

The Importance Of Note-Taking Skills

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Abstract: Many English language learners face difficulties when they enter academic contexts, even after studying English for several years as the foundation of the General English is not that developed. Academic English requires not only subject-specific vocabulary, but also the ability to understand spoken and written information and organize it logically. Note-taking is one of the key skills that connects General English learning with academic success.

This article discusses how improvement in General English gradually leads to better Academic English performance, with a special focus on note-taking skills. The discussion is based on classroom experience and reflective teaching practice. At the beginning, students struggled to take notes because of limited vocabulary and weak listening comprehension. As their General English improved, their ability to identify key ideas and record information meaningfully also developed. The article suggests that note-taking should be taught step by step, starting from simple General English tasks and moving toward academic contexts.

Keywords: General English, Academic English, note-taking, academic skills, EFL learners.

Introduction: In English language education, students are often expected to use Academic English before they are fully prepared for it. Academic tasks like listening to lectures, reading textbooks, and writing assignments require a strong command of General English. Without this foundation, learners may understand individual words but fail to grasp the overall meaning.

General English helps learners build essential skills such as basic vocabulary, grammar, and everyday listening comprehension. These skills later support Academic English, which focuses on formal language use, abstract ideas, and structured communication. One academic skill that clearly shows this connection is note-taking. In order to take useful notes, learners must first understand what they hear or read.

From my teaching experience, it can be observed that students with weak General English often try to write everything word by word, without understanding the main idea. This leads to confusion and ineffective notes. Therefore, this article argues that General English development should come first, and note-taking skills should be introduced gradually as students'

language ability improves.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers agree that academic language does not develop independently from basic language skills. Cummins (2000) explains that everyday language ability forms the base for academic language proficiency. Learners who lack this foundation often struggle with academic tasks, even if they are motivated. Note-taking has been widely studied as an important academic skill. According to Boch and Piolat (2005), effective note-taking depends on comprehension rather than writing speed. Learners must be able to recognize main ideas, supporting details, and key terms. This process requires sufficient vocabulary knowledge and listening skills, which are developed through General English learning.

Harmer (2007) also points out that lower-level learners often feel anxious during listening tasks. As a result, they focus more on writing than on understanding. This problem can be reduced when learners feel confident in their General English abilities.

Overall, previous studies show that note-taking should

not be introduced suddenly in academic settings. Instead, it should be taught progressively, with support and guidance, as learners move from General English to Academic English.

METHODOLOGY

This article is based on reflective teaching practice rather than formal experimental research. The observations come from teaching English to secondary and pre-university students. The main focus was on how students' note-taking skills changed as their General English improved.

Students first worked with short listening and reading texts in General English lessons. Simple note-taking tasks were introduced using keywords, headings, and visual organizers. Later, more academic-style materials were used. Students' notebooks were reviewed, and informal discussions were held to understand their difficulties and progress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the early stage, many students found note-taking difficult. Their notes were often incomplete or copied directly from the text or audio. This showed that they were struggling with comprehension. Limited vocabulary and weak listening skills prevented them from identifying important information.

As General English skills improved, especially listening and vocabulary, students began to take better notes. They started writing keywords instead of full sentences and organizing information more clearly. They also became more confident and less stressed during listening tasks.

Another important change was students' attitude. When note-taking was introduced gradually and in a supportive way, students felt more successful. This increased their motivation and willingness to participate in academic tasks. These observations support the idea that General English serves as a necessary foundation for Academic English development.

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that Academic English skills, particularly note-taking, develop more effectively when learners have a strong background in General English. Note-taking is not just a technical skill; it depends on comprehension, vocabulary knowledge,

and confidence in using the language. Teachers should avoid introducing academic note-taking too early. Instead, they should help students strengthen their General English and gradually guide them toward academic tasks. Simple strategies such as modeling, using visual organizers, and focusing on key ideas can make this transition smoother.

In conclusion, improving General English first allows learners to approach Academic English with greater confidence and success. A step-by-step approach to note-taking can play an important role in supporting students' academic development.

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