



## INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Teaching Technique 16

# Guided Notes

### ACTIVITY TYPE

- Active/Engaged Learning
- Note Taking

### TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Poor Attention/Listening
- Poor Note-Taking

### LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Foundational Knowledge
- Learning How to Learn

# Guided Notes

In *Guided Notes*, the instructor provides a set of partial notes that students complete during the lecture, focusing their attention on key points.

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- 1 Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for *Guided Notes*
  - 2 Identify the learning task's underlying problem and craft the prompt
  - 3 Set assignment parameters for completing the prompts
  - 4 Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading
  - 5 Communicate assignment instructions to students
  - 6 Implement the technique
  - 7 Reflect upon the activity and evaluate its effectiveness

# Step-By-Step Instructions

In this section we provide you with guidance on each of the seven steps involved as you consider this technique.

## **STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS**

Students are often poor note takers, in part because they simply don't know how to take good notes. *Guided Notes* provides the opportunity to scaffold the process. It is a flexible technique that can be used across many different disciplines and fields, for a reading assignment, lecture, or other content rich assignment.

*Guided Notes* can help students accomplish several important learning goals. First, the notes can help students develop foundational knowledge in the discipline or field, as they have to understand well enough to complete the notes. Second, the notes provide a model for identifying what is the most and least important content. They also provide a structure for note taking, which can help them understand what good notes could look like, which in turn helps students beyond a single course. They also can help with attendance, as students can only complete the notes by being present for the lecture or other in-class activity where the information is being given.

*Guided Notes* can be a tool for assessing learning. They primarily provide information about how well students understand the subject at hand. This information can help you tailor your instruction to best meet their instructional needs and address gaps in their learning.

## **STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT**

Decide whether you will use this activity once, multiple times, or throughout the semester. Choose the assignment(s), whether a reading, lecture, or other content rich activity.

## **STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS**

Choose whether to develop full notes with strategic blanks for key terms or ideas or whether to develop a looser structure, such as a set of guiding questions. Ensure that this note-taking framework provides sufficient structure without being confusing.

## **STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING**

Determine whether you want to use the notes as a simple in class activity (non-graded) or whether you want to take them up and assess them. If the latter, use as a participation/engagement grade, or alternately, if you use the technique multiple times over the semester, consider tallying student work over time for a percentage.

# Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)



## **STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS**

Create a handout with the notes and with information about how to complete them (e.g. "fill in the blanks", or "answer the following questions"). Also provide information about what students should do with the notes (keep them or turn them in).

## **STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE**

- Develop a set of notes that provide a summary of the information in your lecture.
- Cut out key words, phrases, or concepts, leaving blanks in their place. Alternately, create a set of guiding questions that students can answer sequentially while listening to the lecture.
- Provide students with the Guided Notes. Tell them they will fill in the notes from information contained in the lecture.
- Present the lecture.
- Observe students while they are working or collect the notes when they are complete to ensure students are using the notes.

## **STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

When reflecting on the activity and how effective it was, consider the following questions:

- Did the technique match the course learning goals and objectives?
- Did it meet my goals for this learning module?
- Was it appropriate for the students?
- Did the technique keep the students engaged?
- Did it promote student learning?
- Did it provide me with information about student understanding?

If you answer yes to all or most of these questions, next consider how you might improve the activity for the next use.

# Support Materials



The materials in this section are intended to help you with the process of implementing this technique.

## **GUIDED NOTES SAMPLES**

Consider the following samples on pages 6–7 to help you implement *Guided Notes* in your classroom. Utilize fill in the blank notes, question-focused notes, or a combination of both when creating your guide.

# SAMPLE GUIDED NOTES 1

Fill in the blank notes

Students often struggle to \_\_\_\_\_.

This affects their ability to \_\_\_\_\_.

Here's an activity to support \_\_\_\_\_ during a lecture:

In *Guided Notes*, the instructor provides a \_\_\_\_\_ that students complete during the lecture, focusing their attention on key points.

## Here's how it works:

Develop a set of notes that \_\_\_\_\_ of the lecture.

