

+1 Routine

A routine for the identifying important ideas worth remembering



After reading a text, watching a movie, listening to a lecture, or being presented with new information or ideas in some manner, a group of learners does the following:

- RECALL** In 2-3 minutes and working individually, each learner generates a list of key ideas that he or she recalls from the presentation that he/she feels is important to hang onto. Learners do this from memory rather than reviewing notes or material.
- ADD (+) 1** Learners pass their papers to the right. Taking 1-2 minutes, each student reads through the list in front of him/her and *adds one new thing* to the list. The addition might be an elaboration (adding a detail), a new point (adding something that was missing), or a connection (adding a relationship between ideas). REPEAT this process at least two times.
- REVIEW** Return the papers back to the original owner. Learners read through and review all the additions that have been made on their sheets. At the same time they may add any ideas they have picked up from reading other's sheets that they thought were worthwhile.

PURPOSE: WHAT KIND OF THINKING DOES THIS ROUTINE ENCOURAGE?

The routine provides learners with a structure for identifying key ideas and committing them to memory. Research has shown that engaging students in memory work immediately after the presentation of information helps learners to retain that information more effectively.

APPLICATION: WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT BE USED?

As learners we often encounter new ideas, information, and content. At upper levels, students often take notes on this material but too often may do so in a superficial, unthinking manner by merely writing down everything for possible review later. This routine could be used as an alternative to traditional note taking. The benefit of post-lecture note taking is that students are required to identify key ideas, an important processing move, which is often easier to do after material is presented than during its presentation. At the same time this routine harnesses the power of the group to enhance everyone's notes while providing individuals with a written record to hang onto for future reference.

LAUNCH: WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR STARTING AND USING THIS ROUTINE?

When presenting students with new information, in whatever form, tell them that you will be trying out a new note taking routine that will help them identify key ideas from the lesson/material. Instead of taking notes, ask learners to listen, engage, and participate fully in the lesson/lecture. You may want to assure them that they will have access to your slides or lecture notes so that students are worried about missing important information. Explaining the psychology behind this routine can help students learn how to learn. The routine is not simply an activity you are asking to students to do, but a tool designed to help us use our brains more effectively for learning. You may wish to tell students that research has shown it is important to engage memory right away when something is learned rather than waiting to try and memorize things for a test later. At the end of the lesson allow 10-15 minutes for the routine. Timing may be influenced by the complexity, richness and depth of the material that was presented as well as the age of students. Debrief this note taking method and discuss how to make it better next time.