

Triple-Entry Note Taking

Instructions

To do “triple-entry” note taking divide a blank page into three parts.

In the right-hand column jot down any sentence or phrase which strikes you (plus the page number where it appears). By “strikes you,” I mean a sentence with which you disagree, which you don’t understand, which you wholeheartedly endorse, or which triggers an association with something else.

In the middle column, opposite the sentence or phrase you’ve taken from the text, write down whatever occurs to you (in other words, your response). It could simply be—“oh, no.” Or—“that’s the same point Orwell makes in 1984.” Or- “if it’s true that I must trust myself, where does that leave science and all its proofs?” (In other words, this sort of note taking is a way of beginning a dialogue with the author of the text.)

Sometimes the chain of response ends with the middle column. But other times one may find a response to one’s middle-column response. If so, record this in the left-hand column. You might write—“Not only is it in 1984, but also in Death of Ivan Ilyich. Ivan, like Socrates and Winston Smith, also tries to follow his inner voice against strong social pressures.”

Advantages

- Students actively engage with the reading – the technique opens **multiple** interactions between reader and text.
- Students more easily make connections between the current readings and previous discussions or readings. The technique “rests upon the view that learning involves finding connections, moving back to see the forest and going forward to see the trees.” (Fishman 59)
- Students are more motivated to find connections between the readings and their own lives. Knowledge is made personally relevant.
- Students create a pool of ideas and preoccupations that can serve as inspiration from essay writing. They can “loop” back through their triple-entry notes and circle recurring or especially interesting ideas they generated.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Excerpt from *First Inaugural Address*
Delivered 4 March 1933

[L]et me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life, a leadership of frankness and of vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory. And I am convinced that you will again give that support to leadership in these critical days.

In such a spirit on my part and on yours we face our common difficulties. They concern, thank God, only material things. Values have shrunk to fantastic levels; taxes have risen; our ability to pay has fallen; government of all kinds is faced by serious curtailment of income. [...] Primarily, this is because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed, through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and have abdicated. Practices of the unscrupulous money changers stand indicted in the court of public opinion, rejected by the hearts and minds of men.

Triple-Entry Note Taking

Response to one's middle-column	Whatever occurs to you (your response)	Sentence or phrase which strikes you

Based on:

Fishman, Stephen M. "Student Writing in Philosophy: A Sketch of Five Techniques." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. 69 (Spring 1997): 58-59.