements 11-13

These three statements tackle basically common methods or approaches to revision. They raise certain issues of using sorts of notes, reciting aloud and sharing personal notes (or in other words revising within a group). Such useful techniques may vary in the degree of their adaptability according to students' styles and/or strategies. Throughout analyzing the checklist statements, we are likely to know such degrees of adaptability of each statement.

Statement eleven: - Using sorts of writing to revise:

Some students prefer to rewrite the notes which they have reviewed just after they recite; they strongly believe that this method helps them to a great extent in the process of recalling and retention of the learned material. Students with a visual style usually seem to have such an ability to recall written data especially when different forms of notes appear to be used signaled by the use of colors.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	05	04	00
Percentage	55.55%	44.44%	0%

Table 36: Students' Positions towards Using Some Sorts of Writing to Revise

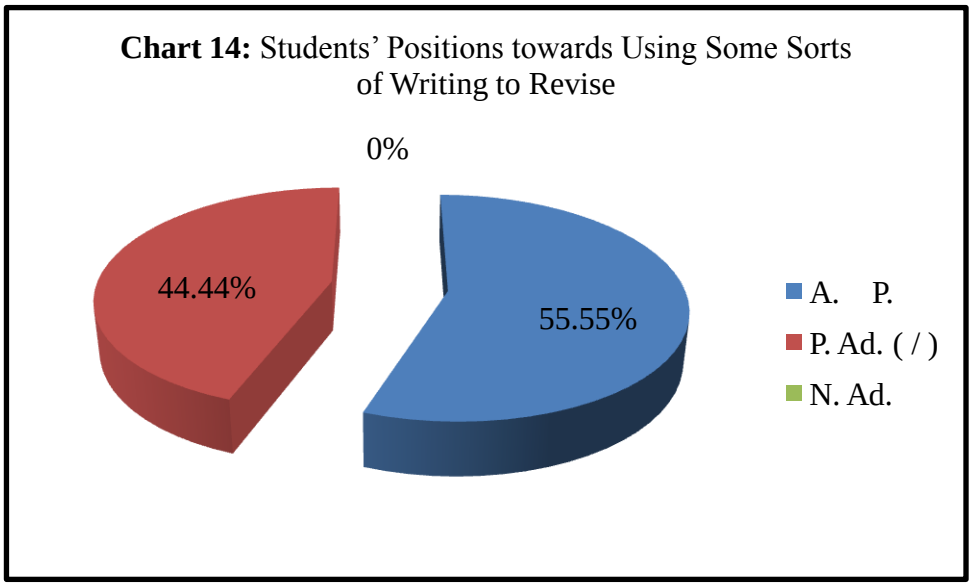


Chart 14: Students' Positions towards Using Some Sorts of Writing to Revise

Looking at the above chart, we find that all the sample use this technique to revise lecture notes. Noticeably, (55.55%) of the whole sample (that is to represent (05) participants) do prefer to accompany what they have recited with sorts of writing. However, they seem to adapt only traditional formats of rewriting the notes such in the usual method of writing in sentences, and sometimes other simple forms such as 'clusters' and 'patterned notes' are seldom used. The other remaining four (04) participants (i. e. (44.44%) of the entire sample) claimed to use this technique sometimes and only with main points. They may retrospectively think that they have been using this method long before but would just know a little about its advantages and practical uses.

Statement twelve: - Sharing personal notes:

Discussing and sharing personal notes with other peers is in no way a better technique and a method of revision for some people. It is, then, argued by the University of Bradford (2006) that discussing own notes with other colleagues helps to a great extent in the process of recalling information. By doing so, students may significantly benefit from the

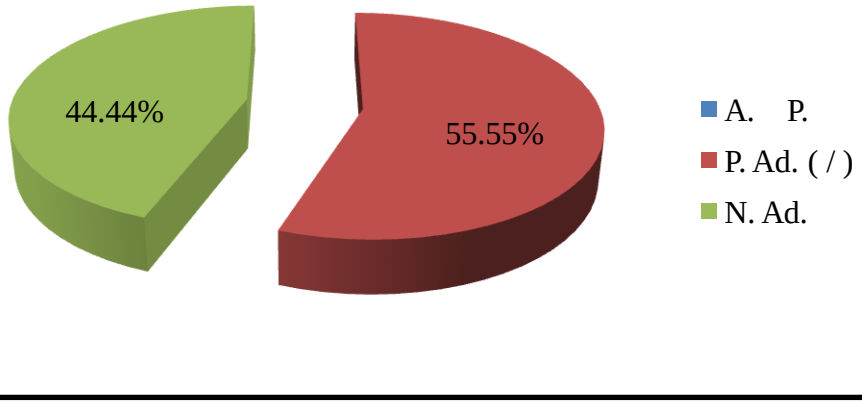
ideas their friends present as well as may identify points of ambiguity and confusion and solve them out. Degrees of adaptability of such a method are shown in the table below:

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	00	05	04
Percentage	0%	55.55%	44.44%

Table 37: Students' Positions towards Sharing Personal Notes

The table above shows how far techniques of sharing and discussing personal notes are adapted and applied. The observation revealed for five (05) participants (that is to form (55.55%) of the global sample) liking firstly to revise by their own, then, they seem to collaborate and discuss what they have noted down in the lecture and afterwards reviewed at home. Fortunately, there was no pure dependence on the part of these participants concerning revising only within groups. This is maybe because there is no such argument that supports the idea of revising just within a group without working on one's own. The other four (04) remaining participants do not appear to advocate such an approach of revision because they feel that it loses time and would only be a matter of chaos and noise.

Chart 15: Students' Positions towards Sharing Personal Notes



Statement thirteen: - Reciting the information aloud:

This is probably the most common method of revision among language learners as it would include strategies of verbal rehearsal, repetition and so on and so forth. This method of reading aloud offers a good way of reinforcing the learned material in the mind especially when accompanied with repeating what has been learnt as many times as it sticks to the mind.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	02	03	04
Percentage	22.22%	33.33%	44.44%

Table 38: Students' Positions towards Reciting the Information Aloud

Although reciting aloud is a useful way to help the memory to store information, what we have obtained as concrete data is that it is strongly approved of by only two (02) participants (that forms only (22.22%) of the whole sample). Other three (03) agents seem to only 'partially' adapt this technique. The remaining four (04) ones (44.44%) claim not to use such a technique liking to recite the information silently. One reason behind the rare adaptation of loud recitation is that the majority of these participants seem to have a visual style rather than an auditory one. This latter as the University of Bradford (2006) argued requires strategies such as recording oneself reading individual parts of the lecture, listening to own voice, reading aloud chunks of information, and so on.

