

**MA APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND ELT IN-SESSIONAL COURSE in ENGLISH for
ACADEMIC PURPOSES**

MAKING NOTES FROM WRITTEN SOURCES

1. Look at the notes made from one of the paragraphs of this article:

Cownie, F. (1995) *The Language of the Law: international students and the reading of statutes*

Cownie (1995) p.6:

Int. sts. + home sts. - probs. reading
statutes, even tho. may be gd. readers

Int. sts. - diff. acad. backgrounds: probs.
↗

Research into reading: : cult. diffs. imp.
∴ not surprising int. sts. may need
xtra help w/ reading statutes



Can you make sense of the notes or some of them?

Think about:

- the topic
- abbreviated words
- symbols
- missing words
- the writer's main points/argument

2. Now write up these notes into a paragraph summary in the space below, using full sentences and linking words. Do not forget to make some reference to the writer.

3. Look at the suggested summary below and compare it with your own. What, if any, are the main differences?

Cownie (1995) points out that both international students and home students have problems reading statutes, even though they may be good readers. Moreover, since international students come from different academic backgrounds, their problems are likely to be greater. Referring to research that addresses the importance of cultural differences in reading, Cownie is not surprised therefore that international students may need extra help with reading statutes.

.....

4. Now read the original paragraph:

Many home students, who are native speakers of English, find reading a statute a very complex process. It can also be disorientating. By the time students enter higher education they have become expert readers. Faced with a statute, which is a completely different kind of text from those with which they are familiar, they become novice readers again. For international students, coming from a different academic culture, the problems are multiplied. Researchers such as Regent (1985) have pointed out that cultural differences play an important part in the process of reading, so it is unsurprising that international students may require some additional assistance when they are beginning to work with statutory materials

How close is the summary in 3. above to the original text? Does it retain all the meaning of the original?

Think about:

- key points
- length
- choice of words
- structure/order of information

5. Now read the next paragraph. Make notes overleaf in the space reserved for notes, and then write up (expand) your notes in a summary on a separate piece of paper.

Hint:

1. Read and study the paragraph first, without making notes
2. Think about what it is saying (the main points of the paragraph)
3. Cover the paragraph and make your notes
4. Then check with the paragraph to ensure you have included the key points
5. Write your summary/paraphrase: think about how you can simplify the message in your own words, as far as possible.

(Zhengdun, et al, 2004):

Unlike success in first language acquisition, success in learning a second or foreign language is considerably more variable. Recently, second language acquisition researchers have called for more integrative research on individual difference factors. With this goal in mind, this study followed a larger, quantitative study of the links between self-directedness for language learning and English language learning attainment among university students on the Chinese mainland and in Hong Kong. Drawing on the findings of that study (Gan, 2003), this 1-semester study looked closely at 2 small groups of tertiary-level English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in China in order to document how they carried out their out-of-class (self-directed) English learning, as well as to elaborate issues that may be critical to

understanding the variability that had already been observed in their English learning outcomes. (Zhengdun, et al, 2004)

Using grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998), 6 categories of qualitative data were constructed: conceptualizing English language learning; perceptions of the College English Course; learning and practising strategies; self-management; internal drive; and English proficiency tests. The study findings suggest that different levels of success may be explained by a complex and dynamic interplay of internal cognition and emotion, external incentives, and social context. The findings imply the need to take a holistic view of variation in language learning outcomes and to broaden the scope of the current practice in learner strategy training.

Notes:

AI/EH/WB 11/08