



## INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



### Teaching Technique 41

# Cued Notes

#### ACTIVITY TYPE

- Active/Engaged Learning
- Note Taking

#### TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Poor Note Taking
- Poor Attention/Listening

#### LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Foundational Knowledge

# Cued Notes

In *Cued Notes* students use a template. The template prompts them to record a cue that you provide and to take notes on a lecture segment tied to the cue. Then, the template prompts students to summarize the full lecture.



1

Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for *Cued Notes*

2

Chunk your lecture content. Develop a simple cue for each chunk.

3

Create a *Cued Notes* template to share with students

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**

Note taking helps students concentrate during a lecture, and students learn during the production of the notes. Students are often poor note-takers, however, and have difficulty distinguishing between main ideas and ancillary details. One of the main reasons to use *Cued Notes* is that it scaffolds the process of note taking and provides them with a prompt to synthesize information.

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

In *Cued Notes*, students use a note-taking template. You provide a cue prior to presenting a segment of information tied to the cue. The cue could be a single key word (e.g., axons or dendrites) or a simple question (e.g., "What is the nervous system?"). You then share the cue with students and encourage them to link the forthcoming information to the cue in their notes. The activity closes as students tie together the information by providing an overarching summary of the lecture. To implement this technique, you will need to identify cues and the content that will accompany the cues ahead of time. You will also need to identify a place to stop or pause the lecture for students to have the opportunity to summarize the content.

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

Students will want to know when to use *Cued Notes* and how long they should continue to take notes in this fashion. Let them know prior to beginning the lecture.

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

While you may not wish to grade *Cued Notes*, taking them up periodically to assess can provide you with insights into the quality of the notes they have taken, which can intimate their level of understanding. You can do a quick check/plus/minus system for assessing the documents.

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

Announce the activity in class and share a sample *Cued Notes* with students—a simple visual can help them understand how you want them to take notes.

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

## STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Begin your lecture. After the introduction, provide a cue and ask students to record it in the left-hand column of their notes.
- Suggest that students record their main ideas in the right-hand column of the notes and present the segment of your lecture that corresponds to the cue.
- Proceed with the lecture, alternating cues and lecture content.
- At the end of the lecture, ask students to provide a summary of the full lecture at the bottom; you may choose to have them complete this step as homework.

## 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.

CUED NOTES TEMPLATE	
Course: _____ Student's Name: _____ Lecture Date and Topic: _____	
<b>CUES</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	

# Online Adaptation

This section is intended to help you with the process of implementing *Cued Notes* in your online class.

## HOW TO START

- First, review your lecture and identify key chunks of information.
- For each chunk, develop a corresponding cue, which can be a:
  - › Symbol
  - › Keyword
  - › Question
- Next, make a *Cued Note* template that students can download or use the one provided in our free download for this technique on **page 5**.
- Create an assignment in your Learning Management System (LMS) and provide the template, directions and expectations.
- Have students fill out the *Cued Notes* template as they view your lecture, whether synchronous (live) or asynchronous (recorded).
- Then, ask students to scan or take a picture of their completed *Cued Notes* and upload it in your LMS as an assignment.

# 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 *Cued Notes* in her course, *Developmental English: Reading*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

# Technique Template

Sample Cued Notes Completed Technique Template:

Content from Claire Major

*Developmental English: Reading*

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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?

*This example comes from our Interactive Lecturing book. It is an undergraduate course that meets twice per week. Students who take the course did not place into college-level English and must complete this course prior to taking English 101.*

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

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

*The professor of this developmental English course planned a lecture on basic elements of fiction. She knew that most of her students were not proficient note-takers. She decided to implement Cued Notes to help them develop better notes and also to help them learn the material better.*



## 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?

*The basic problem she wanted to address was poor-note taking. Her prompts were based on her lecture topic: elements of fiction.*

## 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?

*She began by showing students how to format their notebook paper to take Cued Notes. Her lecture was organized around the seven elements of fiction.*

## 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?

*The professor planned to take up the Cued Notes during class, and to use a tally system to assess before returning the notes to students.*

## 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?

*She announced the activity in class. She also announced each new cue at the appropriate time.*

## STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

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

*At the start of each segment, she wrote the cue on the board and asked students to write the cue in the left-hand column. She advised students to take fuller notes in the right-hand column, making sure to match the cue to the appropriate notes. She then proceeded to describe the element attached to the cue in detail, giving examples from the short story they had read the night before. At the end of the lecture, she asked students to write a summary of the lecture. For an example of their notes see page 11.*

## 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?

*To reflect on the technique, she thought through whether the notes appeared to help students record more useful information than they would have otherwise recorded. She felt that they did. She also thought about how to encourage students to use Cued Notes going forward. She decided she would continue the practice for a few class sessions and then encourage students to continue on their own.*

## CUED NOTES TEMPLATE

Course: Elements of Fiction

Student's Name: Steve Brown

Lecture Date and Topic: Nov 27, 2019

CUES	NOTES
<i>Character</i>	<i>The person in a work of fiction or the characteristics of that person; you have to make inferences, for example, about what the character says</i>
<i>Theme</i>	<i>The underlying message the story is conveying; it is a central idea or meaning; it provides a unifying point for the story</i>
<i>Plot</i>	<i>The causal sequence of events; there is a Freytag pyramid that shows exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution</i>
<i>Point of View</i>	<i>The narrator's perspective; it refers to who tells the story and how it is told; there are several different points of view: third-person omniscient, third-person limited omniscient, objective, and first person</i>
<i>Setting</i>	<i>The location of a story's actions; it is the time and place in which the story occurs</i>
<i>Conflict</i>	<i>The incompatibility of goals or objectives of the main character</i>
<i>Tone</i>	<i>The attitude toward the story or toward the audience that is conveyed in a story</i>

### SUMMARY

*There are several elements in a story, and each tells you something about the story's meaning.*

# Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Cued 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**

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

## **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?

## **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?

#### **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?

#### **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?

## STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

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 “Interactive Lecturing ALT 14: Cued Notes” in *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley & Major, 2018), pp. 264–268. 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., & Major, C.H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley/Jossey-Bass.

## CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Friedman, M. C. (n.d.). Notes on note-taking: Review of research and insights for students and instructors. Retrieved from [http://hilt.harvard.edu/files/hilt/files/notetaking\\_0.pdf](http://hilt.harvard.edu/files/hilt/files/notetaking_0.pdf)
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