Statements 14-15

Now that we have arrived to the core of our investigation, we shall stress the issue of using certain kinds of note-making during revision procedures such as mnemonics and mind maps. For instance, mnemonics and mind maps are two novel way of making

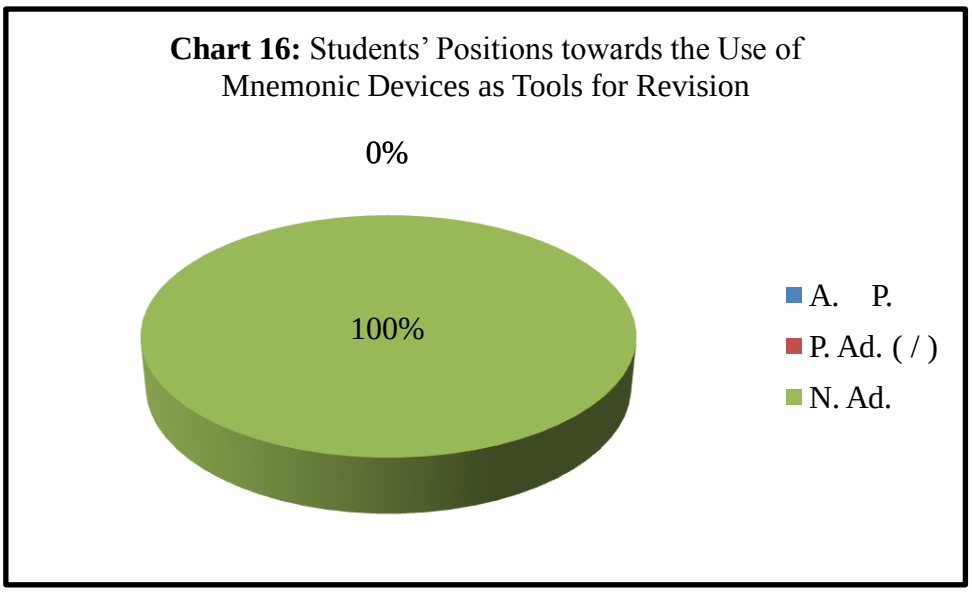
efficient notes which help to a great extent in the process of revision in general and in reinforcing memory in particular.

Statement fourteen: - Using mnemonics to revise:

Mnemonics are considered as being specific ways that are created for the sake of obtaining certain clues to help memory recall. They can be either personally or commonly generated according to certain norms and principles so that each specific clue stands for each specific idea or point of focus. In that vein, Dudley (1986) advocated the use of artificial systems of information connecting devices rather than sensible logical ones because these latter do no longer exist. He also assisted the fact that these mnemonics are aids to memory which help us recall and recapitulate particular pieces of information. Being an effective strategy of making notes in the revision process, we have chosen it for we are going to see how far common, and therefore, used this particular technique.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	00	00	09
Percentage	0%	0%	100%

Table 39: Students' Positions towards the Use of Mnemonic Devices as Tools for Revision



Expectedly, no one participant seems to use this strategy or even have heard about it before. All of the nine (09) participants have not experienced mnemonics as a useful strategy to approach good revision outcomes. A thorough explanation has been put afterwards concerning what are mnemonics and what they look like; how we, as learners, can develop personal mnemonics to help us recall; and finally what are the possible uses and services these mnemonics can serve for. Examples of mnemonics have been shown to these participants raising their awareness towards the benefits and exceptional features they can bring to our memory.

As we have stated right in the beginning of observation procedures, participants were divided into two groups: group A which involves five (05) participants and group B which involves four (04) participants. As group A was exposed to such techniques partially in a free session, group B has been also given a chance to discuss this issue in a free session. In fact, and rather than group A, group B was exposed to a great amount of knowledge on this issue of note making in general and on mnemonics and mind maps in particular shading light on their usefulness in the revision process basically. A welfare debate has been put forward first concerning mnemonics. After explaining what mnemonics are to group B, they were given some common examples. The participants were also given a personal example of mnemonics related to the two linguistic terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’, often misleading which one is which. The participants were first questioned whether they are able to create simple mnemonics to the two words or are not yet ready to do so.

Here is a part of the discussion between the observer and one participant from group B trying to find a solution for the two words ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’. We will first start with the first term ‘signifier’, and then we will move to the next term ‘signified’:

Observer: I know that each one of us first had a problem for the two linguistic terms 'signifier' and 'signified'… Let us look for a way to solve this problem. Can you make up mnemonics for these two words?

[… Moments of silence.]

Observer: Well! These two words contain specific clues that discriminate each term from the other. Look at them carefully […] Try just to be intelligent to identify these clues.

At these moments of discussion, the participants looked amazed, and at the same time eager to know more about this technique. The observer has felt it necessary to change the atmosphere, full of silence and question marks on the participants' heads, by proposing a relevant example. Here is the starting point:

Observer: You know when I have distributed my questionnaire, I have given the same question, I mean: can you make up mnemonics for the two words 'signifier' and 'signified'? And by the time I have received the questionnaire back, I mean when I have started analyzing data, I have found that, of course, no one could do so; I mean no one could make up mnemonics. But you know, there were some students who wanted to challenge by giving me the definitions of the two terms; but unfortunately, they have given me the reverse definitions. 'Signifier' stands for the […Hesitation on the part of learners, then…] the acoustic image, yes! And 'signified' stands for the mental image. When we say 'Signifier', 'signified', what would you imagine?

Participant: […Raising his hand with hesitation…].

Observer: Yes! You please. […Trying to encourage for further discussion…].

Participant: […First hesitating, and then…] It's like waves of sounds.

Observer: Well! Yes your example is very good, but still, you need just a small clue to link between what you have said, these waves of sounds, with this word 'signifier'. Just look carefully. 'sign.i.fier.', there is a small clue in this word which identify it. OK! When you say: waves of sounds; those sounds comes through what?

Participant: comes through the mouth…

Observer: Yes! Through the mouth to the […Creating a sense of flexibility to make the students feel easy to talk and participate…].

Participants: [all together] to the ears.

Observer: Right! To the ears. Now look at the word 'signif.ier' in the blackboard, 'signif.ier' […pointing on the word 'signifier'…] Look at it carefully 'signif.ier', 'ier'

these three last letters: 'i.e.r' do not they look like the word 'ear'? [… Few gestures of appraisal and appreciation on the part of participants] 'signi.fier', 'ear', as if we would imagine those waves of sounds are coming to our ears. The same thing can be applied with the word 'signified', 'signif.ied', 'ied' it's like the word 'eyed' so that we can say 'eyed in the mind', 'a picture or image eyed in our minds'.

Apparently, this seems to be a long debate; however, it would be somehow astonishing for someone who does not know about making notes and about mnemonics as a one technique, wondering that this whole debate stands for only two terms? We would rather argue that making notes is a vast topic which needs to be carefully and specifically identified and investigated.