Cut out \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_, leaving blanks in their place.

Or instead, create a set of questions for students to answer sequentially as they follow along.

Provide students with the *Guided Notes* and ask them to complete the task while listening to your lecture.

Ensure students complete the assignment by observing them during class or collecting the notes afterward.

If you collect the notes, be sure to return them, as they can be \_\_\_\_\_.

*Guided Notes* should be just that— \_\_\_\_\_.

Fuller notes \_\_\_\_\_ and may require less cognitive engagement on their part while scant notes can leave students frustrated in deciphering what information to include.

Find a \_\_\_\_\_ that works best for your class.

*Guided Notes* can also be completed in \_\_\_\_\_. Simply pause periodically and ask students to check their notes with a peer, making corrections as necessary.

You can \_\_\_\_\_ the use of *Guided Notes* as the course \_\_\_\_\_ or as students become \_\_\_\_\_.

Research has shown that *Guided Notes* \_\_\_\_\_.

Over the years I've found students \_\_\_\_\_ and will often request them.

They're a wonderfully \_\_\_\_\_ and students reap benefits from the technique beyond my class.

Here at the K. Patricia Cross Academy, we encourage you to share \_\_\_\_\_ with your class.

Download our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to GET STARTED.

## **SAMPLE GUIDED NOTES 2**

Question-focused notes

What do students struggle with?

Why is that an issue?

What can teachers use to help?

Write a one sentence summary of this technique:

What are the key steps for using this technique?

**\*\*OR\*\***

What is an important feature of the notes, and why is it important?

What has research shown about this technique?

What does the presenter think about this technique?

# Technique Template

Following are two templates to assist you as you think through how you might implement this technique in your own class. The first is a completed template, providing an example of how Claire Major adapted *Guided Notes* in her course, *College and University Teaching*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.



# Technique Template

Sample Guided Notes Completed Technique Template:

Content from Claire Major

## *College and University Teaching*

Course Name

### **COURSE CHARACTERISTICS**

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

*My course is a graduate level seminar, and it enrolls approximately 25 students per semester. These students are diverse in terms of their preparation for this course, but many of them are working as Teaching Assistants at my university but have had no formal training in education generally or college teaching specifically. The course is blended; we meet onsite once monthly and have weekly online discussions and activities in between sessions that student complete through a learning management system. They typically read one book focused on college teaching prior to each class session.*

### **STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS**

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

*My course meets four times during the semester for eight hours at a time. Because of this, I try to incorporate many different activities in each class session to keep it interesting and lively. I lecture at times, and I also incorporate active learning techniques. Guided Notes are a technique that combines lecture and active learning. I use it to help students pay attention while I am sharing information.*

## **STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT**

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

*One of the learning modules I teach is about evidence-based teaching practices. I will use Guided Notes to help students keep track of the key points of my lecture on this topic.*

## **STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS**

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?

*I will create notes that are a set of guiding questions that match the key points of my talk.*

#### **STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING**

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

*I will take up the notes and do a quick assessment using a plus or minus for each key point.*

#### **STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS**

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?

*I'll create a handout with the notes with questions for students to answer as I share key points.*

## **STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE**

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

*I'll share the notes with the students and ask them to complete them during the lecture. I'll collect the notes, assess them, and immediately return them so students will have the information when they need it.*

## **STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

*Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.*

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?

*I'll ask students about how helpful they found the notes. I'll use their responses to determine whether and how to implement the notes in the future.*

# Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Guided Notes** in your class. Fill in the blanks below, and use the information provided elsewhere in the Instructor’s Guide to assist you in your thinking.

