Outline Writing

Activity Type
Groups write simple outlines of lecture notes to identify, highlight, and review main topics covered in lecture. This is a good exercise early on in the quarter to introduce students to this valuable organizational and study tool.

Time Needed
(30-50 min)

Purpose
• To allow students to identify the most important concepts from each lecture
• To assess students ability to identify which concepts are the most important
• To provide an easy format for reviewing covered material which helps students to focus any questions they may have about a particular topic

Abstract

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce benefits of outlining, get students into groups</td>
<td>5 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work making outlines, writing outlines on paper or board</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two people from each group go over their outlines. Instructor compares these outlines to his/her own</td>
<td>20 min</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ask which concepts are most confusing, discuss how students should recognize these and seek help when studying</td>
<td>5-10 min</td>
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Supplies
• Flip chart paper, markers, tape

Pre-class prep
• Send an email to the class reminding them to bring their lecture notes to discussion
• Identify your own list of most important concepts from each lecture that will be covered

In Class
(5 min) Introduce activity and purpose of writing an outline (to focus on main points of lecture, organize and review material)

(20 min) Ask students to get into groups of 3-4 (or assign groups if you prefer). If you are covering the past three lectures, it helps to have at least two groups assigned to each lecture in order to compare their outlines. Assign a lecture day to each group and ask them to identify the main topics covered in that lecture (this can easily range from 3-10 topics). Have them write a simple outline using just phrases, words, or concepts that fall under the headings of the main topics they identified. As students finish, have them write their summary on flip chart paper or the board.
(20 min) Have groups present their outlines to the class, this works best if the outline is on the board. If two groups outlined the same lecture, identify any differences in their outlines. Compare their outlines with your own to assess their ability to identify main concepts.

(5 min) If time remains, answer any questions that arose during the outline review.

**Things to Ask or Emphasize**

- Remind students that they should use indentation or labeling for concepts that fall under each of the main topics
- Ask each group to identify which of the topics on their outline was the most difficult for them to understand. This way you know what to emphasize in subsequent classes, worksheet, and assignments
- When groups are presenting their outlines, be sure to ask the class if they can think of anything missing from the outlines, or if there were any concepts included in the outlines that may not be important

**Typical Mistakes**

**Comments**