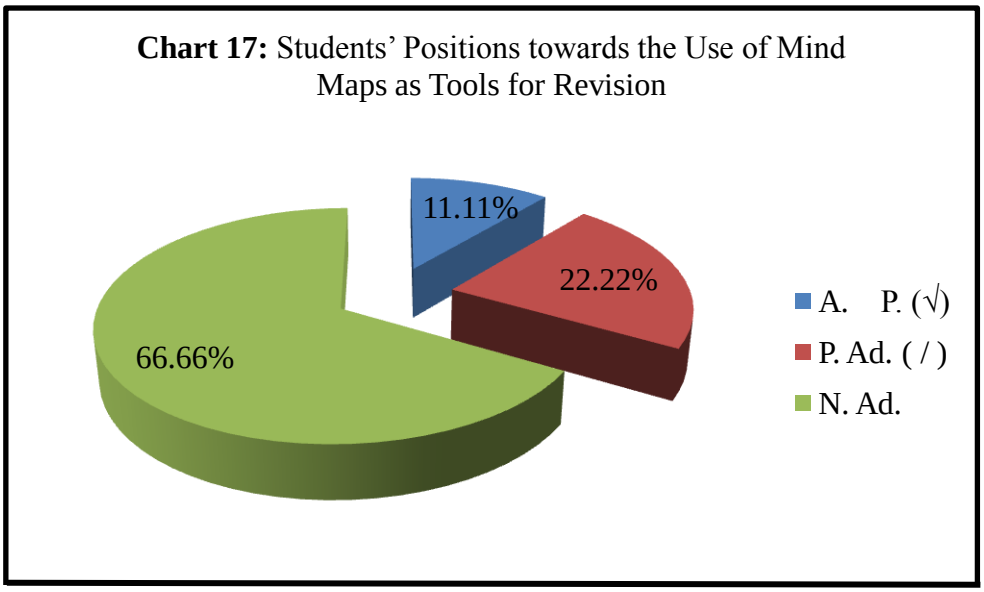
Statement fifteen: - Using mind maps to revise:

Mind maps are, like mnemonics, particular techniques of making effective notes. They were first developed by Tony Buzan in 1989 as a concept in the development of thought or what he has called it: '*Radiant Thinking*' (Buzan, 1994). They were developed by Buzan for the sake of discovering own skills and potentials in many domains of life including study careers. They are also ways to stimulate thinking processes especially during reviewing the learned material because having the whole visual picture of the lecture's points in the mind do significantly help in the recapitulation of information (*ibid*).

Degrees of adaptability of such note-making technique among the nine participants in our investigation are displayed as follows.

Statements' key symbols	**A. P. (√)**	**P. Ad. (/)**	**N. Ad.**
Participants	01	02	06
Percentage	11.11%	22.22%	66.66%

Table 39: Students' Positions towards Using Mind Maps as Tools for Revision



What the observer has noticed throughout the two revision sessions was that only one (01) active participant (i. e. (11.11%) is used to work with mind maps. Two (02) other participants are used to revise using 'clusters' as a kind of note-making. This latter can be considered as a 'partial' adaptation of mind maps since 'clusters' are nearly like mind maps, yet they lack many features and benefits which minds maps can provide. The remaining other six (06) participants seem to never tried this technique having either not heard about them at all or not aware of the manner they work.

A small debate has been put forwards with one participant concerning mind maps and the possibility to be exposed to certain levels of confusion. This debate has been taken a place during the phase of introducing the way mind maps work.

Participant: I think this […Meaning mind maps…] is somehow difficult and confusing.
Observer: You mean mind maps? How? In what way I mean?
Participant: Um! For example if I would use this […Meaning mind maps…], how would I know or identify the different sub-main ideas or points?
Observer: Well! You mean that you will be confused where each sub-point is situated under which heading. Right? I can say that here where the role of colors can appear to be significant. As we have seen just right now, this example mind map […Referring back to

an example of mind maps…] contains different colors: the green color, the red color, the blue one, the pink, and so on, which were used to differentiate each main point from the other. And Tony Buzan as you know, the founder of mind maps, has advocated the use of at least three colors…

Yet we have observed all the pre-designed statements of the checklist, there were some remarks that have been noted during the attended lectures of 'didactics'. The observer meanwhile attending the first lecture have noticed that nearly all the students, including the research sample, depend mainly on the teacher's summary being well written and organized on the board. Still, these kinds of summaries, as being proposed mainly by the teacher, were also based on students' reflections and understandings of the learned material. Another subsidiary remark in the last sessions of 'didactics' was that of the teacher's curiosity to motivate students to take, or better stated, to make their own notes according to what they have understood from the lecture. Such an impulsive guidance of the teacher for students to make their own notes must be encouraged from time to time so that learners will be able to make their own decisions about learning in general.

III. 2. 2. 2. b. Results and Analysis of the Test

After finishing the observation procedures with the nine participants, a small quiz has been given to those participants in order to see how far effective different note making techniques are in developing students' memorization rate, and consequently, in ameliorating their levels or learning outcomes as our hypotheses suggest. The test has been delivered first to the first five participants, which we referred to as group A, in another session of didactics one week after their revision session. In the other hand, the other remaining four participants, which we referred to as group B, were tested just after completing the observation procedures, exposing them to the aforementioned techniques and giving them some time to review their lecture notes of the 'Didactics' module.

The participants' scores in that test are compared to the scores of the same participants in the first semester exam in didactics to see whether there is a progress in the participants' levels or not after being exposed to the 'mind maps' and 'mnemonics' techniques. That is to say that the researcher is looking for a difference in the participants' achievements which can be attributed to the positive effects of note-making techniques.

As we have said in the design and description of the quiz, the marking scale of the test is out of ten points (one point for each correct answer). However, and as we should follow certain recommendations and standards, we have opted for multiplying the obtained results by two (02) so that they go in parallel with that of the pre-scores in the first semester.

The participants' pre-scores and post scores are presented underneath:

Student's Number	**X**	**Student's Number**	**Y**
S. 01	14.5	S. 01	15
S. 02	11	S. 02	12
S. 03	12	S. 03	12
S. 04	12.5	S. 04	11.5
S. 05	09	S. 05	10
S. 06	07	S. 06	15
S. 07	11	S. 07	13
S. 08	10	S. 08	15
S. 09	11	S. 09	15
Total X	98	**Total Y**	118.5
Av. X	10.88	**Av. Y**	13.16

Table 40: Participants' Pre-scores and Post Scores in Didactics

We have been referring to participants' individual scores of the first semester as X. In the other hand, participants' individual scores of the designed test have been referred to as Y. Total X indicates the sum of pre-scores gained by all the nine participants in the first semester exam of didactics; whereas, total Y stands for the sum of scores gained by the same nine participants after undergoing the proposed test. Moreover, the average of both

scores, i.e. pre-score and test scores, were referred to as Av. X and Av. Y, right in this order.

After calculating the two averages of the nine participants; i.e., that of the first semester and that of the test, we shall look at the difference between the two averages. The results are shown hereunder.