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**Course Name**

## **COURSE CHARACTERISTICS**

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

## **STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS**

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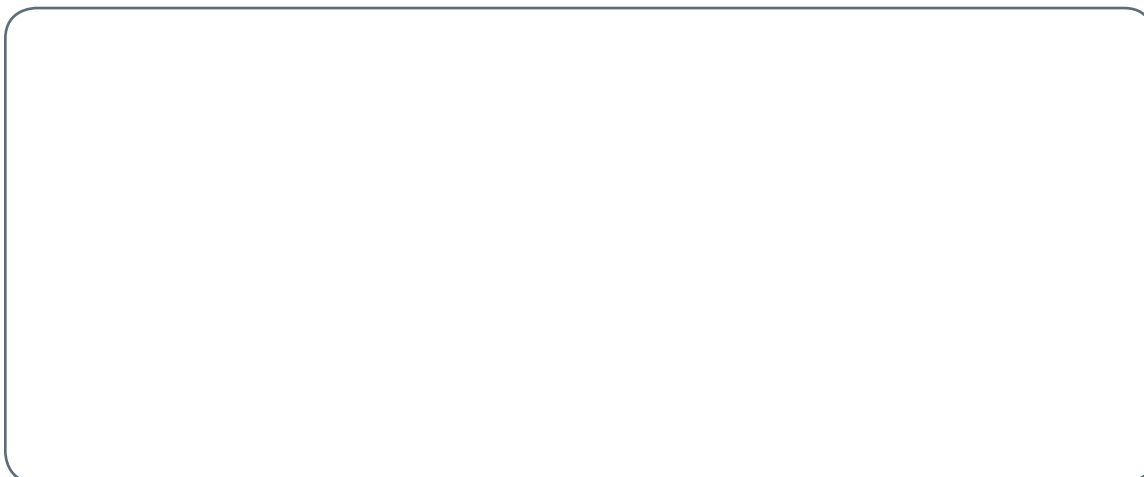
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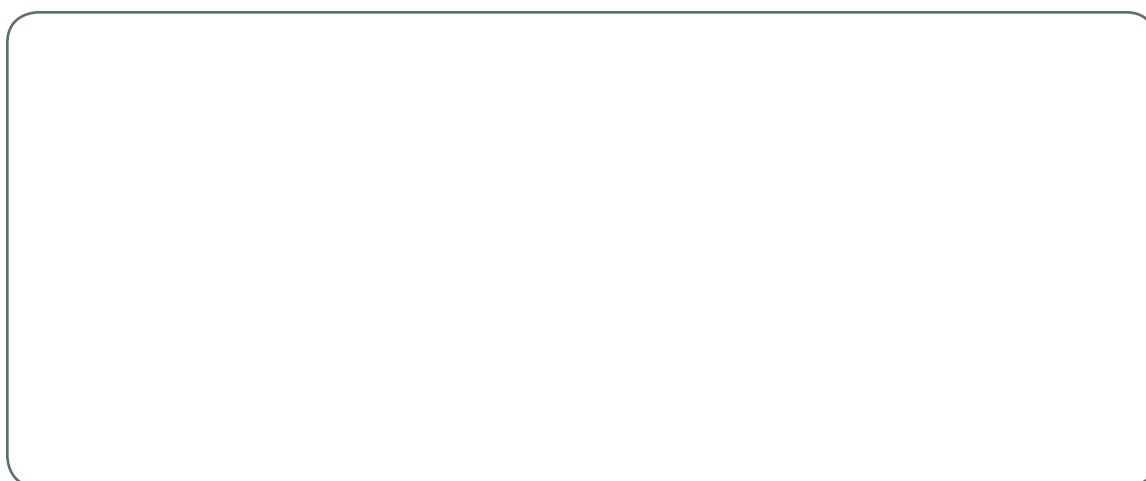
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How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?



## **STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

*Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.*

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?





# References and Resources

## PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from “Active Lecturing Technique 13: Guided Notes” in *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley & Major, 2018), pp. 260–263. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in both on campus and online courses, see the primary source:

Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Morrow, J. (2012). *Do guided notes improve student performance?* Retrieved from [www.westpoint.edu/cfe/Literature/Morrow\\_12.pdf](http://www.westpoint.edu/cfe/Literature/Morrow_12.pdf)
- Sidman, C. L., & Jones, D. (2007). Addressing students’ learning styles through skeletal PowerPoint slides: A case study. *Journal of Online Learning and teaching*, 3(4). Retrieved from <http://jolt.merlot.org/vol3no4/sidman.htm>

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