

Science teachers are one of my favorite groups of teachers to collaborate with when utilizing the Big6™ Problem Solving Skills. The “scientific method” fits well with the stages of the Big6; when science teachers see the connection, they easily begin to use the Big6 with their students on a daily basis. In particular, many science classes do a yearly science project that follows the scientific method. The first part of this project is completing background research on the topic of choice. After choosing the topic (Task Definition), identifying the best sources (Information Seeking Strategies), and locating the perfect sources (Location and Access), students are then ready to extract the needed information in this stage: Use of Information.

Students come into the library media center after they have chosen their science topic, needing sources of information that fit their topic. Once they have located these sources, students have to be guided in methods of extracting the relevant and important information on their topic. This always involves some type of note taking. One of the note taking methods that works well for learners from seventh grade through adults is the *Cornell Note Taking Method*. This method, so called because it was developed by former Cornell University Professor of Education, Walter Pauk, may be taught to a group of students in a short period of time. The system was developed as a way of taking notes during a lecture. However, the system works equally well when taking notes from print resources.

The next time you instruct any class about note taking, consider introducing the Cornell Note Taking Method. It is one of the best “Use of Information” methods.



By Rob Darrow

### Lesson: Use of Information The Cornell Note Taking Method

1. Have students divide a sheet of paper in half (see *Fig. 1*).
2. Give all students the same printed article for a practice exercise.
3. Have students first circle or highlight the main ideas in the article.
4. Then have students underline or highlight, in another color, the details of the article.
5. Once this is completed, the student transfers this information to his or her “Cornell Note Sheet.”
6. Review the results with the whole class.
7. Finally, have students apply the Cornell Note Taking Method to the actual assignment.

**Note:** Library media specialists or classroom teachers may want to grade the note-taking papers because it is extremely important for students to learn how to best extract information from the sources they use. This skill needs to be taught over and over as it is a complex set of smaller skills that need to be reviewed by every teacher with every

group of students every year. (Yes, even those students in advanced placement or college courses!)

Divide your paper into two columns and label the headings, “Main Ideas” and “Details.” The Main Ideas column should be about one-quarter the size of the Details column.

### Online References for the Cornell Note Taking Method

- > Bucks County Community College “Learning Center” in Pennsylvania <[www.bucks.edu/~spepop/Cornl-ex.htm](http://www.bucks.edu/~spepop/Cornl-ex.htm)>
- > Cornell University Learning Strategies Center <[www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/learn/SSWorkshops/SKResources.html](http://www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/learn/SSWorkshops/SKResources.html)>
- > Brigham Young University Center for Learning and Teaching <[www.byu.edu/stlife/cdc/learning/note-tak.php](http://www.byu.edu/stlife/cdc/learning/note-tak.php)> ■

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Main Ideas	Details
<p><b>Cornell Note Taking Method</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can be used to provide an outline of the topic, chapter, or lecture.</li> <li>■ Organized by main ideas and details.</li> <li>■ Sequential—take notes as you read them, or as they are given by instructor, in an orderly fashion.</li> <li>■ Can be used as a tool to:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define terms or explain concepts listed on the left side.</li> <li>2. Identify the concept or term based on its definition on the right side.</li> <li>3. Study for tests.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Figure 1: Cornell Note Taking Method

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