Tests	Pre-test scores X	Post test scores Y
Average Scores	10.88	13.16
Difference in means	2.28	

Table 41: Differences in Means between Pre-test Scores and Post-test Scores

What the researcher can deduce from the table is that obtaining significant results as that shown earlier hold a big difference as (2.28) between the two means. This latter indicates the progress which the nine (09) participants performed after being exposed to the two main techniques of note-making: 'mnemonics' and 'mind maps'. Furthermore, and as we have assigned two main revision sessions, participants which have been referred to as group B, and who have undergone the test just after the session, did substantially better than participants of group A (see table 40). The fact that participants of group B have done much better than group A did holds the impression that these participants have really understood and acquired the procedures of 'mnemonics' and relatively that of 'mind maps'. The results adequately showed that participants who have been exposed to a great amount of discussion on 'mnemonics' and 'mind maps' have really ameliorated their levels, and this may be due to the new methods of note-making they have been exposed to.

Practically speaking, and despite the fact that participants of group A have shown a slight progress in their levels, the progress which group B actually have demonstrated revealed for positive impacts of note-making techniques on students' expected results.

However, the general disparity between pre-test and post-test scores is not as tiny as to the extent that we can attribute such positive results to other external factors.

Conclusion

As a summary to all the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the observation checklist, one would consider the strong relationship that connects the adaption of different note-making techniques with the students' ability to recapitulate targeted information. This chapter was designed mainly to investigate third year students of English at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra about their positions and awareness of the generative skill of note making. Moreover, this investigation study did not only focus on the adaptation of note-making as a mere process but also tackles certain issues in that particular skill such as seeking for the different uses that making effective notes serve. Other issues of academic success and the general learning styles and strategies which characterize graduate learners' levels of taking their notes were also initiated.

The research hypotheses opted for finding welfare relationship between effective not-making strategies and the ability to establish good memorization capabilities among graduate learners of English. Apart from controlling other external or internal factors, any learner who is opted to try different kinds of note-making will simultaneously achieve better results and develop his/her own level. What we have observed and investigated through the students' questionnaire and the observation procedure revealed for what the researcher actually been meant for. Also, from the deep analysis of the two data gathering tools, we have concluded that graduate students are now aware of such a skill, showing a lack of knowledge concerning the various techniques of note-making as well as a strong interest to apply them in the near future. Students' level of awareness, then, has made it a must for them to look for further strategies as far as ameliorating oneself and own level is concerned.

LIMITATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

Limitations of the Study

Throughout this current research, which mainly spots the light on the effectiveness of note-making strategies on students' achievement levels, the researcher has encountered many problems, especially in the practical side. First of all, the issue of note-making as a substantial skill seems to be a very recent and up to date topic in the field of learning to the extent that the researcher has found great difficulties at the beginning of the research to find valuable references. However, as there are some sources which initiate making notes, there were also many references which either talked about note taking as an essential skill, and not note making rather, or which have used the two terms interchangeably.

Other problems that the researcher faced during the investigation study, or better stated in the field work in which factual data and statistics on the current topic are required, was that of students' insincerity to respond honestly to the proposed questionnaire; this has made the process of obtaining valid data for the researcher more difficult. However, this problem has been already solved by proposing near and similar items for the students for the sake of checking the degree of certainty of each item. The biggest problems started to appear mainly during the observation procedures. To start with, the fact that the sample was opted to be voluntarily chosen has been in itself a problem. For instance, no part of artificiality took a place during the whole process of observation but the fact that participants were just opted to collaborate makes it easier for them to abandon. Again, after finishing the procedures of the observation with the remaining five volunteers, and as it would have been suggested to give them the test in another session, so that they will be well prepared, the participants felt unwilling to be interrogated and it took the researcher some time so that for the test to be accomplished. Furthermore, as our sample was intended to take ten participants from the whole population, it was, therefore, needed to look for other five participants so that for our results to be quite reliable and valid. Taking this step

was also difficult due to the conditions under which graduate students were, namely preparing for their term papers. The researcher, then, was obliged to wait until they have submitted their term papers; it was at that time when the investigator has finally collected other five volunteers with the help of one of them. Another remaining problem was that during the last process of observation with the second group of participants (i.e. the test) when one participants refused to take the test claiming that he did not attended most of the lectures. Accordingly, the sample was minimized to nine (09) participants instead of ten.

Pedagogical Implications

As long as this research concerns itself with the effectiveness of various note-making techniques on learning outcomes, the researcher strongly calls for adapting these techniques to serve for different purposes of learning. Students are opted for making their own notes in different situations. They can, for example, restate the learned information in their own words so that they really get certain they have fully understood the lecture. Students, also, can effectively make relevant notes to plan for essay writing. In this respect, many forms of making notes can work for essay planning such as the use of tables, graphs, clusters, CMaps and spider diagrams, to name few. The other significant process where making notes seem to be fruitful and rewarding is that of revision and preparing for exams. For instance, the process of reviewing the notes is more adequate and open for learners to search for good strategies of revision; one effective strategy of revision is that of making notes of different forms and techniques. In addition, the two proposed techniques of ‘mnemonics’ and ‘mind maps’ in this work are among the wide range of note-making techniques and strategies students may choose.

Practically speaking, learners are required to know their learning styles and/or preferences. They are also required to adapt certain kinds and techniques of making notes which eventually match their own learning preferences. As an illustration, visual learners

may greatly benefit from many techniques and kinds of making notes like using visual notes, mind maps and so on. The same remark is applied for auditory learners who may get various advantages from using voice notes.

Making effective notes need to be rigorously taken into consideration by graduate students of English. Thus, acquiring and being able to apply such a creative skill indicate that these graduate learners has obtained certain degrees of awareness and decision-making strategies which enable them to get into further study levels and degrees. So, in order for achieving the needed competences that underlie the note-making technique, students should be made aware of such strategies right from the beginning stages of entering the university if not even before getting to it. Furthermore, there seem to be essential modules which are imbedded in the English branch program where effective note-making can take a place such as written expression and linguistics and many other modules. Given that written expression is an essential module, in which learners are required to learn the basics of writing starting from the writing mechanics up to generating paragraphs and essays, it seems a very good opportunity to incorporate and expose learners to various kinds and techniques of note-making so that they will get used to such a skill.

Implementing note-making strategies on the part of learners within the various methods and approaches of revision has become an effective strategy to reinforce the memory and to help in the process of recapitulation. It has been, then, claimed by some students that restating the learned information in own way and style when reviewing the notes will greatly help them to sustain their memories to retain specific pieces of information. In addition, experiencing different kinds and strategies of making own notes does not only help in the process of recall but would also bring the mind deeply alert and meaningfully engaged. Another effective side from using various note-making strategies is that of establishing certain memory stimuli as well as enjoyable factors in the learner’s

mind, which accordingly create a kind of intrinsic motivation. In the same respect, personal choices and preferences of the kinds and/or techniques used to make the notes whilst revision are also required.

Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Research

This research was mainly designed to establish and maintain a good relationship between and among the two variables of the pre-designed hypotheses which are effective strategies of note-making and the probability to easy recapitulation of the learned information, and consequently for better learning outcomes. Throughout and after accomplishing such and other objectives of the current research, we recommend the following points:

❖ Learners need to be made aware of such various techniques long before they approach the graduation level. If they are to keep on using traditional methods of taking random notes, they will feel obliged afterwards to set up certain skills of making efficient notes to cope with higher degrees of learning and teaching strategies.

❖ It would be better, then, to include such and such skills in the university learning program so that to expose learners to the various aspects which making effective notes in different forms bring. Again, it is quite interesting to discover how different styles of presenting the notes work to accomplish specific learning purposes including revision processes.

❖ As the current research calls for the necessity to adapt the various kinds and techniques to make efficient notes in different learning contexts, it does not definitely neglect the very crucial role which writing in continuous sentences play in the learning process. Yet, it is very surprising to know that learners can adopt certain developed strategies of note-making during lectures; however, it would be just as complex as the

learner is unable to concentrate well during the whole lesson, risking for certain levels of feeling lost and confused as long as the lecture appears to progress.

❖ Learners need to develop their own learning skills and strategies, including that of making own notes, so that for their knowledge to be well enriched and for their levels to be increased. For instance, an effective learner should usually renew and adopt further strategies which seem to bring positive effects on learning in general and not to keep hands tied and wait for success.

❖ Learners should foster personal ways and styles of learning in general and develop certain note-making skills so as to be able to deal with different learning problems such as to be able to maintain concentration and cope with memory deficiencies.

❖ Students need to learn about the diverse problems they encounter generally in learning and particularly in exam situations, when feeling anxious and stressed are common among many learners. Willing students has to control all the external and internal factors which they think they inhibit them from doing well in their career. They need also to look for practical solutions to overcome such serious problems as forgetting, social distractions, stress and anxiety.

❖ Learners need to learn not only about the target language; i.e. its linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects, but also about the effective ways which help to acquire this language by referring back to own potentials and skills, trying to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses for the sake of possible change and amelioration of owns' strategies. As an example, a visual learner may lack knowledge about the very essential features which this particular style serve by providing space for learners to imagine, to draw up visual pictures, to make fabulous associations with word, and so on and so forth. This same remark can be for note-making techniques which should be virtually applied and not just be as an ink on a paper.

General Conclusion

As a sum up to the current research, this dissertation was basically intended for the sake of confirming or rejecting the stated hypotheses. As it concerns itself with finding a stable relationship between the two variables of the underpinning research, this work has resulted for positive effects of using different strategic note-making techniques, given the process of revision, on students' achievements as the results of the test in this study strongly showed. The core principle of achieving higher grades, through making efficient notes, in final exams depends mainly on the easy recapitulation of targeted information as our second hypothesis suggests. This latter has been also proved through graduate students' answers of the questionnaire as well as through the scores obtained from the proposed test. Participants' responses in the questionnaire and the quiz have shown a powerful connection between the use of various effective note-making techniques and the fostering of memory processes, namely that of recapitulation. Consequently, this leads to better learning outcomes which all of these concrete data indicate that our hypotheses have been proved and confirmed.

As far as making effective notes is concerned in the learning process, this valuable skill is thought to bring tremendous effects on learners' achievements as an ultimate goal to many university students. The fact that having a raw material of knowledge does not go against or work as an easy alternative to establishing a personal style of reformulating the learned information in an own way. For instance, many students fail to retain and recall information right by heart but would rather try to cope with the situation believing that examination is just rendering the information back to the teacher. Moreover, types of questions in the exam vary which require different techniques of revision to deal with each type. For this particular aspect, various styles and techniques of making notes are proposed with relevant kinds of notes. As an example, one would choose to adopt certain kinds of

notes to accomplish the reviewing process using visual or patterned notes, for instance. Liking to imagine and make associations between words and certain artificial pictures is another advantage from making effective notes. Besides, one has a chance, if not with all modules, to choose the suitable kind(s) of notes to be used for revision such as using images, pictures and matchstick figures in modules like culture of the language, linguistics and psychology.

In another side, it has been discovered throughout the investigation that adopting various note-making strategies to accomplish leaning purposes does not only help to a great extent in the process of recall and recapitulation of information but would also assist in maintaining concentration during lectures and reviewing processes, in stimulating various memory activities, creating a sense of joy and motivation and relieving stress and anxiety, as few advantages of the strategic skill of making efficient notes.

References

Barrass, R. (2002). *Study! A Guide to Effective Learning, Revision and Examination Techniques*. New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Barrass, R. (2005). *Students must Write: A Guide to Better Writing in Coursework and Examinations* (3rd ed.) New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.

Barrett, J. (2006). *Career, Aptitude and Selection Tests*: *Match your IQ Personality and Abilities to your Ideal Career* (2nd ed.). London: Kogan Page Limited.

Brown, H. D. (2007). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching.* London: Longman.

Burns, T., & Sinfield, S. (2004). *Teaching, Learning and Study Skills*: *A Guide for Tutors*. London: SAGE Publications.

Buzan, T. (n. d.). *The Buzan Study Skills Handbook*: *The Short Cut to Success in your Studies with Mind Mapping, Speed Reading and Winning Memory techniques*. London: BBC Active.

Buzan, T. (with Buzan, B.). (1994). *The Mind Map Book*: *How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize your Brain's Untapped Potential*. USA: A Dutton Book.

Carter, P. (2007). *IQ and Personality Types*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Carter, P., & Russell, K. (2008). *Test and Assess your IQ*: *Numerical, Verbal Spatial Aptitude Tests*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Carter, P. (2009). *Test and Assess your Brain Quotient*: *Discover your True Intelligence with Tests and Aptitude, Logic, Memory, EQ, Creative and Lateral Thinking*. London: Kogan Page Limited.

Chamot, A. U., Barnhardt, S., El-Dinary, P. B., & Robbins, J. (1999). *The learning Strategies Handbook*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Crawford, A., Saul, W., Mathews, S. R., & Makinster, J. (2005). *Teaching and Learning Strategies for the Thinking Classroom*. New York: The International Debate Education Association.

Davidson, G. (2005). *Improve your Spelling*. London: Penguin Books.

Dehn, M. J. (2008). *Working Memory and Academic Learning*: *Assessment and Intervention*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Dembo, M. H. (2004). *Motivation and Learning Strategies for College Success*: *A self-Management Approach* (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.

Dias, J., Paiva, A., Vala, M., Aylett, R., Woods, S., Zoll, C., & Hall, L. (2006). Empathic Characters in Computer-Based Personal and Social Education. In M. Pivec (Ed.), *Affective and Emotional Aspects of Human-computer Interaction*: *Game-based and Innovative Learning Approaches* (pp. 246-254). Amsterdam: IOS Press.

Donald, S. G., & Kneale, P. E. (2001). *Study Skills for Language Students*: *A Practical Guide*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Downing, S. (2011). *On Course*: *Strategies for Creating Success in College and Life*. USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Du Boulay, D. (2009). *Study Skills for Dummies*. England: John Wiley & Sons.

Dudley, G. A. (1986). *Double your Learning Power: Master the Techniques of Successful Memory and Recall*. England: Thorsons Publishing Group.

Dunlap, C. Z., & Weisman, E. M. (2007). *Helping English Language Learners Succeed* (Gallardo, M. E. Ed.). USA: Shell Educational Publishing.

Einstein, G. O., & McDaniel, M. A. (2007). Prospective Memory and MetaMemory: The Skilled Use of Basic Attentional and Memory Processes. In A. S. Benjamin & B. H.

Ross (Eds.), *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*: *Advances in Research and Theory* (vol. 48) (pp. 145-169). London: Academic Press.

Felder, R. M., & Silverman, L. K. (1988). Learning and Teaching Styles in Engineering Education. *Engr. Education*, 78(7), 674–681.

Felder, R. M., & Henriques, E. R. (1995). Learning and Teaching Styles in Foreign and Second Language Education. *Foreign Language Annals,* 28, No. 1, 1995, pp. 21–31.

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social Psychology and Second Language Learning*: *The Role of Attitudes and Motivation*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.

Gardner, J. N., & Jewler, A. J. (2006). *The Essential College Experience*: *With Readings* (6th ed.). USA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Gardner, H. (2011). Frames of the Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (10th ed.). New York: Basic Books.

Graham, S. (1997). *Effective Language Learning*: *Positive Strategies for Advanced Level Language Learning* (M. Grenfell, Ed.). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

Griffin, M. (2004). Bilingual Learners: Inclusive Practice. In C. Bold (Ed.), *Supporting Learning and Teaching* (pp. 105-125). London: David Fulton Publishers.

Hack, C. (2008). *APP1675*: *MSc in Biomedical Sciences distance learning* [Course Handbook]. Faculty of Life and Health Sciences, School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Ulster, UK. Retrieved November24th, 2013 at 18:28 from http://www.ulster.ac.uk/staff.

Harmer, J. (2004). *How to Teach Writing*. England: Pearson Education limited.

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University press.

Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University press.

Hewitt, D. (2008). *Understanding Effective Learning: Strategies for the Classroom*. England: Open University Press.

Hill, J. D., & Flynn, K. M. (2006). *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners*. USA : Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Jeynes, W. H. (2011). *Parental Involvement and Academic Success*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Macaro, E. (2001). *Learning Strategies in Foreign and Second language Classrooms*. London: Continuum.

Nannyonjo, H. (2007). *Education Inputs in Uganda: an Analysis of Factors Influencing Learning Achievement in Grade Six*. Washington: The World Bank.

O'Hara, S. (2005). *Improving your Study Skills*: *Study Smart*. *Study Less*. New Jersey: Wiley Publishing.

Orr, F. (1992). *Study Skills for Successful Students*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Oxford, R. L. (1987). *Language Learning Strategies*: *What Every Teacher Should Know*. Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Paechter, M., & Schweizer, K. (2006). Learning and Motivation with Virtual Tutors. Does it Matter if the Tutor is Visible on the Net? In M. Pivec (Ed.), *Affective and Emotional Aspects of Human-computer Interaction*: *Game-based and Innovative Learning Approaches* (pp. 155-164). Amsterdam: IOS Press.

Price, G., & Maier, P. (2007). *Effective study skills: Unlock your Potential*. England: Pearson Education Limited.

Pritchard, A. (2008). *Studying and Learning at University*: *Vital Skills of Success in your Degree*. London: SAGE Publications.

Pritchard, A. (2009). *Ways of Learning*: *Learning Theories and Learning styles in the Classroom* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Race, P. (2007). *How to Get a Good Degree*: *Making the Most of your time at University* (2nd ed.). England: Open University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. (with Kendricks, H., & Kim, Y.). (2002). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (3rd ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.

Robertson, S., & Smith, D. (1987). *Effective studying.* London: Longman York Press.

Sárosdy, J., Bencze, T. F., Poór, Z., & Vadnay, M. (2006). *Applied linguistics I for BA students in English*. Minden jog fenntartva: Bölcsész Konzorcium.

Schunk, D. H. (2009). *Learning Theories*: *An Educational Perspective* (5th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Seely, J. (2005). *Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Seifert, K., & Sutton, R. (2009). *Educational Psychology* (2nd ed.). Switzerland: Creative Commons Attribution.

Skehan, P. (2008). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning* (10th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spratt, M., Pulverness, A., & Williams, M. (2005). *The Teaching Knowledge Test Course.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

University of Bradford. (2006). *Effective Notemaking*. School of Management, United Kingdom: Neville.

University of Otago. (2008). *Note Taking & Note Making*. Student Learning Center: Anonymous.

University of Stanford. (n. d). *Taking Notes*: *Evaluate your Present Note-taking System*. Sweet Hall: Glickman (650) 723-8676.

Van Blerkom, D. L. (2009). *College Study Skills: Becoming a Strategic Learner* (6th ed.). USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Wallace, M. J. (2004). *Study Skills in English.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Watkins, C., Carnell, E., Lodge, C., Wagner, P., & Whalley, C. (2005). *Learning about Learning: Resources for Supporting Effective Learning*. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Watkins, C., Carnell, E., & Lodge, C. (2007). *Effective Learning in classrooms.* London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Willis M. D., J. (2007) *Brain-friendly Strategies for the Inclusion Classroom: Insights from a Neurologist and Classroom Teacher.* Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wong, L. (2009). *Essential Study Skills*. (6th ed.). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P., & Walberg, H. J. (2004). The Scientific Base Linking Social and Emotional Learning to School Success. In Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (Eds.), *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning*: *What does the Research Say* (pp. 3-22). New York: Teachers College Press.

APPENDIX 01 :

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for Students

Dear students,

This questionnaire is designed for you as a graduate student aiming at exploring "The Effects of Note-making Techniques as an Effective Factor to Better Learning Outcomes". Hoping to know your attitudes towards note making, its different techniques as well as its impact on your learning achievements; you are kindly requested to respond to the items proposed herein. Mind that your contribution would be of a great help not only to the current research but also to you, guiding you to discover your inner potentials and own personality, which in a way or another affect your grades. For that reason, we hope that your answers reflect the way you are, without any bias. Finally, accepting the data obtained from your answers is of our interest and duty.

Note: you would be required to tick (√) in the relevant boxes for questions that necessitates it, or provide full answers to justify.

Section One: Background Information:

Item one: please complete this part of the questionnaire first:

1. Gender: a- Male ☐ b- Female ☐
2. Your choice of English as a branch at the University was:
   a- Personal ☐ b- Imposed ☐

Section Two: Introducing the Note-making Technique:

Item one:

Attending your lectures, do you usually take notes?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

Item two:

When taking your notes, do you tend to:

a- Record everything the teacher says ☐
b- Write only the main ideas mentioned by the teacher ☐
c- Make your own notes according to what you have understood ☐
d- Wait until the teacher dictates or writes on the board ☐
e- Separate the dictation of the teacher from the explanation ☐

Item three:

How often do you use the following techniques to make your notes?

Frequency / Technique	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a- Linear notes (using continuous sentences)				
b- Visual notes (illustrating with pictures and images)				
c- Mnemonics				
d- Graphs and/or tables				
e- Concept maps and mind maps				
f- Abbreviations				
g- Patterned notes (forming outline of ideas)				

Item four:

In your opinion, do you think there is a relationship between the subject (module) you are studying and your choice of the note's kinds?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

How?

……

……

……

Item five:

Do you choose the kinds and/or techniques to make your notes according to:

a- The module ☐

b- The objective of writing (lectures, revision, essay preparation) ☐

c- The nature of information required ☐

d- all of them ☐

e- None of them ☐

Item six:

Do you rewrite the information in your own words when you review your notes?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

Item seven:

What about essay preparation? Do you PLAN for it making use of notes?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

Item eight:

What sort(s) of notes do you use most fulfilling the following purposes?

Purpose / Sort of notes	Writing lecture notes	Planning for essay writing	Revising
a- Linear notes			
b- Visual notes			
c- Mnemonics			
d- Graphs and/or tables			
f- Concept maps and mind maps			

Item nine:

When taking your lecture notes, do you focus more on:

a- The format of your notes ☐

b- The significance of information ☐

c- The quantity of information the teacher supplies ☐

d- The Relationships between and among ideas ☐

Item ten:

Do you assign specific files for every module or you condense your notes in one file?

a- Assign many files ☐ b- Condense notes in a file ☐

Item eleven:

Practically speaking, your lecture notes seem to be:

a- Arranged in an organized manner ☐

b- Disorganized and untidy ☐

c- Written using various colors ☐

d- Difficult to be recognized (handwriting) ☐

e- Connected and meaningful ☐

f- Unclear and meaningless ☐

Section Three: understanding the learning environment and approaching academic success

Item one:

Assessing yourself along three years of study, how would you evaluate your achievements?

a- Very good ☐ b- Good ☐ c- Acceptable ☐ d- Poor ☐

Item two:

When the teacher is explaining the lesson, you seem to:

a- Just listen carefully to the teacher ☐
b- Combine and make harmony between listening and note making ☐
c- Focus on taking as many notes without selective attention ☐

Item three:

While listening to your teacher do you:

a- Listen carefully without making notes ☐
b- Listen carefully making some sorts of notes ☐
c- Pretend to listen but cannot follow or understand ☐
d- Keep listening until you are distracted by something else ☐

Item four:

Are you a?

a- Visual learner ☐
b- Auditory learner ☐
c- Kinaesthetic learner ☐

Item five:

Name some strategies you use and think are effective for you in the classroom:

……
……
…….

Item six:

What is your position of time management? Do you manage your time:

a- Often ☐ b- Sometimes ☐ c- Never ☐

Item seven:

Do you set your goals previously?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

Item eight:

To what factor(s) can you attribute your failure to reach your expected goals?

a- Cognitive factors ☐
b- Psychological factors ☐
c- Social factors ☐

Item nine:

State some factors you feel they usually hinder (obstruct) you to do well, especially in exams:

……
……
……
……

Item ten:

Do you revise your lecture notes:

a- Every day (within 24 hours) ☐

b- Every week ☐

c- Two or one week before the exam ☐

d- Just the night before the exam ☐

Item eleven:

What is your method of revision?

a. Review your lecture notes ☐

b. Recite what you have learned (read aloud) ☐

c. Learn by heart ☐

d. Create summary notes ☐

e. Make up mnemonics and/or mind maps ☐

f. Revise individually ☐

g. Revise within a group ☐

Item twelve:

Do your notes seem to be disorganized and of nonsense when you refer back to them?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

Item Thirteen:

Have you experienced revision using mnemonics and mind maps? Specify?

a- Yes ☐ b- No ☐

……

Item fourteen:

Can you make up mnemonics to differentiate between the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ or supply any mnemonic you have created?

……

Item fifteen:

In your opinion, is making notes helpful to sustain revision?

……

Item sixteen:

To what extent is making notes of various forms helpful in aiding memory?

……

……

……

A word of ‘Thank’ to all who participated

APPENDIX 02 :

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Observation Checklist:

In order for our research project to be enriched with relevant and real data, we have proposed the following checklist to measure the degree of students' perceptions from different angles of making notes both during lectures and when preparing for tests/exams.

	S_1	S_2	S_3	S_4	S_5	S_6	S_7	S_8	S_9	S_{10}
Student's sitting position										
Preparation of necessary materials										
Having all lectures mixed/organized										
Organization of the lecture										
Making own notes										
Recording nearly everything										
Using linear notes in lectures										
Using abbreviations										
Using other forms of notes										
Highlighting key words…etc										
Using sort of writings to revise										
Sharing personal notes										
Reciting the information aloud										
Using mnemonics to revise										
Using mind maps to revise										

√ = Active participants / = Partially adapted m/o = Mixed/organized

F/B = Front/Back.

APPENDIX 03 :

TEST (01) IN DIDACTICS

Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

Faculty of Arts and Languages

Department of English

Last Name: ……

First Name: ……

Group: ……

Test 01 in Didactics/TEFL

Task One: (4/4) pts.

- Identify the appropriate concepts relevant to the following definitions:

1- ……. They deal with the ability to master a specific language behavior.

2- ……. They target students' positive attitudes and their psychological states such as achieving self-confidence.

3- ……. They tend to develop students' intellectual knowledge.

4- ……. They involve students' ability to implement learning skills in different situations.

Task Two: (6/6) pts.

* Below is an example of an objective:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to memorize four (04) action verbs.

Activity one: (3/3) pts.

- On the basis of the above example, what are the different components which form or constitute this objective?

Condition	Task/performance	Criterion/standard
…….. …….. …….. 	…… …… …… ……	…… …… …… ……

Activity Two: (3/3) pts.

- Which type(s) of objectives can this example be classified under?

……

……

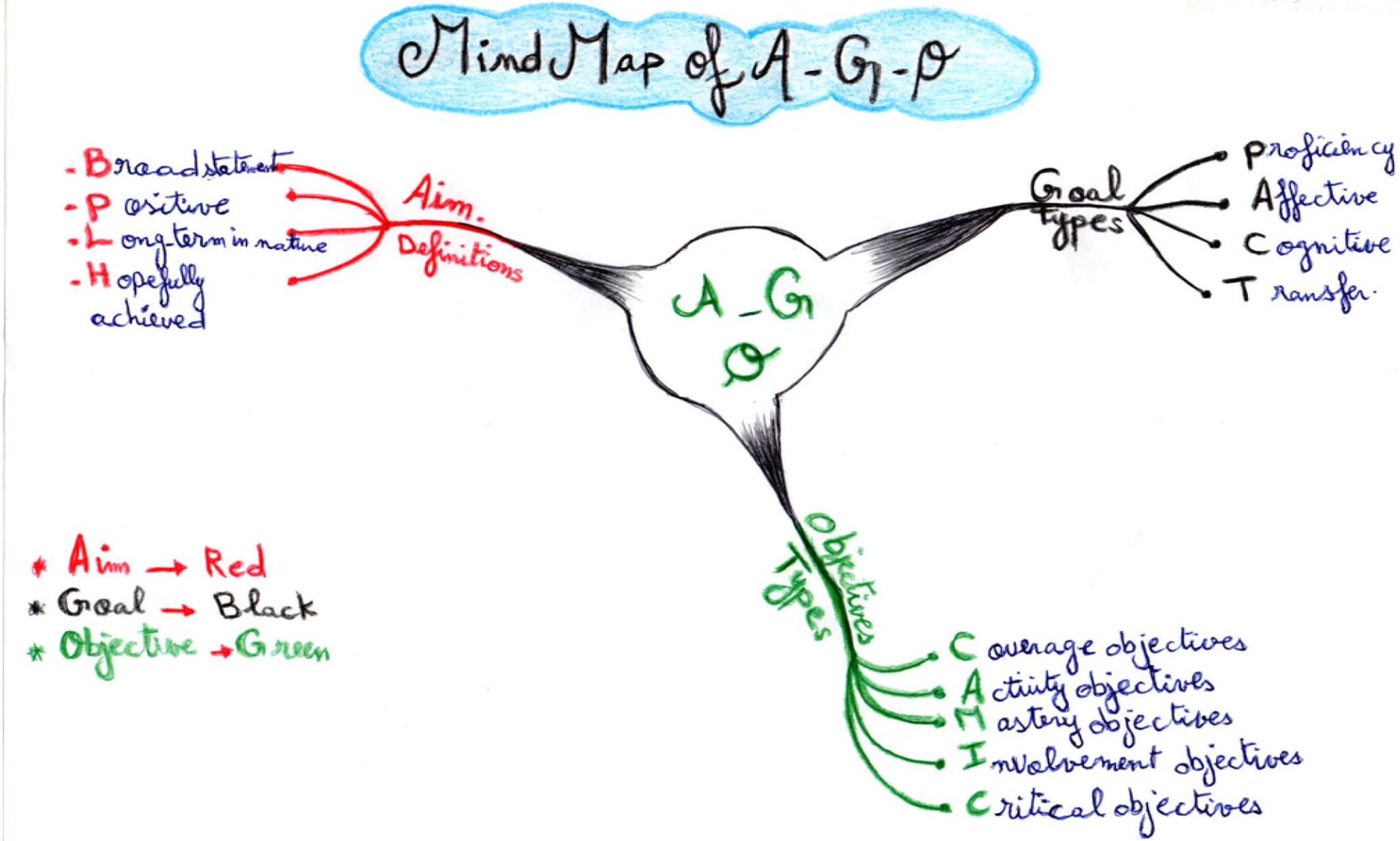
……..

❋ WHEN THERE IS A WILL , THERE IS A WAY ❋

APPENDIX 04 :

A SAMPLE MIND MAP BY A STUDENT FROM GROUP « B »

Mind Map of A-G-O



ملخص

تعتبر تقنية إعادة صياغة الملاحظات بعد تدوينها (Note-making Technique) من أهم المهارات المعتمدة في الدراسات العليا. و من هذا السياق، فإنه من الواجب على الطلبة المقدمين على التخرج أن يكونوا على علم مسبق بمهارة كهذه و أخذها بعين الاعتبار، من أجل إثبات مدى قدراتهم و إمكانياتهم الحقيقية التي من شأنها مساعدتهم على مواجهة متطلبات العمل مثلا أو في متابعة دراسات عليا أخرى. و لذلك، فإن الدراسة الحالية تسلط الضوء على التأثير الايجابي لهذه التقنية على التحصيل و النجاح على المستوى العلمي ، كما أنها تبحث عن العلاقة المتينة التي تربط استعمال مختلف أنواع هذه التقنية لترتيب المعلومات المكتسبة بأسلوب شخصي والقدرة على استرجاعها خاصة خلال فترة الامتحانات.

تعنى الدراسة الحالية كذلك بوصف الأسلوب المتبع من طرف الطلبة المقدمين على التخرج من جامعة محمد خيضر ببسكرة و المتمثل في طريقة التعامل مع المعلومات المكتسبة ، أي هل يكتفي الطلبة بما يقدم لهم من معلومات ليعيدوا توظيفها كما هي في ورقة الامتحان أم أنهم يحاولون فهمها و إعادة صياغتها بأسلوبهم الخاص و محاولة إيجاد طرق ناجعة لتثبيتها في الذاكرة.

من منطلق الأهداف و الحجج السابقة ، نحاول في هذه الدراسة تأكيد أو نفي الفرضية القائلة بأن استعمال الملاحظات الموضوعة شخصيا يزيد من فرص تحصيل نتائج جيدة في الامتحانات.

تعتمد الدراسة على المبدأ الوصفي و الذي يبحث عن الطرق العامة التي ينتهجها الطلاب في مراجعة دروسهم خصوصا عن طريق تقنية كتابة و إعادة صياغة الملاحظات من أجل ترسيخها ، كما أن البحث الحالي يوضح كذلك إلى أي مدى يتم تطبيق هذه التقنية من طرف طلبة السنة الثالثة انجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر- بسكرة ، أين تم توزيع الاستبيان على أربعين طالبا منهم ، إضافة إلى اعتماد أسلوب الملاحظة مع تسع طلبة آخرين مرفقا بامتحان موجز (Quiz).

النتائج المتحصل عليها من هذه الدراسة تكشف عن علاقة قوية أو بالأحرى تأثيرات إيجابية لاستعمال هذه التقنية على مقدرة الطلبة على استرجاع المعلومات بسهولة و من ثم تحقيق النتائج المرجوة ، لذلك فإن هدف هذه الدراسة هو حث الطلبة بقوة على تعلم المبادئ الأساسية لهذه المهارة ليس فقط من أجل التحصيل العلمي ، بل أيضا لإثبات الرغبة في التعلم و إنماء القدرة على اتخاذ القرارات.